CALLED TO *LA LUCHA*:
A COUNTERNARRATIVE STUDY OF LATINX THEOLOGICAL FACULTY IN EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES

By

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ABSTRACT

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This counternarrative study illuminates the experiences of Latinx theological faculty in evangelical seminaries. While a number of scholars have explored the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions broadly, very few have shed light onto the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical theological institutions specifically. Drawing on Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), and employing a counternarrative methodology, I sought to understand the challenges of eight Latinx theological faculty in evangelical seminaries as well the ways these faculty created spaces for enduring such challenges. Latinx theological faculty in Evangelical seminaries experienced unfair labor expectations, difficulty working with White allies, and microaggressions. Despite these challenges, these faculty were able to create new spaces for thriving by leaning into their sense of calling and vocation, developing scholarship for the benefit of Latinx and Christian communities, and building community with other Latinx scholars outside their institutions. These findings affirm that while the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries often mirror those of racially minoritized faculty in higher education broadly, they developed spaces for thriving based on their theological and social locations. This study draws attention to how racial/ethnic and religious identities intersect in the lives of faculty, and provides implications for how evangelical seminaries and evangelical churches can create hospitable spaces for all.

To my grampa, Andres.
Wish we could hit the links and grab a chicken sal san.

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This dissertation is the product of decades of friends, family, mentors, pastors, and teachers building into my life and inspiring me to take up worthwhile work that contributes to our understanding of how the church and its corollary institutions can better embody the call to wholeheartedly love God and neighbor. As such, my acknowledgments here can truly do no justice to the conversations, notes, texts, and messages that have shaped my worldview, writing style, and passion. Thanks to all who have been a part of my life and this process.

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felt loved by you, especially when our family was growing and life was changing so much. To the Faith Church fam, thanks for helping me find a church home and serve on the pastoral staff! Because of y'all, I found a denominational home and an ecclesial family.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Mi Historia/My Story

Every Saturday growing up, my family and I would visit my paternal grandparents, Andres and Maria. Living in the northern suburbs of Detroit, we would drive 45 minutes south to a place called Southgate, where my father grew up. My grandparents were divorced, so we would first visit my grandpa before heading over to grandma's. The two could not be more different. They met in the town of Laredo, Texas, and came to Detroit in the 1950s to get in on the booming auto industry. They'd tell us stories of the discrimination they had experienced, getting kicked out of restaurants for being Mexican. These experiences led them down two different paths. My grandmother, a devout Catholic, leaned into her Mexican identity. Her house always smelled of incense, *arroz* (rice), fresh tortillas, and images of *La Virgen* (The Virgin of Guadalupe) and Jesus covered the walls. She became an advocate for the Mexican community in Detroit and was awarded numerous accolades when she retired. My grandfather, on the other hand, embraced his status as an American citizen, learned to play golf, and mainly spoke English. He was proud of his Mexican heritage, but ultimately saw the benefit of assimilation. His faith was that of an inactive evangelical, one who adhered to the core tenets of Christian faith but was never involved in church. I loved them both. But they represented two different visions of what it can mean to be Latinx in this country. My father respected my grandma's ethnic pride, but perhaps embraced a version of Latinidad much like my grandpa's. Having very light skin because of my White mother, I always felt as though I could be Mexican or White whenever I wanted. In this way, I grew up as a chameleon.

In addition, my family started going to a Baptist church early on in my life. I remember being enamored with the things of God—sitting in the pews, singing hymns, hearing about a

Creator who loved me, and taking offerings to the poor in our community. There was never a time I wasn't a Christian. While I can count on my hand the number of racially minoritized families that attended our church, the church was a welcoming space and I always felt comfortable there. In fact, when I was 16, I felt a distinct call to enter the ministry. This led me to attend a Christian college. College is generally a time when people come to an awareness of where they stand in the world, yet I never had that moment. I leaned into my Whiteness, as it allowed me to walk through most spaces without suspicion. I broke out my Mexican heritage when it was convenient to me. I didn't realize I could play this game until a few years ago.

After college, I entered seminary, where I was frequently the source of ethnic curiosity for some of my friends. They would often ask me why I did not "actively" embrace my Mexican heritage. They believed that, as a Mexican American, I should act, speak, and think a certain way. I remember asking a friend why she felt the need to always question my Mexican heritage. She responded, "If I had culture, I would embrace it. It's sad that you don't embrace yours." Her words were heartfelt, yet misguided. I embraced my Mexican American identity, yet did not do so in a way that was acceptable or congruent with my friends' expectations. In a seminary that purported to be welcoming of all races and ethnicities, I felt alone. While there were a number of international students from Nigeria, Kenya, South Korea, and Mexico, I can count on one hand how many non-international racial or ethnic minorities there were. While a number of my White friends were supportive of me, none truly understood or could empathize with my experience. In addition, there were few professors of color with whom I could communicate my feelings of isolation.

I begin this project by sharing these brief narratives because it provides a window into how I approach this research topic and demonstrates the power of narrative in research. I am a

third-generation Mexican American. I am half-Mexican and half-White, and I care deeply about the plight of not only Chicanxs, but all Latinxs[1] in the United States. My racial and ethnic identity has been a source of both great privilege and marginalization. On one hand, I am privileged because I am able to pass as fully White most places I go. My light skin has excused me from enduring the kinds of hardships my siblings of color have faced and continue to face. I do not have to worry about being pulled over unjustly by the police while driving. I do not have to worry about people calling the police on me for grilling with my friends or walking on the street. Yet, my last name automatically identifies me as "other" and at times causes people to assume certain ideas about me and my Mexican heritage. In some ways I do not experience the same kinds of racism and discrimination as other Latinxs (or other people of color, for that matter) and, in other ways, I do. I heard the terms "wetback" and "beaner" growing up. Folks would talk about hiring "cheap Mexican labor" right in front of me. Mind you, they would apologize profusely when they found out who I was, but their words gave me insight into how they truly felt. It wasn't until my doctoral program that I had a Latinx professor, or even was assigned a book by a Latinx author. I come to this study thus as one who acknowledges his privilege as a White-passing Latino and I also come as one who understands the reality of being Latinx in higher education, particularly in theological higher education and in society in general.

In addition to this complex racial and ethnic identity, I am a Christian and, as such, seek to follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible. I affirm the teachings of the Bible as interpreted in its original cultural context. Alongside affirming the teachings of Scripture, I am also the inheritor of a great intellectual and ecclesial tradition known as Wesleyanism. As a Wesleyan Christian, I follow the teachings of John Wesley (1703-1791), who

[1] I use the identifier Latinx, as opposed to Hispanic or Latina/o, to describe persons from Spanish-speaking countries or descent who reside in the United States in an effort to employ more inclusive language.

taught that God is ultimately a God of love who seeks to bring about spiritual and social liberation to human beings. Wesley believed that human beings were in need of spiritual liberation through a relationship with God's Son, Jesus Christ. However, this spiritual liberation *must* necessarily lead to social liberation. In his sermon "Thoughts Upon Slavery," Wesley (1774) described the institution of slavery as horrific. While other Christian leaders, such as George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, condoned slavery for primarily economic reasons, Wesley's theology compelled him to oppose an institution that ultimately forced a human being created in the image of God into forced servitude (Parr, 2015). In tandem with William Wilberforce, who vigorously fought the Atlantic slave trade for his entire career in British parliament, Wesley spent the latter years of his life as an abolitionist. This dual emphasis on spiritual and social liberation continues to be a driving force in my life, research, and leadership.

It was not until my time at Michigan State that I felt I could be free to be myself as the spaces I have walked through have not been completely safe or empathetic. Through my initial explorations of what it can mean to be a Chicano Christian, I have begun to reflect upon my experience in seminary. I longed to be taught by a Latinx professor. I longed to read great works of theology by racially minoritized scholars. As I pondered my seminary experience, I became convinced that, had I been taught by professors of color or read works by theologians of color, I would have felt a greater sense of belonging during my time there. I would also have a much richer and deeper understanding of Christian theology.

In exploring the literature on faculty of color, I began to notice some disturbing trends. In sum, scholars have found that racially minoritized faculty often face greater work expectations from their White counterparts (especially in areas of service), experience race-based discrimination, and often feel pressure to represent the token "person of color" perspective

(Baez, 2000; Brown, Alvarez McHatton, & Trotman Scott, 2017; Harris, Sellers, Clerge, & Gooding, 2017; Stanley, 2006a, 2006b; Turner, 2015; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). While none of this literature explored faculty of color in theological seminaries, I began pondering what a research project exploring the experiences of racially minoritized faculty in theological education might look like.

The convergence of my racial, ethnic, and religious identities in my personal experiences, and exposure to literature by racially minoritized scholars led me to explore the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological education. While I saw that scholars have pondered similar questions, none have specifically thought about Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. Early in my program, I knew I had found a topic of great relevance to me personally, spiritually, and academically. I approached this topic with great love for *mi gente* (my people), a strong commitment to the mission of evangelical seminaries, and a critical eye. Evangelical seminaries can be spaces of great transformation and joy, but they can also be spaces filled with isolation, loneliness, and struggle.

I am hopeful that this study can shed some needed light onto the experiences of Latinxs in evangelical spaces (and in evangelicalism broadly) and serve as a starting point for discussions regarding race-based discrimination and oppression in evangelicalism. Specifically, in this study, I examine the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries, institutions whose specific missions are to train people for ministry leadership and other religious vocations. I am interested in understanding the challenges they face in such institutions as well as how they have sought to thrive amidst such challenges. As such, I have landed on two primary research questions:

1) What challenges do Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries face based on their racial/ethnic identity?

2) What practices allow Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries to endure challenges from their institutions?

In what follows, I provide background on the Latinx professoriate and theological higher education to provide context for readers before presenting my statement of purpose and specific research questions. I love the Latinx community, I love the church, and hope this study can be a gift to both.

Background

In this section, I highlight key information essential for understanding the nature and purpose of this study. I first give a snapshot of the demographic characteristics of Latinxs in the U.S. and their growing presence in U.S. higher education. I also briefly recount the history and growth of Latinx Protestantism and Evangelicalism in the U.S. Then, I describe Latinx student enrollment in higher education with an emphasis on theological schools. In addition to the growing attention to the experiences of Latinx students, several researchers have explored the experiences of Latinx faculty in higher education. In sum, a growing Latinx population in the US, an increased Latinx presence in higher education, and the explosion of Latinx Protestantism are critical to understanding how Latinx faculty experience and negotiate challenges in theological institutions.

Demographics and Characteristics

Latinxs are one of the fastest growing racial/ethnic populations in the United States. While there are several common factors that bind Latinxs together—such as shared histories, language, and cultural practices—the Latinx community is markedly diverse in terms of racial identity, religious affiliation, and educational attainment. At the broadest level, they constitute

18% of the current U.S. population (totaling 58 million) and are the youngest racial and ethnic group in the U.S. (Pew Research Report, 2017). Krogstad and López (2014) found that, among all Latinxs in the U.S., the share of foreign-born Latinxs was 35.5% in 2012, while the other 64.5% were born in the U.S. The Pew Research Center (2014) predicted that, by 2050, Latinxs would constitute 29% of the U.S. population. Although Latinxs are among the fastest growing populations in the U.S. due to migration, they have been present in the U.S. since the 16th century due to Spanish colonization of Indigenous peoples (Martínez, 2018).

Latinx Student Enrollment in Higher Education

As the Latinx population in the U.S. grows and matures, Latinx students are enrolling in higher education in increasingly higher numbers. In 2015, nearly 40% of Latinxs ages 25 and older had college experience, which is up from 30% in 2000. Moreover, 52% reported they had gone to college, an increase of 9% from 2000 (41%) (Pew Research Report, 2017). While the number of Latinxs enrolling in higher education continues to climb, they are still more likely to enroll in a public institution than a private one. In 2013, 83% of Latinx students were enrolled in a public institution, 49% were enrolled in community colleges, and the other 34% were enrolled in a four-year public institution (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2017). Latinxs have also continued to enroll in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI's), institutions whose student body is comprised of over 25% Latinxs. HSIs serve approximately 64% of Latinxs enrolled in higher education institutions (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2017). The growth of Latinxs in the U.S. and their increasing enrollment in higher education has led scholars to understand and raise awareness regarding the educational opportunities and challenges for Latinx students (Ayala & Contreras, 2018; Ayala & Chalupa, 2016; Ballinas, 2017; Gonzales, 2012; Nuñez, 2009; Pérez II, 2017; Song & Elliot, 2011; Velez, 2008)

Often left out of the conversation concerning Latinx enrollment are theological institutions. The designation "theological institutions" serves as an umbrella term for schools that have a myriad of theological, denominational, and cultural orientations, including evangelical seminaries. They train people for religiously-rooted work in churches and the local community. These institutions confer degrees in theology at the graduate level (though some grant only bachelor's degrees) and can be best described as "a community of faith and learning that cultivates habits of theological reflection, nurtures wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contributes to the formation of spiritual awareness and moral sensitivity" (Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, 2015, p. 5). Presently, approximately 270 theological schools are located in the U.S. and Canada. Recently, Latinxs have aggressively enrolled in these institutions. In 2013, 3,772 Latinxs were enrolled in theological institutions, while in 2017, 4,866 Latinxs were enrolled—a nearly 23% rise in enrollment (ATS, 2018). Meanwhile, the numbers of White-, Asian-, and Black-identified students enrolling in theological institutions have remained steady (ATS, 2018).

Latinx Faculty in Higher Education

The increased Latinx presence in both the U.S. population and in higher education has also extended to the increased presence of Latinx faculty in higher education. In the U.S., Latinx faculty constitute roughly 6% of the total faculty (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017). Accordingly, a growing literature base has been established that broadly describes the experiences of Latinx faculty from recruitment to retention (Guanipa, Santa-Cruz, & Chao, 2003; Ibarra, 2003; Padilla, 2003; Padilla & Chavez, 1995) as well as the unique intellectual and institutional challenges Latinx faculty face in higher education (Delgado-Romero, Flores, Gloria, Arredondo, & Castellanos, 2003; Gutierrez, Castañeda, & Katsinas, 2002; Jones & Castellano,

2003). For example, scholars have examined how the following issues impact Latinx faculty: bias in hiring and low levels of diversity in faculty hiring pools (Clark, 2006; Cole & Arias, 2004; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Stanley, 2006; Turner & Myers, 2000); high turnover rates among racially minoritized faculty (Bradburn & Sikora, 2002; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009; Moreno, Smith, Clayton-Pedersen, Parker, & Teraguchi, 2006); discrimination (Brown et al., 2007; Valladares, 2007); and the importance of mentoring relationships (Aguirre et al., 1993; Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Turner, 2000).

The Growth of Latinx Protestantism and Evangelicalism

While the Latinx population is growing in the U.S. alongside correlated growths in Latinx student enrollment and faculty employment, it is also experiencing changes in dominant religious affiliation. Although the Latinxs in the U.S. have historically identified as Roman Catholic, Latinx Protestantism has experienced unprecedented growth (Mulder, Ramos, and Martí 2017). In the 19th century, while Spanish missionaries were intent on converting the Indigenous population to Roman Catholicism, there were increased efforts on the part of Protestant missionaries to convert the population as well (Matovina, 2013). Matovina (2013) asserts that "generally short-lived outreach efforts to Mexicans during the antebellum period subsequently evolved into the more enduring establishment of Hispanic Baptist, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, and Presbyterian foundations by 1900" (p. 128). By 1900, there were approximately 150 Spanish-speaking, Latinx-majority churches, particularly in Texas and New Mexico (Matovina, 2013). The majority of these churches were affiliated with Mainline Protestant denominations, groups of churches characterized by religious liberalism.

Today's explosion of Latinx Protestantism truly began with the onset of the Pentecostal movement at the Azusa Street Revival in 1906. At the revival, many participants claimed an

outpouring of experiences with God, something that hadn't been heard of since the earliest days of the Christian church. The revival initiated the Pentecostal movement, which emphasized personal experiences with God through the speaking of tongues, miracles, and healings. Pentecostalism has almost exclusively been affiliated with evangelical churches, though Pentecostal practices have been present in Mainline Protestant churches. Matovina (2013) asserts that, after Azusa, "Pentecostal growth ensued and, along with the increase of evangelicalism, became the mainstay of Latino Protestant affiliation over the course of the 20th century" (p. 130). Moreover, Pentecostalism migrated south, leading Latinxs in Central and South America to affiliate with the movement.

The growth of Latinx Pentecostalism in both the U.S. and Latin America contributed to the growth of Latinx evangelicalism in the U.S. in the mid-twentieth century. Pentecostal megachurches (churches with over 2,000 congregants) began sprouting up across Latin America in the 1970s (Martínez, 2018). Around the same time, Latin American immigration to the U.S. reached its height, thereby bringing in more Latinx evangelicals, including pastors and ministry leaders. This growth of immigration compelled U.S. denominations to begin "importing an increasing number of pastors from Latin America, as the number of new immigrants into new parts of the United States seemed to overwhelm many churches and denominations" (Martínez, 2018, p. 9).

Based on sociological research, Mulder et al. (2017) assert that, by 2030, the majority of Latinxs in the U.S. will be Protestant. They note that, "As the number of Latino Protestants increase, their presence will continue to have greater consequences in the larger culture…the rise of Latino Protestantism will be one of the most important trends in U.S. religion in the coming decades" (p. 3). Here, they specifically suggest that one-half of the Latinx Protestant population

will be evangelical by 2030 and highlight that this will have a lasting impact on the whole of American culture.

Latinx Faculty in Theological Education

The growth of the Latinx population in the U.S., increased Latinx participation in higher education, and the explosion of Latinx Protestantism and evangelicalism has led some scholars to begin exploring the experiences of Latinx faculty working in theological institutions (Alicea-Lugo, 1998; Turner, Hernández, Peña, Gonzalez, 2008; Hernández, Pena, Turner, & Salazar, 2017; Maldonado, 2009). As of 2018, Latinx faculty working in theological schools number approximately 140, or roughly 4% of total faculty in theological institutions (ATS, 2018).

Some Latinx theologians and scholars (Segovia, 1994; Isasi-Díaz, 2003, 2004; Turner et al., 2008) have conceptualized the academic labor of Latinx theological faculty as *La Lucha* ("The Struggle") identifying this struggle as one against racism, sexism, and dehumanization in the supposedly hospitable utopia of theological academia. Specifically, some Latinx scholars have explored how Latinx faculty have challenged dominant norms in theological studies (Alicea-Lugo, 1998; Isasi-Díaz, 2004) and the working conditions of theological institutions themselves (Maldonado, 2009; Segovia, 1994). Most of this literature conceptualizes theological institutions as cross-denominational spaces where the training of future clergy takes place.

Statement of Purpose

The growth of Latinxs in the U.S. and their increasing enrollment in higher education has led to an increased awareness of the professional work of Latinx faculty (Delgado-Romero, Flores, Gloria, Arredondo, & Castellanos, 2003; Gutierrez, Castañeda, & Katsinas, 2002; Jones & Castellano, 2003). This awareness has mostly yielded studies of Latinx faculty working in theological education broadly (Turner, Hernández, Peña, Gonzalez, 2008; Hernández, Pena,

Turner, & Salazar, 2017). While a few scholars have shed needed light on the lives and work of Latinx faculty in theological education, none have specifically explored the work of Latinx faculty in *evangelical* seminaries, which are a distinct type of theological school. Specifically, evangelical seminaries adhere to conservative interpretations of Christian religious doctrine. The many surveys of Latinx faculty in theological education all provide a robust, interdenominational, and holistic understanding of Latinx faculty across theological institutions without necessarily differentiating how the lives and work of Latinx faculty differ between Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, Orthodox, and evangelical seminaries. Even a qualitative study, such as Turner et al.'s (2008), generally asked "what are the experiences of Latina/o faculty in theological education" without differentiating between institutional affiliations. In this way, previous research on the experiences of Latinxs in theological education provide a valuable foundation for further examining how the type of theological institution impacts key facets of faculty life and work.

My choice to focus on Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries is based on three rationales. First, evangelical seminaries are on the uptick in the landscape of theological education. Since 1998, the number of evangelical seminaries has grown from 85 to 119, an increase of nearly 50% (ATS, 2018). Evangelical seminaries also constitute roughly 44% of schools affiliated with the Association for Theological Schools (ATS). While mainline Protestant schools used to comprise the majority of schools associated with the ATS, evangelical seminaries now constitute the majority share of theological schools in the U.S. and Canada (Meinzer, 2018). The current literature on Latinx faculty in theological education does not account for this dramatic shift in the makeup of theological institutions.

Second, the rapid growth of Latinx enrollment in theological schools and Latinx Protestantism implies that Latinxs are making their way into evangelical seminaries. Hernández et al. (2017) found that Latinx faculty derive great joy from mentoring students, though time spent with students meant faculty spent less time on institutionally valued activities—namely teaching and research. While the population of Latinx theological students is growing (23% in the last five years), the number of Latinx theological faculty has remained static. Since theological faculty have been shown to derive great satisfaction from mentoring students, Latinx faculty in evangelical schools may thus be stretched to perform all their positions demand of them. Turner et al. (2008) has also confirmed that Latinx faculty "need more support due to the stress that they encounter as tokens in academe" (p. 323). Evangelical seminaries are thus logical contexts for the study of challenges faced by Latinx faculty regarding unfair labor expectations.

Third, evangelicalism in the United States has a long, tenuous history in regard to race relations. In their landmark study recounted in the book *Divided by Faith*, Emerson and Smith (2000) interviewed over 2,000 White evangelicals on their perceptions of racial issues in the United States. The study revealed that White evangelicals often do not acknowledge systemic racism or White privilege. Moreover, very few studies have examined the topic of race in evangelicalism. The current study, while focused on Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries, therefore contributes to our nascent understandings of racial rhetoric and discourse in U.S. evangelicalism.

In short, while some scholars have explored the work experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions broadly, none have specifically examined the work of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. The literature demonstrates that the working conditions of Latinx faculty in theological institutions present numerous challenges (Maldonado, 2009; Segovia, 1994) and

that Latinx theological faculty have resisted dominant discourses in theological studies (Alicea-Lugo, 1998; Isasi-Díaz, 2004). The literature also describes the agency that Latinx faculty enact in these institutions, such as leaning into their love of joy and mentoring (Hernández et al., 2017). To build on this literature base, I seek to understand the challenges that Latinx faculty face in evangelical seminaries and understand how they respond to and cope with these struggles. As such, the two research questions that guided my study are as follows:

1) What challenges do Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries face based on their racial/ethnic identity?

2) What practices allow Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries to endure challenges from their institutions?

Conceptual Lens

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) served as the conceptual lens for my study. Grounded in Critical Legal Studies (CLS), CRT challenges "claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 56) while centering the voices of racially minoritized groups. Though CRT is still utilized and critiqued in legal circles (Rose, 2017) it has been a popular framework for research with racially minoritized groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Building on CRT, Latinx scholars developed LatCrit as a "theoretical space in which to analyze and share personal narratives, stories, and racial issues often absent in dominant narratives and discourse" regarding the Latinx population (Arreguín-Anderson & Kennedy, 2013). CRT and LatCrit overlap in many ways. For instance, Valdes (1996) has suggested that "LatCrit . . . at its best, should operate as a close cousin—related to [CRT] in real and lasting ways, but not necessarily living under the same roof" (pp. 26-27). LatCrit specifically engages topics relevant to the Latinx community

such as issues of language diversity, immigration, and nondominant forms of knowledge (Osario, 2018). Osario (2018) has suggested that, together, CRT and LatCrit "place value on non-dominant forms of knowledge, document social injustices, and recognize that racism does not exist in isolation from other forms of oppression" (p. 94).

While some scholars have critiqued CRT and LatCrit for what is perceived to be a simplistic approach to religion and spirituality (Paradise, 2014), these frameworks can provide helpful lenses by which to understand the experiences of racially minoritized groups in religious settings. For example, Turner et al. (2008) used LatCrit to explore a number of key areas related to the work of Latinx faculty, such as the importance of social justice, experiential knowledge, and counternarratives to dominant theological discourses. For this study, a CRT/LatCrit conceptual lens similarly enabled me to center the voices and experiences of Latinx theological faculty in evangelical seminaries and provide counternarratives to the dominant racial and disciplinary discourses told by their institutions and disciplines. I describe my conceptual lens in depth at the end of the second chapter.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study was counternarrative (Harper, 2009; Milner IV & Howard, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Milner IV & Howard (2014) have asserted that counternarrative methodology "provides space for researchers to share teachers' (and others') experiences in ways that have not necessarily been told" (pp. 541-542). In using counternarrative as a methodology, I thus sought to create space for Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries to share their stories on being one of very few racially minoritized faculty. In this space, the faculty specifically shared stories about teaching, experiencing racism, and labor exploitation. I discuss more about my methodology and data collection strategies in the third chapter.

Significance of the Study

The current study is significant for a few reasons. Miguel De La Torre (2013) warned that, because Latinxs represent the largest minority group in American colleges today,

> any academic society or academic institute of higher education that ignores these changing demographics does so at its own peril. Why? Because the religious and ethical dilemmas, questions, and concerns faced by Hispanics are the dilemmas, questions, and concerns that will be faced by the largest group of Americans. To continue to ignore Hispanic voices is to ensure the loss of cutting-edge academic analysis. Indeed, this is the real danger for academic institutions and societies. It stands poised to lose its relevance for the emerging majority of Americans. (pp. 7-8)

De La Torre's assertion that higher education institutions will become irrelevant if they continue to ignore the voices, knowledges, and experiences of Latinxs is especially pertinent to evangelical seminaries. While such schools have experienced an uptick (50%) in the last two decades, enrollment in theological education on the whole is declining (Aleshire, 2009). As previously mentioned, Latinx student enrollment in theological education has increased by 23% in the past five years, while the number of Latinx faculty has remained static (ATS, 2018). Thus, while Latinx students are entering theological education with the hope of making an impact on the church and society, there are few Latinx faculty who are able to mentor them toward the attainment of their degrees. As the distinct theological voices of Latinxs continue to be muted in such institutions, students seeking theological resources to support Latinx religious communities will be unable to share key resources and ideas from a distinctly Latinx perspective with these communities. Meanwhile, the Latinx population continues to dramatically increase in the U.S. (Pew, 2018). Theological schools face a decrease in cultural relevance if the needs of Latinx

faculty and students are not understood or met. My research thus seeks to understand the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries to help these institutions think critically about how they serve and engage the Latinx community.

Furthermore, my research extends the literature on racially and ethnically minoritized faculty. Blackburn, Wenzel, and Bieber (1994) wrote that "higher education institutions...need to focus on the experiences of faculty of color if we hope to understand the work environments needed to support creative talents" (p. 280). While the literature on racially and ethnically minoritized faculty has explored a number of institutional types, there is still a lack of research devoted to understanding the work of these faculty members in theological institutions.

Organization of the Dissertation

The rest of my dissertation is organized into several additional chapters. In Chapter 2, I provide a literature review that explores the history of the academic profession in higher education, the development of theological institutions (particularly those in the evangelical tradition), and the literature on Latinx faculty in theological institutions. I then provide a rationale for my research questions and the conceptual lens with which I conduct the study. In Chapter 3, I detail why counternarrative methodology was the appropriate methodology for this study alongside descriptions of the research process for this study. In Chapter 4, I provide an overview of my participants' backgrounds to contextualize my findings chapter. In Chapter 5, I describe my findings, which I organize based on my two research questions. In Chapter 6, I provide a synthesis of my findings, a discussion on the study in relation to current literature and its unique contribution to scholarship, and a set of recommendations designed to aid evangelical seminaries and churches in creating more hospitable environments for racially minoritized groups.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the literature that informed my approach to the study of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. I first summarize the history of higher education in relation to the development of the academic profession. Next, I provide a holistic overview of theological institutions. As my study will focus on a specific type of theological institution, evangelical seminaries, I also provide an overview of how scholars have explored racial issues in that body of literature.

Next, I explore the literature on Latinx faculty in theological institutions. While this literature is robust and provides vital thought regarding the struggles of Latinx theological faculty, none have specifically studied the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. After reviewing and providing a rationale for my research questions, I turn to the conceptual lens that grounds this study, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCrit).

The Colonial History of Higher Education

To describe the history of higher education in the United States and the development of the academic profession, I must acknowledge that American colleges and universities were founded on lands stolen from Indigenous groups and built using the unpaid labor of enslaved African people—all under the banner of spreading Christianity. Wilder (2014) writes that the earliest higher education institutions in the United States "were instruments of Christian expressionism, weapons for the conquest of indigenous peoples, and major beneficiaries of the African slave trade and slavery" (p. 17). For instance, the original mission of Harvard College was "For Christ and His Church." These institutions served as places to strategize about how to

convert indigenous peoples to the Christian faith (Wilder, 2014). While the English, Spanish, and Portuguese used Christian rhetoric and practices to justify the subjugation of indigenous people and enslaved Africans, not all Christian leaders approved of their violence and barbarism. In examining the heinous practices of his fellow English citizens, Christian theologian and founder of Methodism John Wesley did not mince words regarding their wholesale adoption of colonization:

> Even cruelty and bloodshed, how little have the Christians come behind them. And not the Spaniards or the Portuguese alone, butchering thousands in South America: not the Dutch only in the East Indies, or the French in North America, following the Spaniards step by step: our own countrymen, too, have wantoned in blood, and exterminated whole nations; plainly proving thereby what spirit it is that dwells and works in the children of disobedience. (Wesley, 1872/1986, p. 432)

Wesley thus suggests that the blood "wantonness" and the extermination of whole groups of people were proof that the "Christians" who engaged in such acts did not do so out of Christian conviction or love but rather out of a need to assimilate and colonize those who would not conform to their standards.

The impact of colonialism still resonates within higher education today. Over time, higher education has been used a means for excluding and marginalizing various racial and ethnic groups. Today, most higher education institutions are labeled "predominantly White institutions" (PWIs), colleges and universities with at least 50% White enrollment (Bourke, 2016). The predominantly White shape of modern higher education institutions has given rise to a number of minority-serving institutions (MSIs), such as Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), that exist for the purpose of creating

more equitable learning environments for racially minoritized groups. As Bourke (2016) has pointed out, there is no official designation for PWIs; the term is instead used colloquially in academic circles. However, as Bourke (2016) has noted, the term PWI carries with it more malevolent implications: "PWI is more than a simple institutional label in that the word 'predominant' reflects an ongoing social practice according to which whiteness maintains a place of supremacy," (p. 15). In other words, these institutions play a role in perpetuating the subjugation of racially minoritized groups in the US. Thus, coloniality pervades higher education institutions, and is reflected in the often predominantly White makeup of colleges and universities. Any discussion on the history of higher education in the U.S., especially regarding religiously affiliated institutions, must begin by critiquing its inception as an inherently colonial creation used to further the purposes of those in power, promote a Eurocentric worldview, and perpetuate Christian supremacy.

Higher Education and the Academic Profession

Built on colonial foundations, higher education in the United States began for the purpose of training clergy for ministry and inculcating within students distinctly English values (Geiger, 2011; Gonzalez, 2015; Rudolph, 1990). Institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary were themselves established as centers to promote Christian and English values. The curricula of these institutions mirrored the curricula of the middle ages, including courses in philosophy, classical languages and literature, and a "smattering of general worldly knowledge" (Geiger, 2011, p. 39). The first two years were generally devoted to studying classical languages and mastering Latin, while the last two years focused on philosophy, theology, and other subjects (Geiger, 2011).

The facilitators of this curriculum were the tutors. Tutors functioned as personal mentors to students. According to Finkelstein, Conley, and Schuster (2017), being a tutor was an "odd job taken by largely fresh undergraduates of baccalaureate programs as a way station on the path to some other career" (p. 29). In the words of Rudolph (1990), tutors were instructed to "take care to advance in all learning, divine and humane, each and every student who is or will be entrusted to your tutelage" (p. 6). It has been noted that they were "with their pupils almost every hour of the day...and slept in the same chamber with some of them in the night" (Morison, 1936). Similarly, Finkelstein et al. (2017) have suggested that the role of tutors grew from content delivery to "mentoring, moral oversight, and figurative hand-holding" (p. 29). While the combination of pedagogue, pastor, mentor, and moral accountability partner was a desirable arrangement for early colleges, it nonetheless proved ineffective. Tutors were an "unstable corps" of young men who viewed the position as a gap employment for a short time (Finkelstein et al., 2017, p. 29).

Over time, colleges recognized that the tutor model, with its multiple responsibilities, was untenable. Eventually, the corps of tutors was supplemented with a small class of permanent faculty who would focus on a specific discipline and continue to develop their specialized knowledge while teaching new students. For example, at Harvard, philosopher Thomas Hollis, established two of the first professorships in the U.S., one in divinity (1721) and another in mathematics and natural philosophy (1727). The Hollis Professorship of Divinity would later become a point of contention that would lead to the founding of the first seminary in the U.S. As late as 1750, there were only about 10 college professors in the U.S. (Carrell, 1968). The pattern of hiring specific faculty that originated at Harvard and Yale quickly spread to other institutions. By 1770, Brown added three professors to their group of five tutors. Princeton likewise added

three professors to their three tutors by 1967 (Finkelstein et al., 2017). By 1800, the number of professors multiplied to about 100 and, by 1900, that number had doubled to 200 across the 19 colleges in the U.S. (Finkelstein et al., 31).

While there was a commonality of roles among tutors and professors, several key features distinguished the two positions. First, professors were stewards of their subjects, only providing instruction in their areas of specialty, whereas tutors were responsible for the instruction of entire classes across disciplines. Second, professors were typically older and more experienced than tutors. Third, professors were considered permanent employees, while tutors were generally temporary positions (Finkelstein et al., 2017; Rudolph, 1990). Finally, professors generally entered academia after careers in fields such as medicine, law, and ministry. Thus, the professoriate was a second career for many.

In the early 1800s, colleges and universities began using more and more professorial labor in an effort to prepare students for professions other than the pastorate. Professors thus began outnumbering tutors as colleges began expanding their program offerings to include professional studies. Since faculty had the experience and education necessary to impart information to students, tutors—with their temporary status and relative inexperience—began decreasing. Combined with rapidly growing enrollment, professors began overtaking the corps of tutors that once occupied a special place in higher education (Finkelstein et al., 2017). Moreover, despite a growing diversification of offered disciplines, White men continued to dominate faculty ranks.

While the scope and nature of faculty work differ depending on institution type, they still tend to revolve around the trifecta of teaching, research, and service (Finkelstein, Conley, and & Schuster, 2017; Mamiseishvili, Miller, & Lee, 2015; Neumann, 2009). Many scholars have

explored the tension that often exists between these three domains (Bok, 1988; Boyer, 1990; Hardré, 2012). However, this tension differs from institution to institution. As detailed in the following section, faculty in theological institutions are expected to perform these tasks, however, the time spent on each task differs between schools.

Racially Minoritized Faculty in Higher Education

As previously mentioned, the colonial nature of higher education institutions is embodied in the PWI. Due to a marked lack of racially minoritized faculty in the landscape of U.S. higher education, several scholars have examined how racially minoritized faculty often experience unfair expectations related to institutional service (Antonio, Astin, & Cress, 2000; Baez, 2000; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Stanley, 2006; Tuitt, Hanna, Martínez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009; Turner et al., 2008; Verdugo, 2003; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002). Tierney and Bensimon (1996) have referred to this phenomenon as the problem of "cultural taxation," as they suggest minoritized faculty bear the burden of advocating on behalf of their racial or ethnic group or community (p. 11). Other scholars have explored the effects of institutional climates that do not embrace diversity on racially minoritized groups (Aguirre, Martínez, & Hernández, 1993; Bower, 2002; Jayakumar et al., 2009) as well as how racially minoritized faculty incur pressure to be "twice as good" as White faculty to gain tenure, garner the respect of students and colleagues, and obtain promotions (Matthew, 2016; Turner, Walker-Dalhouse, & McMillon, 2005).

Zambrana et al. (2017) suggested that racially minoritized faculty often face a "crisis of legitimacy" based on three specious presuppositions: 1) their research comes from a "biased" perspective; 2) they are beneficiaries of affirmative action programs and therefore undeserving of their positions; and 3) they lack professionalism (p. 209). These presuppositions are reinforced

through institutional structures that deny equitable practices and support cultures that promote "colorblindness" (Zambrana et al., 2017). In addition, racially minoritized faculty are often subjected to microaggressions, or "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). These kinds of racially hostile climates of higher education combined with the inevitable burnout and fatigue that serve to further marginalize racially minoritized faculty often lead racially minoritized faculty to seek informal communities inside and outside of their institutions (Griffin, Pifer, Humphrey, & Hazelwood, 2011; Johnson, Boss, Mwangi, & Garcia, 2018; O'Meara, 2015).

Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood's (2008) global review of the faculty literature indicated that while there has been some progress in the development of more equitable conditions for racially minoritized faculty, significantly more work is needed at the institutional level (e.g., hiring practices, leadership development, increased pay for extra labor, etc.) to create meaningful change. The authors discovered that the keys to persistence for racially minoritized faculty were a deep love for teaching and a supportive, diverse environment where they were not the token person of color. Moreover, faculty of color have been shown to consistently experience a drive to challenge the dominant intellectual norms of their respective disciplines through publishing (Baez, 2000).

An Overview of Theological Institutions

According to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS, 2015), a theological institution is "a community of faith and learning that cultivates habits of theological reflection, nurtures wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contributes to the formation of spiritual

awareness and moral sensitivity" (p. 5). These institutions offer degrees in religion, theology, biblical studies, counseling, religious education, spiritual formation, and ministry leadership. According to the ATS, there are 270 theological institutions in the U.S. and Canada, 120 of which are considered evangelical (Meinzer, 2018). Theological schools represent a myriad of denominational, historical, and theological ties. While this dissertation focuses specifically on evangelical seminaries, in this section, I will briefly describe the history of theological institutions, the curriculum, and the nature of theological institutions today.

The History and Development of Theological Institutions in the U.S.

While institutions like Harvard and Yale were primarily established to train clergy, the expansion of degree offerings at such institutions pushed theological education to the curricular margins. This was a concern for those invested in the training of clergy, but the tipping point that led to the "modern exemplar of seminaries," Princeton Theological Seminary, occurred in 1805. While New Brunswick Theological Seminary lays claim to the title of oldest seminary in the U.S., Princeton Seminary remains a primary institution through which to understand the emergence of modern theological education.

As previously mentioned, one of the first faculty positions in the United States was the Thomas Hollis Professorship of Divinity at Harvard. Thomas Hollis had outlined requirements for those who would come to occupy the chair. Hollis required that the occupant "should be a man of solid learning in divinity, of sound, or orthodox principles, one well gifted to teach, of a sober and pious life, and of a grave conversation" (Bradford, 1837, p. 350). The first occupants were Edward Wigglesworth (1722-1765), Edward Wigglesworth, Jr. (1765-1792), and David Tappan (1792-1803). Each met all of Hollis' requirements, especially the requirement of possessing "orthodox principles." However, in 1805, Harvard appointed a Unitarian, Henry

Ware, to occupy the professorship. While orthodox Christianity posits that God is a Trinitarian God, that is, one entity expressed in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), Unitarian theology asserts the opposite—that there is one God, and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not God. Supporters of Ware's appointment believed that Trinitarian belief was a relic of an older time and that Hollis' requirement of orthodox principles could be interpreted differently as opposed to holding to orthodox theological beliefs.

Ware's appointment spurred theological conservatives to take action by leaving Harvard to found their own institution devoted to the training of orthodox ministers. The new institution, Andover Theological Seminary, was founded in 1808. According to Shelley (1993), Andover Seminary would serve as the exemplar of theological education for the next two centuries. Specifically, the seminary "stressed adequate funds, scholarly study of Christian theology, a professional, specialized faculty, and a sizable library. The three-year curriculum focused on three areas of study: Bible, church history, and theology" (Shelley, 1993, p. 43). In 1812, Presbyterians founded Princeton Theological Seminary. Contrary to Shelley (1993), Miller (2007) suggests that Princeton Theological Seminary served as the arbiter of modern theological education. Its combination of classical theological approaches, contemporary theological reflection, and connections to wealthy Presbyterian donors established Princeton Seminary as the most influential theological school of its time.

An essential feature of Princeton Seminary in the late 1800's was its emphasis on ministerial work. While other seminaries had focused almost exclusively on teaching theology , biblical languages, and history to future ministers, Princeton established itself as a center for preparing ministers for the *tasks* of pastoral ministry. Miller (2007) suggests that "For Princeton, whatever else the modern minister might need to be, a minister was first and foremost a servant

of the Word of God whose weekly exposition of the Bible provided the congregation with a contact with revelation" (p. 15). The preacher as minister established the work of pastors as more like "that of [a] college or university teacher than that of a social worker or business person. The minister was the resident Christian intellectual, equipped to teach in either pulpit or classroom" (Miller, 2007, p. 16). Over time, theological differences regarding the role of women in ordained ministry, the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, and the doctrines of salvation and the Holy Spirit led to the founding of other seminaries.

Curricular Offerings

From their inception, seminaries have shared a "common aspiration to develop in their students an aptitude for theological reflection that deepens spiritual awareness, shapes moral sensibilities, enhances understanding of a faith tradition, and provide[s] the requisite skills to perform ministry in religious and religiously based organizations" (Yoo, 2016, p. 1878). From the beginning, the curricula of theological seminaries have centered around four primary areas of religious studies: biblical studies, theology (or dogmatics), church history, and preaching (Yoo, 2016). Biblical studies explores the text of the Bible, which Protestants believe to be the sole rule of faith and teaching for the church. Theology, or dogmatics, seeks to draw themes from the biblical text, philosophy, and reason to make claims about the nature of God and other aspects of Christian doctrine. Church history studies seeks to trace the development of the church from the time of Christ to the present day with special attention to how the church has formulated doctrine, the various movements that have grown out of the church, and how denominational groups have expanded over time. Seminaries continue to teach students the art of preaching, which still remains a primary practice of pastors in today's churches. Some have argued that preaching, or public presentations expounded on spiritual ideas, should remain a heavy curricular

emphasis in theological education, as preaching is arguably the most important task of pastors and teachers in the church.

In general, the growth of theological seminaries in the U.S. facilitated the professionalization of clergy. Yoo (2016) suggests that, in seeking to "prepare ministers who would be proficient in the care of the human soul as a medical physician was in the cure of the human body, Protestant seminaries educated their students to become religious professionals with a highly specialized set of skills to lead congregations" (p. 1878). Due to the increasing professionalization of the curricula, seminaries began offering students a pathway to a myriad of religious and non-religious careers. For instance, seminaries expanded their curricular offerings for students seeking careers as licensed professional counselors, teachers in Christian schools, faculty in religious and secular higher education institutions, community engagement, and non-profit and business leadership, among others.

The primary program offering by theological seminaries is the Master of Divinity (M.Div.). The M.Div. curriculum is generally broken up into thirds. One-third is devoted to courses on biblical languages and biblical studies, one-third is devoted to church history and theological studies, and the last third is comprised of courses in the practice of ministry, such as preaching, counseling, and field work. While the M.Div. remains the most popular seminary degree program, theological institutions generally offer a myriad of specialized Master of Arts (M.A.) degrees in practical ministry fields (e.g., counseling, leadership, religious education, cross-cultural ministries, etc.) and academic studies (biblical studies, theology, church history, etc.) that often lead to PhD programs. Presently, enrollment in M.Div. programs is steadily declining, while enrollment in M.A. programs is increasing (Meinzer, 2018). Meinzer (2018) has

predicted that, by 2021, enrollment in M.Div. and M.A. programs at theological institutions will be the same, with M.A. enrollment surpassing M.Div. enrollment by 2022.

Theological Institutions Today

Today, theological institutions occupy a minority place in the landscape of higher education. Among the largest seminaries in the U.S. is Fuller Theological Seminary, located in Pasadena, California. During the 2015-16 school year, Fuller enrolled nearly 3,000 students (ATS, 2018). Among the smallest seminaries is Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, which enrolled 12 students total. There are over 270 theological schools accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (Association of Theological Schools, 2017).

While the ATS' standards emphasize the need to diversify faculty ranks and accommodate the educational needs of racially and ethnically minoritized students, theological schools are still predominantly White (76%) (ATS, 2018). The percentage of Black students in theological schools mirrors the percentage of Blacks in the U.S. and Canada combined (roughly 12.6%), the percentage of Latinx students in theological schools (6%) dips significantly below the U.S. population of Latinxs (14%), and the percentage of Asian/Asian American students in theological schools (7%) is higher than that of the general Asian/Asian American population (4.8%) (Association of Theological Schools, 2017). Roughly 8% of faculty in ATS institutions identify as Black while 4.4% of faculty in ATS institutions identify as Latinx. Enrollment among Black students has grown only slightly over the last 10 years, while growth among Asian/Asian-American students has remained stagnant. However, since 2013, the population of Latinx theological students has grown significantly (23%) in contrast to Black and Asian/Asian-American theological students.

Theological institutions themselves are primarily differentiated by theological beliefs or denominational affiliation. In the U.S., there are seminaries that serve students of all faith traditions (e.g., Claremont School of Theology in California) and others that serve primarily Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or evangelical students. Roman Catholic seminaries are controlled by the Roman Catholic Church, while the other types of seminaries either maintain independent control or are controlled by a denomination. For instance, Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. is controlled by the United Methodist Church. However, Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky is independently controlled, yet enrolls more United Methodist candidates for ministry than any of the seminaries controlled by the United Methodist Church (Ringenberg, 2011).

Faculty Work in Theological Institutions

The work of faculty in theological schools mirrors the work of faculty in other institutions of higher education, including teaching, research, and service, with the exception of an emphasis on the integration of faith and learning. This is evidenced in the ATS' guidelines for faculty work. The ATS (2015) suggests that the "faculty of a theological school constitute a collaborative community of faith and learning, and they are crucial to the scholarly activities of teaching, learning, and research in the institution" (p. 13). As data on faculty work in theological institutions is limited, I turn to ATS' standards and expectations for faculty work to better understand the standards and expectations for faculty work are needed for in the context of this study. All schools within the ATS are required to adhere to the following standards in order to maintain accreditation.

According to the ATS, faculty in theological schools are expected to have not only proper academic credentials, but also experience in religious communities. Moreover, the ATS requires

that their institutions be attentive to the composition of faculty in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender. The ATS further suggests the faculty "should also include members who have doctorates from different schools and who exemplify various methods and points of view. At the same time, faculty selection will be guided by the needs and requirements of particular constituencies of the school" (ATS, 2015, p. 13). The ATS also mandates that their institutions be clear in their expectations of faculty, including requirements for promotion and tenure, academic freedom, research leave, and termination. Moreover, ATS standards promote academic freedom "in the context of institutional purpose and the confessional commitments affirmed by a faculty member when appointed" (ATS, 2015, p. 13). This means that faculty are free to produce knowledge as they see fit, given their knowledge production falls within the bounds of an institution's doctrinal beliefs and commitments. For instance, evangelical seminaries must allow faculty the freedom to produce knowledge as they see fit, so long as such knowledge production falls within the bounds of evangelical doctrine and practice.

The ATS mandates that faculty possess full autonomy in the classroom, given they include "theological reflection that enables students to integrate their learning from the various disciplines, field education, and personal formation" (ATS, 2015, p. 14). Institutions are also expected to provide resources for faculty to develop their teaching skills, such as centers for teaching and learning, professional development modules, and opportunities to enhance faculty use of educational technologies. In addition, theological schools are required to create evaluative procedures by which to measure teaching effectiveness. According to the ATS, "mechanisms should involve faculty members and students as well as administrators" (ATS, 2015, p. 14).

Related to teaching excellence, the ATS mandates that all faculty members in theological schools be involved with "evaluating the quality of student learning by identifying appropriate

outcomes and assessing the extent to which the learning goals of individual courses and degree programs have been achieved" (ATS, 2015, p. 15). Faculty are also expected to collaborate with offices of advising and libraries to provide students with the resources they need to succeed academically. Additionally, faculty should be creating "opportunities for regular advising and interaction with students and attentiveness to the learning needs of diverse student populations" (ATS, 2015, p. 15). The reference to meeting the educational needs of "diverse student populations" is the sole hint in the ATS standards regarding the importance of including racially and ethnically minoritized students.

As previously mentioned, "In the context of its institutional purpose, each [theological] school shall ensure that faculty have freedom to pursue critical questions, to contribute to scholarly discussion, and to publish the findings of their research" (ATS, 2015, p. 16). The ATS standards also emphasize that this research must be done "congruent with the purpose of the school and with commonly accepted standards in higher education" (ATS, 2015, p. 16). For theological school faculty, there is an expectation that theological research will be disseminated not only in academic settings, but also in religious communities.

Evangelical Seminaries, Race, and Racially Minoritized Faculty

Recall that there are numerous types of theological institutions, such as Catholic, Mainline Protestant, and Orthodox seminaries. For this study, I chose to focus on Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries, which constitute approximately 44% of ATS institutions and are defined as institutions that seek to prepare people for careers in church ministry, non-profits, and academic spaces through a theoretical and practice-based curriculum that emphasizes core elements of evangelical theology. Evangelicalism remains the dominant religious affiliation of the U.S. Balmer (2004) contends that Evangelical Christians adhere to the Bible as their guide

for faith and life, actively share their faith with others, and emphasize the need for personal spiritual conversion in others. They are committed to following the teachings of Jesus Christ, working to honor God, and demonstrating to others that following Jesus is the best way to live one's life (Balmer, 2004). Based on research from the Gallup Organization and the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, self-identified Evangelical Christians comprise approximately 30-35% of the population in the United States, the largest religious group in the U.S. (Gallup Organization, 2005; Wheaton College, n.d.). Evangelical seminaries exist to serve the evangelical Christian community, providing leaders for evangelical churches, colleges, and non-profits.

In order to understand the predominant racial narratives of evangelical seminaries, it is important to first understand the predominant racial narratives of White evangelicalism, as Whites comprise the majority of evangelicals (76%). In their landmark study on White evangelicals, Emerson and Smith (2001) found that most White evangelicals tend to believe that race problems are individualistic in nature. "From the isolated, individualistic perspective of most white evangelicals and many other Americans, there really is no race problem other than bad interpersonal relationships" (p. 89). Hence, White evangelicals tend not to understand the nature of structural racism. "Most White evangelicals, directed by their cultural tools, fail to recognize the institutionalization of racism - in economic, political, educational, social, and religious systems. They therefore often think and act as if these problems do not exist" (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 170). White evangelicals tend to assume that ethnic communities fail to "succeed" due to some deficiency in their motivation or within their culture. Building on the work of Emerson and Smith (2001), Tranby and Hartman (2008) have concluded that White evangelicals hold the racial beliefs they do because of their conflation of American individualism

and Christian culture. “American individualism not only blinds white evangelicals to structural inequalities involving race, but it also assigns blame to those who are disadvantaged by race and normalizes and naturalizes cultural practices, beliefs, and norms that privilege white Americans over others” (Tranby & Hartman, 2008, p. 354).

Yancey (2006) has further suggested that White evangelicals’ view of racism through the lens of individualism leads to three responses: colorblindness, multiculturalism, and Anglo-conformity. Colorblindness suggests society must move beyond seeing the color of one’s skin in order to view all as equal. However, this model erases the histories of racially minoritized groups and denies how institutional structures continue to support racist practices. Multiculturalism recognizes the value of hearing the perspectives of minoritized groups as a means of overcoming racial issues, but “devolves into cultural relativism, asserting that all cultures possess truth, and to critique other cultures amounts to cultural superiority” (Espinoza, 2018, p. 87). Anglo-conformity suggests that racially minoritized groups adapt to the beliefs, values, and behaviors of White European Americans to survive in a racist culture. Yancey (2006) has suggested that this model is highly problematic, as it “projects an image of Eurocentrist arrogance” and “offers only European American methods of economic empowerment” (p. 52).

These views operate as the dominant racial narratives that pervade White evangelicalism. As a result, evangelical seminaries remain PWIs and have only recently and very slowly begun to engage the topic of race. For example, while seminaries have held panels on “racial reconciliation,” they oftentimes avoid addressing issues of systemic racism or race-based violence (“From the seminaries,” 2016). One evangelical seminary president suggested that the problem of racism is primarily spiritual, not social (Niehof, 2016). In other words, for

evangelical leaders, social theories of racism do not adequately explain the primary problem of racist individuals (Niehof, 2016).

More recently, race-based incidents on theological school campuses have been garnering an unprecedented amount of public attention. For example, in 2017, a photo appeared on Twitter featuring a retiring preaching professor alongside four colleagues (all of whom are White) donning chains, hoodies, and bandannas while posing as rappers. The photo was taken down amidst pushback and the original poster tweeted an apology: "I apologize for a recent image I posted which was offensive. Context is immaterial. @swbts [Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary] stance on race is clear as is mine" (Tisby, 2017). In another instance, a group of Black students at a prominent evangelical seminary began tweeting about the racism they had experienced using the hashtag "#seminarywhileblack." The hashtag served as an outlet for Black seminarians to detail their experiences in seminary (Twitter, 2018). These recent instances, among others, suggest that evangelical seminaries are still in need of effective strategies for addressing racism, as it continues to remain invisible to institutional leaders.

Despite a lack of consciousness regarding the pervasiveness of racism on their campuses, several evangelical seminaries have explicitly expressed a commitment to cultivating a diverse student body and faculty. One seminary in the southern U.S. has stated that, "We are committed to responding effectively to the growing ethnic diversity and urbanization of North America. We will develop degree and non-degree programs as well as demonstrate flexibility in delivery systems for Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, African-American, Indian, and other ethnic minorities" ("Our Defining Values," n.d.). Another seminary in the Western U.S. self-describes as an "evangelical, multi-denominational, international, and multiethnic community dedicated to the equipping of men and women for the manifold ministries of Christ and his Church" ("Purpose

and Mission," n.d.). Other seminaries in the evangelical stream have expressed similar commitments to fostering multiethnic student bodies and have created programs targeted at providing more spaces for racially and ethnically minoritized students and faculty on their campuses (Tisby, 2017).

As the above indicates, there are growing efforts to modify theological education in light of the increasingly multicultural and globalized nature of the world (Aleshire, 2009; Esterline & Kalu, 2006; Conde-Frazier, Kang, & Parrett, 2004; Fernandez, 2014; Matthaei & Howell, 2014; Werner, Esterline, & Kang, 2010). Some scholars have written about how racially minoritized students and scholars navigate the predominantly White environment of American seminaries. For instance, Cha (2014) has reflected on the increasing diversity of U.S. evangelical seminaries and how these institutions can better serve a diverse student body via an internal case study at an evangelical seminary aimed at understanding the experiences of minoritized students throughout their master's coursework. The study interviewed graduates of the program, inviting them to speak to the entirety of their academic experience in the institution. The participants of this study all expressed a sense of isolation, marginalization, and invisibility (Cha 2014, p. 77), which led faculty to reflect on their complicity in perpetuating institutional racism and motivated them to discuss ways to better support racially minoritized students.

In *A Many-Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*, Conde-Frazier and Kang (2004) described their experiences as racially minoritized theological students and professors. Conde-Frazier, a Puerto Rican woman, was told by her preaching professor to "keep her hand movements during the sermon in an imaginary box in front of [her]," a slight against the way that she communicates as a Latina (Conde-Frazier et al., 2000, p. 27). She expressed a need to keep a list of phrases handy that would earn her an "A" grade in class. Kang,

a Korean American enrolled in a doctoral program while teaching courses at the same seminary, recalled grappling with the predominantly White nature of the institution, which employed only one professor of color and generally used textbooks authored by White males. He reflects, "During this period, I experienced a severe reaction against the institution, which I deemed racist toward Americans of ethnic minority descent and paternalistic toward international students. My anger and frustration extended to American evangelicalism as a whole" (Conde-Frazier et al., 2000, p. 5). This ultimately led him to leave the institution and enroll in a doctoral program at a large research university.

Moreover, Hernández et al. (2017) has described evangelical seminaries as institutions that must remain "attentive both to the theological sensibilities of their major constituent denominations, as well as to their likely student market" (location 918). Thus, in contrast to Catholic, mainline Protestant, and university-affiliated divinity schools, evangelical seminaries must remain especially conscious of shifting demographics and cultural changes in order to survive. For example, Hernández et al. (2017) described how evangelical seminaries tend to create Spanish-only degree and certificate programs if they are located in areas with large Latinx populations. Hernández et al. (2017) also described one midwestern seminary that opened a campus in Florida that specifically caters to the Latinx market. As Latinxs enroll in theological institutions, Latinx faculty—who represent a myriad of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and disciplinary diversity—will play a key role in helping these students succeed in their educations and careers.

Latinx Faculty in Theological Institutions

Due to growing attentions to race and racism in theological institutions, several scholars have started to explore how faculty and leaders of color experience their roles in theological education (Gonzalez, 2014; Jennings, 2014; Maldonado, 2009). As the Latinx population

continues to grow in the U.S., so does the population of Latinx students. Growth in Latinx students significantly outpaces tenure-track Latinx faculty (Morris, 2016). As extant literature suggests, faculty of color are implicitly expected to mentor students of color (Aguirre et al., 1993; Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Turner, 2000). The outpacing of tenure-track Latinx faculty to Latinx students means extra labor for Latinx faculty seeking to mentor and assist Latinx students. As previously mentioned, there is a robust strand of literature that broadly describes the experiences of Latinx faculty with particular attention to the unique intellectual and institutional challenges Latinx faculty face in higher education (Delgado-Romero, Flores, Gloria, Arredondo, & Castellanos, 2003; Gutierrez, Castañeda, & Katsinas, 2002; Jones & Castellano, 2003). Within this body of literature on Latinx faculty, there exists a sub-field of literature devoted to understanding the experiences of Latinx faculty working in theological institutions.

Demographic Characteristics of Latinx Theological Faculty

While it is tempting to essentialize Latinx faculty in theological institutions, this group is actually very diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and religious affiliation. The majority of Latinx theological faculty are Protestant (Hernandez et al., 2017). Interestingly, the majority of Mexican Americans tend to be Roman Catholic, but Mexican theological faculty are more likely to be Protestant, while the majority of Roman Catholic theological faculty tend to be Mexican or Cuban (Hernandez et al., 2017). In comparison to Roman Catholic seminaries, Protestant seminaries tend to hire more Latinx theological faculty (Hernandez et al., 2017).

Latinx theological faculty are predominantly identify as Puerto Rican (27%), Mexican (24%), or Cuban (23%) (Hernandez et al., 2017, loc. 3088). The remaining 26% are comprised of faculty who identify as South American (12%) or another Latinx group (Dominican,

Guatemalan, Ecuadoran, etc.)(14%)(Hernandez et al., 2017, loc. 3088). While Mexicans comprise the majority of Latinxs in the United States (64.9%), their low representation among Latinx theological faculty is surprising. Hernandez et al. (2017) speculate this underrepresentation could be due to "educational differentials in heritage groups, citizenship, or a confluence of factors" (loc. 3088).

The majority of Latinx theological faculty are born outside of the U.S. or Puerto Rico. Only 37% of Latinx theological faculty were born in the U.S. Twenty-one percent are second-generation, while 16% are third generation or more. Thus, the experiences of most Latinx faculty in theological education are "doubly shaped by their foreign birth in addition to their racial status" in the U.S (Hernandez et al., 2017, loc. 2088).

Latinx theological faculty are predominantly male. Black and Latinx faculty are more likely to be female than their White counterparts, but a great majority of Latinx theological faculty are male (Hernandez et al., 2017). Approximately one-fifth of Latinx faculty in the United States are female, comprising 0.88% of total faculty nationwide. Hernandez et al. (2017) suggest that the slim population of Latinx female faculty thus experience hardships due to the male-dominated culture of their profession, especially in theological education. Latina female faculty "tend to communicate more hardship than their male counterparts," and thus "find themselves with the added pressure of negotiating their gender as well as their Hispanic and other identities" (Hernandez et al., 2017, loc. 3074).

The literature on Latinx theological faculty stretches back to the 1970s, when scholars had begun to recognize the growth of the Latinx population in the United States and the potential of Latinxs to shape theological discourse (Herrera, 1979). In what follows, I first explore large-scale studies that have been conducted on Latinx faculty in theological education. I then explore

how Latinx theological faculty have been challenging dominant theological beliefs in Christianity. This literature essentially argues that Latinx faculty bring a critical and oft-ignored perspective that is crucial to the process of theological reflection. Next, I address several studies and reflections that seek to understand the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions. I conclude by drawing attention to the work of Latinx theological organizations and the role they play in the support and development of students and scholars.

Survey Research on Latinx Faculty in Theological Institutions

The diversity of Latinx faculty in theological education has spurred several large-scale reports detailing their experiences in North American theological education. These studies include *The Theological Education of Hispanics* (1998), *National Survey of Hispanic/Latino Theological Education* (1995), and two surveys from the University of Notre Dame's Institute on Latina/o Religion, the *Latina/o Seminary Survey*, and the *Latina/o Theological Faculty Study*. While these reports have broadly focused on Latinxs in theological institutions, several reports contain sections that specifically highlight the experiences and perspectives of Latinx faculty.

One of the first major reports on Latinx faculty in theological education is a 1988 report entitled *The Theological Education of Hispanics*. The survey study highlighted the severe lack of Latinx representation in theological education among students, faculty, and staff at the time. The report also stated that there is a growing group of Latinxs qualified to serve as faculty and that it is in the best interest of every Christian denomination to recruit and hire them to attract more Latinxs to the faith. Additionally, the report highlights how Latinxs have experienced theological education as a struggle of preserving Latinx identity, negotiating Latinx-centered theological dimensions, and resisting the racism and patriarchalism present in theological education.

Similarly, Davis and Hernández (2003) examined data from the *National Survey of Hispanic/Latino Theological Education* (1995) to give a holistic look into the experiences of Latinx participants in theological education. The study describes the demographics of these participants in great detail, highlighting factors like age, ethnic background, reason for pursuing theological education, and reasons for dropping out. Overall, the study demonstrated the diversity among Latinxs who are pursuing and/or involved in theological education in a professional capacity. Hernández, Davis, and Wilson (2002) later examined the same data set to produce a substantial discussion on the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions. The report described how Latinx faculty are pushed beyond the boundaries of their professional charge to support Latinx students, represent the Latinx and/or "person of color" perspective on diversity committees, and focus on issues pertinent to racially minoritized communities. Hernández et al. (2002) also discovered that Latinx faculty are able to help Latinx students in ways that non-Latinx faculty cannot. Latinx faculty "have a significant impact on Latino/a students' ability to affirm their cultural identity, believe in their own potential, and negotiate with other faculty and administration" (p. 73). The authors also highlight several institutional policies that can help Latinx faculty thrive in their institutions, such as supporting their involvement in professional organizations, funding opportunities, and writing sabbaticals.

In their work on Latinxs in theological education, Hernández, Pena, Turner, and Salazar (2017) examined Latinx faculty in theological education using several data sets from 2001 to 2005. Specifically, the authors explored data sets from the University of Notre Dame's Institute on Latina/o Religion, the *Latina/o Seminary Survey* and the *Latina/o Theological Faculty Study*. In the section on Latinx faculty, the authors highlighted that, while Latinx faculty derive joy and meaning from teaching and advising students, they are often stretched thin in doing so by their

responsibilities serving on committees, traveling to conferences, and maintaining involvement in the Latinx community. One participant responded:

> I tell you my all-time favorite is the teaching—being with the students and exposing them to new ideas and sitting with them [at a field trip location] and watching their faces and hearing their conversations and reading their journals, you know, when they reflect upon it. I think that's the most exciting. (Hernández et al., 2017, loc. 3271)

However, in pondering the ways in which their labor is stretched by their institution, another respondent suggested that she and her fellow Latina colleague were often asked to perform work outside of their teaching and research responsibilities:

> So even if we are not the advisors, we are advisors of all the Latino students. Even if we are not counselors, we are counselors of all Latino students. We are housing advisors; we are go-betweens, because most of the administration at [our school] is white Anglo, and they have a hard time understanding the specificities and idiosyncrasies and differences of the Latino population, of Latino ministers. So we have, very often, to be the ones functioning as buffers, as advocates before the housing office, financial aid offices, before this and that, because the people in those positions, even if they are very good at it, they often don't have the skills and patience, the experience to even understand what it is about. (Hernández et al., 2017, loc. 3321)

Furthermore, the study compared the experiences of Latinx faculty with White faculty, confirming the notion that faculty of color are expected to perform labor their White counterparts do not. These large-scale studies affirm the fact that Latinx faculty, while deriving a sense of a joy and fulfillment from their work, often feel stretched to serve their students, institutions, and communities. It is important to note here that these studies align with the experiences of faculty

of color in other predominantly White institutions (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Johnsrud & Sadao, 2002; Zambrana, Harvey, Wingfield, Lapeyrouse, Dávila, Hoagland, & Valdez, 2017).

Latinx Faculty Experiences in Theological Institutions

While survey studies have offered a general snapshot of the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions, several scholars have reflected on their own experiences serving in predominantly White theological institutions. Fernando Segovia (1994), a biblical scholar, argued that Latinx theological discourse is often pushed to the margins in seminaries as one of many "contextual approaches," such as Black or feminist theology. According to Segovia (1994) Latinx theology can have its place in theological institutions, but only if it does not seek to change or interrupt dominant theological discourse (i.e., White theology). He states that *"La vida es una Lucha* (life is a struggle)" in the academy for Latinx faculty because they must consistently seek to validate their ideas for others and guard against attacks from dominant discourses that exclude Latinx voices. In bringing visibility to these challenges, Segovia encourages other Latinx theological scholars to continue this struggle.

Maldonado (2009) advances Segovia (1994) by asserting that "to simply say that the theological seminary is a welcoming institution without recognizing and making room for cultural realities is misleading and quite deceiving" (Maldonado, 2009, p. 30). For Maldonado (2009), being a faculty member of color is a challenging enterprise:

> You will have to learn the system just to survive. You will have to overcome the system in order to succeed and to thrive. You will have to live out your commitment to Latino issues despite the system! Finding your place at the table may well mean claiming and defining your space in the institution as a Latino/a

> and as a scholar…. You serve a variety of constituencies and strongly identify with a community beyond the walls of the seminary. As Latinos we struggle to balance the expectations of the institution, the academy, the Latino community/church, and our own sense of identity and purpose. All four lay claim to big chunks of who we are. How we manage this balance and keep our sense of integrity will shape our lives and careers. (p. 31)

Moreover, Maldonado (2009) elucidates several of the key themes present in the work of Davis and Hernández (2003) and Hernández et al. (2017): Latinx faculty are stretched in several directions by their communities and workplaces. He argues that multiple solutions exist, such as hiring more Latinx faculty, contextualizing theological ideas, and partnering with Latinx-specific Bible institutes (educational organizations run by churches).

Realizing that empirical research into the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions was lacking, Turner et al. (2008b) sought to uncover how Latinx faculty interact with the predominantly White environment of theological seminaries. Their overarching question was, "What are the experiences of Latina/o faculty in theological schools?" (Turner et al., 2008b, p. 322). To shape and guide their research, the authors used Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and discovered four key themes. First, Latinx faculty were often the target of "marginalization, tokenization, and exclusion" based on their racial/ethnic, gender, language, and class-based identities (Turner et al., 2008, p. 326). Second, Latinx faculty often resisted Eurocentric ideologies that sought to devalue their cultural or theological perspectives. Third, Latinx faculty often engaged in social justice work, citing a strong sense of vocational commitment to making a difference in Latinx communities. Finally, Latinx faculty embraced their epistemological and social locations to legitimize their knowledges and experiences and challenge dominant

ideologies. For Turner et al. (2008), these findings were unsurprising, as they confirmed much of the literature on Latinx faculty.

Organizational Support for Latinxs in Theological Education

As Hernández et al. (2017) have noted, Latinx theological faculty often seek support from external organizations devoted to supporting Latinx theological faculty in their vocation. Davis and Hernández (2006), Hernández et al. (2002), Hernández et al. (2017), and Turner et al. (2008) praised the work of the *Asociación para La Educación Teológica Hispana* (AETH) and the *Hispanic Theological Initiative* (HTI), organizations that seek to develop Latinx religious leaders through seminars, financial support, and mentoring programs. While these organizations have done impressive work in developing theological leaders, their very existence is a critique of the failure of theological education to address the unique needs of Latinxs.

Turner, Hernández, Pena, Gonzalez, Hogan, & Station (2005) have explored the HTI from the perspective of both graduate students and faculty mentors. Turner et al. (2005) discovered that graduate students were mostly satisfied with their experiences, while faculty mentors often felt stretched between their commitments to their institutions and communities. In particular, young Latinx faculty seeking promotion and tenure perceived that their institutions did not value their commitment to mentoring future Latinx theologians and scholars. One faculty member lamented, "the values that we embrace are not perceived as valuable by tenure evaluators. Our difference is valued as a presence but not affirmed as a professional contribution to theological education" (Turner et al., 2005, p. 95). Additionally, Turner et al. (2005) found that the HTI was predominantly comprised of men, leaving Latinas to ponder their place in the organization, which has supposedly been committed to gender equality since its inception. While the study was predominantly focused on the experiences of doctoral students involved in HTI,

Turner et al. (2005) conclude their piece by emphasizing the need for Latinx representation at the faculty level in theological institutions:

> Further, both anecdotal evidence and empirical research demonstrate that Hispanic faculty members add value to their institutions. The presence of Latino and Latina faculty helps to stimulate library acquisitions in Latino theology, increase enrollment by Latina/o students, expand multicultural course offerings and increase Latino representation in campus governance… When Latino faculty are hired and retained it both strengthens the presence of Latina/o voices and contributions at a given theological school, and leads to qualitative improvements in the overall educational experience. (p. 99)

As the above indicates, the authors suggest that faculty representation is key to creating equitable environments that foster knowledge production and Latinx student support. As programs like HTI continue developing scholars, Turner et al. (2005) suggest that the HTI create and maintain partnerships with theological institutions in the future.

Latinx Challenges to Dominant Theological Discourses

Although much of the research on Latinx faculty in theological institutions highlights their marginalization and isolation, research has also shown how they demonstrate critical agency by subverting dominant discourses in theology. While Latinx theology is rich, diverse, varied, and plentiful, in this section I describe several ways Latinx faculty challenge dominant theological discourses.

Listening to the Theological Voices of Latinxs

Several Latinx theological scholars have actively challenged the dominant theological discourses present in theological education. Herrera (1979) has argued that, since Latinxs have engaged in centuries of theological reflection, they offer dominant theological discourses a

richer, fuller account of Christian theology. According to Herrera, Latinxs challenge theological educators to recognize the Catholic history of North America, become sensitive to oppression and speak out on behalf of the oppressed, and return to the Christian values of which Jesus spoke in the Gospel of Matthew.

Building on Herrera, Riebe-Estrella (1992) have suggested that, in theological education, students are taught to apply an "objective" theological approach (true in all places at all times) to their distinct contexts. However, such an approach has been shown to privilege Anglocentric theology and de-legitimize the work of Latinx theologians (Riebe-Estrella, 1992, p. 272). Riebe-Estrella have thus called for a *culturally responsible* model of theological education that takes "seriously the historical and cultural location of the candidate and facilitates his or her theologizing out of that context" (p. 273). In this way, Herrera and Riebe-Estrella challenge dominant discourses that perpetuate ahistoricity via the continuous decontextualization of theological concepts.

Establishing a Latinx Theology

As the above suggests, Herrera (1979) and Riebe-Estrella (1992) view their work as a challenge to dominant theological discourse. Such a posture allows scholars to interrogate dominant ideologies, but may also minimize some of its contributions. A key aspect of Latinx theology is the notion of doing theology *en conjunto* ("in community" or "in collaboration"). An example of this approach to theological discourse is Robert Pazmiño's (1994) book, *Latin American Journey: Insights for Christian Education in North America*, which introduces theological educators to liberation theology. At its core, liberation theology (which originated in South America) asserts that the goal of Christian theology should be liberation for oppressed peoples and the transformation of society. In contrast, dominant North American Christian

theology has tended to emphasize personal, spiritual transformation—certainly an important aspect of Christian faith. For Pazmiño, however, North American theologians have not adequately explored the possibilities of liberation theology, and argues that a richer expression of Christian faith would be to emphasize both individual and social transformation. Pazmiño's purpose is similar to Herrera's (1979) in that he sought to challenge dominant theological discourses and shatter dualisms that "have separated clergy and laity. . . . ecumenical and evangelical, public and private, the church and the world, the sacred and the secular" (p. 103). Pazmiño thus attempted to start a dialogue between Latinx and non-Latinx theological perspectives to foster "an openness to learn from others and a unity that transcends differences" (p. 104).

Building on Herrera (1979), Riebe-Estrella (1992), and Pazmiño (1994), Benjamin Alicea-Lugo (1998) has argued that Latinx scholars in theological education are often considered illegitimate voices within their disciplines and institutions. Alicea-Lugo (1998) has similarly argued that Latinx voices come from the margins and actively question the dominant discourses of theology for its hesitation to engage with scholars of color, its lack of attention to praxis, and failure to provide a holistic account of Christian theology. Alicea-Lugo's argument aligns with CRT's commitment to the *centrality of experiential knowledge* (Solórzano, 1998). Moreover, Alicea-Lugo's (1998) piece was among the first to begin substantively analyzing Latinx challenges to theological discourse.

Latina Theologies

While Alicea-Lugo (1998) has broadly examined Latinx contributions and challenges to theological discourse, Isasi-Díaz (2004) and Martell-Otero, Maldonado-Perez, & Conde-Frazier (2013) have offered theological proposals from a Latina perspective that actively challenge

dominant theological norms. For instance, Isasi-Díaz (2004) has argued that feminist theology privileges White, upper-middle class women, while womanist theology emerges from the experiences of Black women. This realization led her to construct Mujerista theology. Mujerista theology is a specific theological orientation that describes the structures in society that actively oppress others as inherently sinful. A theology of personal and social liberation is thus needed to create social conditions that give life to everyone. Mujerista theology runs counter to dominant evangelical theological norms that privilege an individualistic approach to liberation (Isasi-Díaz, 2004).

Building on Isasi-Díaz (2004) and rooted in Latina, feminist, and evangelical theologies, Martell-Otero et al.'s (2013) work, *Latina Evangelicas*, explores themes such as the complexity of Latina Christian identity and the emergence of theological reflection from daily existence. Additionally, the authors echo Pazmiño's (1994) commitment to including a broader perspective of liberation to North American evangelical theology. The authors explored numerous aspects of evangelical theology deriving from theological reflection through the lens of the Latina experience. The works of Isasi-Díaz (2004) and Martell-Otero et al. (2013) are unique in the landscape of Latinx theology, which critiques perspectives that embrace more conservative evangelical interpretations of key Christian doctrine, such as the ongoing work of God in the world and personal nature of salvation. In general, literature from Latinx theology has not stemmed from an evangelical perspective, but rather centers the experiential knowledges of Latinxs.

Broadly, Latinx theologians have been actively challenging dominant theological discourses that privilege the voices of upper middle-class White male theologians. This literature highlights how theological institutions have consistently pushed Latinx theological reflection to

the margins as “ethnic theologies” (Segovia, 1994). From a LatCrit perspective, Latinx faculty in theological institutions challenge dominant ideologies, center the experiential knowledge of Latinxs, and counter objective and ahistorical narratives (Solórzano, 1998). However, as several scholars have suggested (Baez, 2000; Matthew, 2016; Turner et al., 2005; Turner et al., 2008), Latinx faculty across institutional type must perform extra labor as they struggle for social and intellectual legitimacy within their disciplines and institutions.

Summary and General Impressions of the Literature

After reviewing the literature, I have come to several conclusions about the current state of the scholarship. Evangelicalism and evangelical seminaries, while promoting rhetoric that favors a diverse vision for theological education, embraces problematic assumptions regarding the causes of racism and potential remedies. The dominant racial narratives of theological education that result from these assumptions have led to working conditions that marginalize Latinx faculty who seek to legitimize their knowledges and serve the Latinx Christian community. The broad and growing literature related to the experiences of Latinxs in theological education suggests that Latinx faculty are often undervalued by their institutions, experience racism from colleagues, and work twice as hard as their White counterparts. With the exception of Turner et al.’s (2008) study, there is little qualitative work that explores the experiences of Latinx theological faculty.

Exploring the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries is a helpful contribution for several reasons. First, the population of Latinx evangelicals is rapidly growing in the United States. Changing demographics will thus challenge evangelical seminaries to adapt in order to stay relevant. Second, while Latinx evangelicalism has been growing, evangelicalism as a whole has a checkered past with regard to race relations (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Jones,

2016). Third, evangelical seminaries are among the largest theological institutions and the fastest-growing (ATS, 2018; Meinzer, 2018). Fourth, Hernández et al. (2017) describe evangelical seminaries as institutions that must remain "attentive both to the theological sensibilities of their major constituent denominations, as well as to their likely student market" (location 918). Finally, as incubators of evangelicalism, evangelical seminaries espouse dominant narratives regarding racism, such as colorblindness, multiculturalism, and Anglo-conformity (Yancey, 2006) that must be named and interrogated to begin meaningful conversations about diversity, equity, and social justice. My study seeks to challenge these dominant narratives by listening to the voices of those who have been marginalized by such narratives. Thus, the following research questions guided my work:

1) What challenges do Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries face on account of their racial/ethnic identity?

2) What practices allow Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries to endure challenges from their institutions?

In what follows, I describe the conceptual lens that guided my research.

Conceptual Lens

In this study, I employed Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) (Delgado, 1995; Delgado Bernal, 2001, 2002; Espinoza & Harris, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1998) as a conceptual framework for exploring the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. CRT and LatCrit are very similar, though they differ in a few key areas, which I explore. Combining these frameworks constitutes the conceptual lens that guided my research questions, design, and analysis.

Critical Race Theory

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) suggest that critical race theorists are "a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (p. 26). CRT originated out of Critical Legal Studies (CLS), which suggests that the legal system seeks to perpetuate the power structures of society. However, CLS had failed to account for how power structures privilege the White population while continuing to marginalize racially and ethnically minoritized groups. In recounting their experiences with CLS, Lawrence III, Matsuda, Delgado, and Williams (1993) have argued that "Even within this enclave on the left we sometimes experienced alienation, marginalization, and inattention to the agendas and a misunderstanding of the issues we considered central to the work of combating racism" (p. 5). Hence, CRT sought to directly challenge the racial status quo of the U.S. legal system while remaining sensitive to how the legal system oppresses minoritized groups of all kinds.

Over time, educational scholars began incorporating CRT into their work to challenge the racial status quo of the educational structures within society. Yosso (2005) defines CRT in educational contexts as "a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (p. 74). CRT challenges "claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy" in educational institutions and discourses (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 56). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) write that "as we attempt to make linkages between critical race theory and education, we contend that the voice of people of color is required for a complete analysis of the educational system" (p. 58). They conclude that "without authentic voices of people of color . . . it is doubtful that we can say anything useful about education in their communities" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 58).

The first tenet of CRT/LatCrit is *the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism* (Solórzano, 1998, p. 122). Scholars have often positioned race and racism as marginal to conversations regarding oppression. However, CRT and LatCrit scholars assert the centrality of race as a form of oppression. The second tenet, *the challenge to dominant ideology,* "challenges the traditional claims of the educational system and its institutions to objectivity, meritocracy, color and gender blindness, race and gender neutrality, and equal opportunity" (Solórzano, 1998, p. 122). As previously mentioned, White evangelicalism tends to embrace an individualist approach to racism that ignores structural realities and practices different, yet problematic approaches to racial issues like colorblindness, multiculturalism, and Anglo-conformity (Emerson & Smith, 2001; Yancey, 2006). Third, CRT/LatCrit is committed to social justice, meaning the elimination of racism, and other forms of institutional discrimination. Fourth, CRT/LatCrit recognizes *the centrality of experiential knowledge,* asserting that the knowledges of Latinxs and other people of color are "legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education" (Solórzano, 1998, p. 122). Finally, CRT/LatCrit embraces *the interdisciplinary perspective* as a means of overcoming notions of objectivity and ahistoricity, insisting that knowledge is contextually and culturally based (Solórzano, 1998, p. 123). Overall, practitioners of CRT believe recognizing marginalized voices in education brings a fuller, more accurate picture of how social structures (like education) operate to maintain inequality and White supremacy.

Latinx Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

Latinx scholars have built on CRT with the development of LatCrit as a "theoretical space in which to analyze and share personal narratives, stories, and racial issues often absent in dominant narratives and discourse" regarding the Latinx population (Arreguín-Anderson &

Kennedy, 2013). The primary difference between CRT and LatCrit is that LatCrit touches on issues pertinent to the Latinx community, such as phenotype, immigration, culture, and language (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Espinoza, 1990; Hernández-Truyol, 1997). Delgado Bernal (2002) suggest that LatCrit is a "theory that elucidates Latinas/Latinos' multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression" (p. 108). In Delgado Bernal's mind, there is little difference between CRT and LatCrit, other than the fact that LatCrit scholars focus primarily on the experiences and subordination of the Latinx population. Valdes (1996) has drawn similarities between the two theories as well, noting that "LatCrit is supplementary, complementary to CRT" (p. 26) and that "LatCrit . . . at its best, should operate as a close cousin—related to [CRT] in real and lasting ways, but not necessarily living under the same roof" (pp. 26-27). Using a CRT/LatCrit framework was thus necessary to this study given its focus on the experiences of Latinx faculty in predominantly white theological schools and, as such, informed my interview protocol, methodological choices and, most of all, my interpretation of the data, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Critical Race Theories and Christianity

While CRT and LatCrit remain popular lenses through which to study the experiences of racially minoritized groups, they have often sidelined the role of religion in overthrowing "legalized racial subordination" (Paradise, 2014, p. 120). For instance, Paradise (2014) has suggested that, while Critical Race Theories seek to elevate the lives and experiences of racially minoritized groups, CRT scholars have maintained a suspicious posture toward religion. Specifically, they have ignored the fact that liberation movements, such as Civil Rights, were "born out of the Black church and powered by the Black prophetic tradition" (Paradise, 2014, p. 119). Moreover, according to Paradise (2014), CRT scholars view religion as only an oppressive

force rather than an emancipatory one, thereby reducing CRT's impact in that it only engages religion as antithetical to antisubordination. In specifically referencing LatCrit, Paradise (2014) suggests that:

> LatCrit's conception of antisubordination has led important LatCrit scholars to conclude that LatCrit should critique religion from the external perspective of its commitment to antisubordination, as opposed to developing LatCrit scholarship grounded in the internal, normative resources of Latino/a religion. (p. 170)

With this, Paradise (2014) further critiques the work of Francisco Valdes (1997), who suggested that LatCrit scholars must approach religion in the lives of Latinxs with skepticism and "should manifest a broadly-defined anti-subordination sensibility and purpose" (Valdes, 1997, p. 22).

Like Paradise (2014), I affirm that, while religion has been used as an oppressive force against non-dominant communities, "arguments developed from the internal point of view of a religion can perform powerful work on behalf of oppressed people" (p. 175). Paradise (2014) specifically identifies Martin Luther King, Jr's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and the Civil Rights movement as faith-empowered critiques of oppressive societal structures (p. 175). I thus approached my data with this dual approach to religion, as one who is an "insider," a person of faith whose identity is formed and shaped by the Christian tradition, but also as one who recognizes the oft-oppressive role that Christianity has played throughout history. In chapter 3, I will discuss in depth how I modified my conceptual lens to account for religion, faith, and spirituality in my data.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of my conceptual lens. As previously mentioned, my experiences and perspectives, including my familiarity with the topic at hand, led me to adopt a CRT/LatCrit framework for this research. Paradise's (2014) critiques of CRT also influenced

how I approached the topic. As I discuss in chapter 3, I approached the data inductively and deductively, allowing room for the data to interact with the frameworks I adopted for this study.

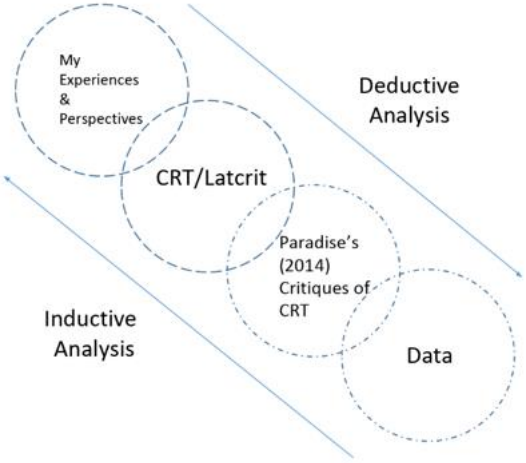

Figure 1. Conceptual Lens

As this literature review indicates, CRT/LatCrit has been used to study the experiences of Latinx theological faculty before (Turner et al., 2008). However, Turner et al.'s (2008) study explored the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions broadly. Alternately, the present study explored the experiences of Latinx theological faculty in evangelical seminaries, thus applying the framework to a previously unexplored institutional type. In the following chapter, I provide the details of my methodology (counternarrative) and how I produced new knowledge about Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As previously noted, scholars have explored the experiences of Latinx faculty in theological institutions broadly, but none have specifically explored the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. Moreover, apart from Turner et al. (2008), little qualitative work has been conducted in this sector or with this population. Thus, to highlight the stories and perspectives of those who have been marginalized, I drew on counternarrative methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Milner IV & Howard (2014) have observed that, similar to narrative inquiry, "counter-narrative provides space for researchers to share teachers' (and others') experiences in ways that have not necessarily been told" (pp. 541-542). Similarly, Harper (2009) has described counternarrative as "a method of telling the stories of people who are often overlooked in the literature, and as a means by which to examine, critique, and counter majoritarian stories (or master narratives) composed about people of color" (p. 701).

As I further elaborate below, using a CRT/LatCrit conceptual lens is harmonious with the use of counternarrative. Milner IV and Howard (2008) have noted that "Critical race theory's advancement of the narrative and counter-narrative centralizes race for the knower and for the known. In other words, race and racism are placed at the center of the narrative and counter-narrative in critical race theory" (p. 1576). As such, a counternarrative approach informed by CRT/LatCrit enabled me to centralize the experiences of Latinx faculty—who are often pushed to the margins in their schools and disciplines, perpetuating the centrality of White theologians and faculty—working in evangelical seminaries and create space to subvert dominant narratives surrounding my participants. Moreover, the literature on Latinx faculty in theological education essentially ignores Latinxs who work in evangelical seminaries, as researchers have tended to

homogenize theological institutions to focus on Latinx faculty themselves. A counternarrative approach allowed me to give attention to how Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries might experience and engage with their environments in ways that differ from their counterparts in other types of theological institutions.

In this chapter, I discuss my positionality and how I attended to this research through the provision of an overview of counternarrative methodology that emphasizes its congruence with CRT/LatCrit and my topic of study. I conclude with an overview of my research process, including data collection strategies, procedures, and data analysis.

Positionality and My Role as a Researcher

My first commitment as a human being, thinker, and researcher, is as a Christian. As a Christian, I am guided by my commitment to God and Scripture, which I believe to be objectively true realities. However, while I believe this objective truth exists, I believe that, within my finitude, I am unable to know this truth completely and impartially. I thus embrace a modified critical theory paradigm. Critical theory, according to Sears and Cairns (2010), "shares with positivism the conviction that people do have access to the world outside their own subjective activity," but "shares with the interpretive approach the idea that access to the world is always mediated by subjective activity" (p. 69). Thus, the ontological position I embrace is one that understands that truth is real, but my conception of truth is informed by my cultural, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic biases. While I believe that conceptions of truth are most often constructed on the basis of power (Sipe & Constable, 1996, p. 155), I believe that Christian truth is constructed on the basis of historical events (the resurrection of Jesus and the revelation of Scripture).

As a critical researcher, then, I seek truth through the examination and interrogation of mainstream "truths" that have been promulgated by dominant peoples and cultures. Sears and Cairns (2010) have proposed that a critical epistemology "invites us to challenge both the myth of the impartial researcher, and the conception of research as completely subjective, as associated with interpretive approaches" (p. 69). I therefore embrace an epistemological humility, acknowledging that my identity as a Latinx, evangelical, upper middle-class, heterosexual male affects the way I practice research. In contrast to a post-positivist epistemology, I am not an objective researcher who is completely able to separate my identity from my research—who I am naturally affects what I do and the kinds of research questions I pursue (Chang, 2015, p. 56). In engaging with my participants, I did not seek to extend a posture of impartiality; my experiences as a Christian and Latinx in the U.S. were extremely similar to their experiences.

It is also important to explain that my faith and critical theory align in the case of axiology. Critical theory values notions of justice, equity, fairness, and diversity in the interest of achieving personal and societal transformation—all qualities that Christianity (in its most biblically and historically accurate form) embraces. As a critical theorist, I espouse the raising of "critical consciousness," wherein we come to recognize our place in society and seek to contribute to the transformation of the world. As Sipe and Constable (1996) have pointed out, the goal of critical theory is to discover "what is just and take action. . . . since knowledge is a form of power, it can be used to change the world into a more just and equitable place for all groups of people" (p. 159). Thus, my pursuit of knowledge "seeks to inform people of the workings of the world so they can act to change the world" (Sears & Cairns, 2015, p. 189).

As I mentioned in my introduction, I identify as a Christian and a Mexican American who possesses the privilege of being able to pass as White. My worldview is thus not only shaped by the Christian tradition and a critical posture, but also by my experiences as a Latinx living in the U.S., as a pastor, and as a graduate student at a large research university. My commitment to a theologically robust approach to social justice and life in general informed my literature review, my choice of conceptual lens (and critique), and my methodological choices. Because of my religious and racial/ethnic identifications, as well as my history of working in theological education and the church, I was able to relate to my participants in a personal way. As a Latinx engaged in the Christian community and the theological education community, I anticipated maintaining professional and personal relationships with my participants.

Counternarrative Methodology

Building on the critical race work of Delgado (1989) and Lawson (1995), Solórzano and Yosso (2001) have suggested that counternarratives function in four primary ways: (1) they put a human face to educational theory and create community among marginalized populations, (2) they can challenge established "wisdom" from those at the center of society and provide a space to transform inequitable power structures, (3) they enable marginalized populations to imagine a new reality beyond their current context and realize they are not alone in their experiences, and (4) they teach others that combining story with current literature can create a richer story than simply the story or current reality by themselves (p. 475). Below, I describe four reasons why using counternarrative methodology was well-suited for this study.

First, counternarratives provide a space to explore the entire experiences of a person's life. In using counternarrative, I was able to better understand the contours and dynamics that have shaped my participants' lived experiences. While I am specifically interested in

understanding the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries, I am keenly aware of the societal influences that have shaped the life trajectories of my participants, specifically racism. Milner IV and Howard (2008) have suggested that "A counter-narrative provides space for researchers to *disrupt* or to *interrupt* pervasive discourses that may paint communities and people, particularly communities and people of colour, in grim, dismal ways" (p. 1577). The space created through a counternarrative allowed my participants to "name their own reality," a hallmark of CRT research (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 57). In allowing my participants to name their own realities, I was able understand the factors that led them to pursue a faculty career in evangelical seminary and how their life trajectories have shaped how they experience and perceive their vocational context.

Second, in using counternarrative, I sought to holistically understand my participants' stories in relation to their experiences in evangelical seminaries and to understand the ways their work challenges institutional and disciplinary norms that perpetuate White supremacy and centrality. Counternarrative has already enabled many Latinx faculty, including some working in evangelical seminaries, to share their personal experiences (De La Torre, 2013; Segovia, 1994; Maldonado, 2009; Martell-Otero, 2013). As Solórzano (1998) has suggested, challenging dominant ideologies and institutions is a cornerstone of CRT research. Employing a counternarrative methodology aided me as a researcher in understanding and making sense of the multiple dimensions of faculty work, including knowledge production and the promotion/tenure process. Moreover, it aided me in ultimately challenging dominant ideologies alongside my participants.

Third, employing a counternarrative methodology allowed me to centralize the voices and perspectives of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. From the perspective of CRT,

counternarratives function as a means for centering the experiences of those whose knowledges and perspectives have been marginalized by dominant groups (Solórzano, 1998). The literature also suggests that Latinx faculty working in theological institutions often experience marginalization of their scholarship (Hernández et al., 2017; Isasi-Díaz, 2004; Segovia, 1994) and increasingly high labor expectations, especially around diversity (Hernández et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2008). However, while these stories have been told of Latinx scholars in theological institutions in general, I endeavored to center the stories of Latinx faculty working in evangelical seminaries. The literature on Latinx faculty in theological education tends to ignore this growing sector of seminary education. As evangelical seminaries constitute approximately 120 of the 270 theological institutions in the United States and Canada (Meinzer, 2018), this population of faculty deserve more attention than they have currently received. The growing number of Latinx evangelicals alone warrants further study into the experiences of Latinxs in evangelical seminaries (Mulder, Ramos, & Martí 2017).

A key function of counternarratives are to disrupt "master narratives," narratives that have been perpetuated by dominant groups at the expense of the narratives of minoritized populations. Of counternarratives, Stanley (2007) has written:

> Counternarratives act to deconstruct the master narratives, and they offer alternatives to the dominant discourse in educational research. They provide, for example, multiple and conflicting models of understanding social and cultural identities. They also challenge the dominant White and often predominantly male culture that is held to be normative and authoritative. (p. 14)

Delgado and Stefancic (1993) have similarly suggested that counternarratives in CRT research challenge the "bundle of presuppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared cultural understandings

persons in the dominant race bring to the discussion of race" (p. 462). In the literature on Latinx faculty in theological education, we see the efforts by Latinxs to name their experiences as faculty in relation to their White counterparts (Isasi-Díaz, 2004; Maldonado, 2009; Segovia, 1994). Ladson-Billings (1998) has suggested that, for racially minoritized people, naming one's reality "links form and substance in scholarship" (p. 12). Furthermore, using a counternarrative methodology to explore the experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries extends the literature on Latinx faculty in theological education by providing counterstories to the predominant narratives taught in evangelical seminaries, namely notions of "colorblindness" and "multiculturalism" (Yancey, 2006). As the next chapter demonstrates, this work also challenges the dominant literature on Latinx faculty in theological education.

As Solórzano and Yosso (2001) have suggested, counterstories humanize academic literature by providing tangible artifacts and histories that bring the abstract to the concrete. Using counternarrative, I was able to pair participants' counterstories with the literature to "construct another world that is richer" than simply the counterstories or literature by themselves (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 475). As the literature suggests, and as Segovia (1994) argues, *la vida es una lucha* ("life is a struggle") for Latinx faculty (De La Torre, 2013; Maldonado, 2009). Latinx faculty experience racism and discrimination, especially when it comes to their scholarship and service (Hernández et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2008). While some of my participants shared stories that confirm this, I also heard stories of how participants have invested time in their students, been received positively by their peers and colleagues, and have seen meaningful change occur in their seminaries. In using a counternarrative methodology, I intend for my work is life-giving and affirming, and that it allows Latinx theological faculty in evangelical seminaries to share their stories in ways that can enact meaningful institutional

change.

Research Design & Process

Institutional Review Board

Prior to seeking participants, I applied for institutional review board (IRB) approval at Michigan State University (MSU). As required by MSU's Human Research Protection Program, the study complied with all relevant federal, state, and institutional policies and procedures. I submitted all the pertinent paperwork to MSU's IRB and was approved. I did not contact potential participants or collect data until my study was approved by the IRB.

Participants

As previously mentioned, my participants were Latinx faculty working in evangelical seminaries here in the United States. For the purpose of this study, I define evangelical seminaries as institutions that seek to prepare men and women for careers in church ministry, non-profits, and academic spaces through a theoretical and practice-based curriculum that emphasizes core elements of evangelical theology. Participants in this study were eight Latinx faculty who are currently serving in an evangelical seminary in the United States. Potential participants needed to: (1) identify as Latinx, (2) serve in a faculty role in an evangelical seminary, and (3) be willing to participate in two one-hour interviews or one two-hour interview regarding their experiences working in an evangelical seminary. To capture the great diversity of the Latinx community, I cultivated a sample that cut across racial/ethnic, gender, and disciplinary demographics. Two participants came from the same seminary, while the rest came from different seminaries, representing a total of seven seminaries. The sample was limited in that it lacked women (n=2) and Afro-Latinxs.

Access and Recruitment

Upon receiving approval from MSU's IRB, I identified my participants using snowball sampling. Creswell (2012) suggests snowball sampling as a useful method for recruiting participants. This technique allowed me to connect to people who either qualified to participate in my study or knew others who could. Moreover, this method was appropriate to use for my study, since Latinx faculty working in evangelical seminaries across the nation are a small, relatively tight-knit group. I began the recruitment process by contacting individuals whom I know personally through professional associations. Leaders in organizations such as Hispanic Theological Initiative and the La Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (Association for Hispanic Theological Education) also recommended potential participants. Through personal connections and network affiliations, I was built a sample relatively quickly and sent a pre-formatted email to possible participants, asking them to fill out a brief questionnaire that enabled me to discern if they were qualified for the study. As noted in the previous section, to participate in my study, an individual had to: (1) identify as Latinx, (2) serve in a faculty role in an evangelical seminary in the U.S., and (3) be willing to participate in the study.

Obtaining Consent

I took seriously my commitment to respect participants' willingness to share their knowledge with me. I thus protected their information by seeking their informed consent and protecting their confidentiality. Upon scheduling and confirming interviews with qualified participants, I obtained their informed consent electronically by sending them an informed consent form prior to the interview. The informed consent form was formatted in accordance with MSU's IRB. In the document, I provided participants with key information about the purpose of my study and the research methods I would employ. I also stated the potential risks

that could occur as a result of my study. I clearly stated to my participants that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. At the beginning of each interview, I asked participants if they had any questions about my project in addition to re-confirming their consent.

Confidentiality

Counternarratives represent a highly personal and sensitive methodology. As a result, special precautions were taken to ensure my participants' confidentiality. Participants' confidentiality was protected in two primary ways. First, after their initial interview, I discussed with participants how they wanted their identity to be protected. These discussions resulted in the use of pseudonyms selected by each participant. If they did not have a preferred pseudonym, I assigned them one. Second, I ensured the confidentiality of my participants by protecting all sensitive data. Interviews were recorded on an encrypted mobile device and participants' stories were saved on a protected, encrypted laptop.

Data Collection

The primary methods used in counternarrative methodology are loosely structured interviews (Harper, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As narrative methodology is essentially a "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 20), I employed a loosely structured method of interviewing for my study. Some participants opted for two 60-90 minute interviews, while others chose an extended, single interview. The structure and length of these interviews allowed me to garner rich narratives and allowed participants to engage in deeper reflection regarding their experiences. I also wanted to remain open to the directions my participants wanted to take with the interviews and shared some of my own thoughts, feelings, and experiences interviews shifted accordingly.

Counternarrative methodology is often used to collect three different types of narratives: (1) personal narratives, (2) composite stories, and (3) the narratives of others (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Personal narratives are often autobiographical stories that recount a person's experience with sexism or racism and are often paired with extant literature (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Composite stories are narratives that extract data and create "characters and place them in social, historical, and political situations to discuss racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination" (p. 33). The narratives of others approach are stories told in third person regarding people's experiences with discrimination. For this study, I employed a "narratives of others" approach because I wanted to center the complex and textured stories of my participants and provide a deep and thorough analysis of their narratives.

For the first part of interview, I asked participants to share their life stories, particularly those about their families, their understandings of their racial identities, and their faith experiences. As a narrative researcher, I assume that humans are storied beings and that, to understand one's present and future, we must first understand their past histories (Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Espinoza, 2014). Throughout the first part of the interview, I was careful to listen for the how participants' biographies intersected with national and historical narratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Hearing participants' life stories was especially important as I employed a CRT/LatCrit lens to guide my work. CRT/LatCrit asserts that racism is pervasive throughout society and that our consciousness of racism and systemic injustice is shaped by society (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This first biographical section of the interview was crucial in understanding how my participants have come to be where they are currently are and how the pervasiveness of racism throughout their lives has shaped how they perform their roles

as faculty in an evangelical seminary context. Moreover, this interview helped to establish rapport with my participants (Grinyer & Thomas, 2012).

For the second part of the interview, I asked my participants to share their specific experiences as faculty in evangelical seminaries. In this part of the interview, I remained attentive to several aspects related to their work experience: teaching, performing research, sharing their work with colleagues, serving on committees, their professional involvement in their respective disciplines, and whatever else they wanted to discuss. In addition, I asked participants to reflect on their experiences with racism and other types of discrimination experienced at their institutions. I also asked participants for any relevant documents or artifacts that had meaning for them or that somehow related to their experiences as faculty in evangelical seminaries. Overall, a counternarrative methodology using loosely structured interviews enabled me to understand how Latinx faculty interact with their evangelical seminary environments and how their interactions with the socio-historical realities of racism and discrimination inform their engagement with such institutions. I sent a transcript to each of the participants who specifically requested one and provided a copy of my findings chapter to them as well so they could have a say in how I represented their stories.

Data Analysis

To analyze participant narratives, I thoroughly read interview transcripts and any documents my participants had chosen to share with me to gain a global sense of the data. I spent time reading and re-reading each individual transcript, taking note of key events, stories, and experiences that my participants shared with me. Informed by the literature on faculty work, Latinx theological education, and my use of CRT/LatCrit as a conceptual lens, I studied the transcripts to highlight the challenges participants faced at their institutions and to elevate their

strategies for survival and thriving. Specifically, CRT/LatCrit helped me identify how my participants challenged dominant ideologies, determined which of the challenges they experienced were driven by institutional racism and discrimination, uncovered specific cases of anti-Latinx sentiment from colleagues, and sought to legitimize their knowledges and experiences in and out of the classroom (Solórzano, 1998). For instance, when participants shared stories of how their Latinx identity was attacked by a colleague or how they experienced a microaggression, I coded such instances as challenges. When participants described a desire to write scholarship for the benefit of the Latinx Christian community rather than for an academic audience, I considered this activity as a challenge to dominant ideologies.

While my literature review and conceptual lens of CRT/LatCrit was helpful in situating and understanding participants' experiences, these lenses did not necessarily account for all aspects of the data. As mentioned in chapter 2, scholars in the CRT/LatCrit tradition have maintained a suspicious posture toward religion and spirituality (Paradise, 2014). However, my participants described their Christian faith as interwoven throughout all aspects of their lives. Their racial/ethnic identity was second to their identity as Christians. My participants also described their sense of calling and vocation, which they discussed at length in spiritual terms. I thus drew from literature on religion and spirituality and the intersection between race and religion to make sense of my data (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Martinez, 2018; Mulder et al., 2017). In doing so, I expanded my original CRT/LatCrit conceptual lens to account for participants' faith, which proved helpful in analyzing and making sense of the data.

After reading through each transcript and identifying patterns and themes, I engaged in deeper-level coding using a combination of patterns and codes that emerged from the data, in addition to specific codes constructed using a CRT/LatCrit conceptual lens. The combination of

inductive and deductive analysis helped me garner a richer depiction of the data and develop themes that emerged inductively and deductively. I engaged in first- and second-level coding (Saldaña, 2013), which helped me find common patterns and themes among the data and enriched my analysis. For the first cycle of coding, I used initial coding, which helped me better understand the worldviews of my participants and their unique perspectives. For second-level coding, I identified key patterns and themes that emerged not only inductively from their data, but also deductively through the use of my conceptual lens.

Data and Results Representation

In alignment with my desire to center the unique experiences, challenges, and perspectives of my participants, I devoted a chapter of my dissertation to sharing the narratives that have shaped their lives. I did so to honor their stories and create space to focus on this diverse group of people because I recognized that each participant would have different life experiences and that those experiences differently shaped their engagements with their institutional contexts. I sought to honor their experiences in this way. While I had initially desired to devote a chapter to each participant, I opted to share my findings thematically in the following chapter to maintain my participants' confidentiality. Since the Latinx theological education community is very small (and the evangelical seminary community is even smaller), representing data thematically rather than narratively (as I had originally intended) was a necessity. Nonetheless, the themes generated over the course of data analysis are based on the narratives of my participants.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure trustworthiness, I triangulated my data in several ways. I sought thick, rich description of data, which will be represented by participant quotes (Creswell, 2015).

Additionally, I consistently engaged in member checking with my participants to ensure that my representation of their data in both interview transcripts and in the final product was accurate. I employed an audit trail throughout this process where I tracked my processes so readers could assess the quality of my research approach (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Once the dissertation was completed, I allowed my participants to examine portions of text where their stories were shared to ensure that their identities were adequately protected and that I was accurately representing their stories.

CHAPTER 4: THE LIVES OF MY PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of Latinx faculty who work in evangelical seminaries. To fully understand their experiences, I employed a counternarrative methodology that sought to privilege their voices and provide a counternarrative to the experiences of Latinxs in theological education that currently exists in the literature. While the predominant literature prioritizes Latinxs who work in Roman Catholic or Mainline Protestant seminaries (Hernández et al., 2017), I chose to explore Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries, a growing sector of theological education in the U.S. and Canada (Meinzer, 2018). Since the Latinx evangelical population is growing and bringing their unique theological perspectives to Christian institutions (Martinez, 2018; Mulder et al., 2017), evangelical seminaries need to reckon with this dramatic demographic and epistemic shift in the evangelical Christian landscape.

As a narrative researcher, I understand that my participants' experiences in evangelical seminaries are not isolated; they have wrestled with sociohistorical, economic, cultural, and religious realities their whole lives. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I have chosen to use a "narratives of others" approach to this research (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This strategy "offers biographical analysis of the experiences of a person of color, again in relation to U.S. institutions and in a sociohistorical context" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 33). Thus, as a researcher, it was important for me to remain attentive to the sociocultural and historical forces that have shaped my participants' experiences.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information about my participants. They each shared with me stories of their family histories and other personal information, but in

order to maintain the confidentiality of my sample, I have chosen to highlight only the information that gives context to my findings in Chapter 5. Understanding the backgrounds of my participants is crucial to understanding how they have made sense of their experiences in evangelical seminaries and provide important context for data analysis in Chapter 5.

An Overview of My Participants

Since the population of Latinx faculty working in evangelical seminaries is small, ensuring participants' anonymity was among my greatest concerns throughout the research process. While identifiers such as country of origin, denominational affiliation, and discipline add context to participants' experiences, including them risks exposing them as faculty. I have thus gone to great lengths to ensure my participants identities can remain confidential.

Name	Gender	Discipline
Jorge	M	Practical Theology
David	M	Biblical Studies
Roberto	M	Biblical Studies
Annie	F	Practical Theology
Miguel Ángel	M	Practical Theology
Alejandro	M	Practical Theology
Elsa	F	Practical Theology
Aapo	M	Theology

Table 1. Table of Participants

As Table 1 shows, my participants came primarily from two disciplines, biblical studies and practical theology, and represented seven evangelical seminaries. Biblical studies refers to studies of the biblical text, particularly in reference to cultural contexts in which the Bible was written. Biblical studies scholars conduct research and primarily teach in either the Old Testament (the first 29 books of the Bible) or the New Testament (the last 27 books).

Meanwhile, scholars in practical theology can focus on a plethora of topics related to the theory and practice of ministry, such as counseling, leadership, preaching, education, and community development. Only one of my participants, Aapo, comes from historical theology, which is a field focused on how theologians throughout history have made sense of religious studies. Prior to entering academia, all participants were involved in ministry in some form or another. Some were pastors in local churches, others worked for denominational headquarters, and some even planted churches. At the time of this study, all were still involved in church ministry in some shape or form. Below, I give brief introductions to each of my participants.

Jorge

Prior to entering his current institution, Jorge served for numerous years in pastoral ministry and denominational service, particularly with Latinx ministries. Jorge teaches courses in practical theology (particularly pastoral ministry), preaching, and Latinx ministries. Jorge's journey has been filled with challenges. As a young man with considerable leadership qualities, Jorge was called upon by his denomination to serve as the director of Latinx ministries. However, due to a number of political and ecclesial situations, Jorge decided to transition out of his position and seek an academic position teaching and directing Latinx outreach for a seminary. He is still extremely active in the life of the church.

David

During numerous years of academic teaching, David has taught in various seminaries across the world and the United States. He teaches in biblical studies and cultural issues. For David, being immersed in a Latino community and living in teaching in Central America enabled him to grow positively as a Latino in the U.S. However, he began having questions about his identity when he visited Central America later in life:

> It wasn't until we were in Central America that I was actually able to name it. There's a whole study, you probably know this, called "third culture kids." And I began to see that's what I was—I had a passport culture. I had this other culture from my mother. And then I was somewhere in the middle of it, the third culture person. And so what I've learned, I've never been able to resolve that. I'm always bouncing. My heart leans more toward the [South American] side, but physically I look very Anglo. And so what I've learned is that the Anglos doesn't understand me and the Latinos don't believe me.

David's time in Central America was transformative regarding his own racial/ethnic identity. His status as bicultural allowed him the privilege of being able to navigate predominantly White and Latinx spaces with ease, but he didn't become aware of how people perceived his identity until the aforementioned trip.

Roberto

Though Roberto has served as an administrator of his institution for the past several years, his began his career teaching biblical studies. He identities as evangelical but recognizes how his identity as a Latino has shaped his scholarship and religious identity. Roberto is firmly committed to his Latino identity. While others have encouraged him to anglicize his last name, he refused. Several of his family members encouraged him to adopt a more "American-sounding" name, yet he remained committed to his Latinidad. "You know, I always made it a clear choice: I am Latino, don't forget it…Everything that I do is informed by that reality." As Chapter 5 demonstrates, Roberto's strong affirmation of his Latinidad has caused others to view him with suspicion in professional circles. Yet, he has remained firm in his racial identity.

Annie

Annie has several years of administrative experience and has taught full-time at her current institution for over two decades. Coming from a Latin American country, Annie has observed a racial hierarchy in her home country via her family's position of being able to trace their heritage back to Spain. She observed that the Indigenous people in her home country were often treated much worse than those of Spanish descent and knew her Spanish heritage carried a certain kind of privilege. "Growing up, we just didn't talk to them or live around them. There was definitely some racism." But coming to the states and studying in graduate school made her more aware of racism in the U.S. "I was in a class on leadership and I shared an anecdote about my time in Latin America. The professor told me that we're in America, and we're not talking about leadership in [my home country]." In another instance, she asked a professor if she could write a paper in Spanish, to which he responded, "you can do that, but I won't read it, nor will anyone else." Multiple instances like this occurred for Annie in graduate school, yet the experiences did not deter her from continuing her education in the U.S. and seeking a faculty position. Annie has extensive experience training church leaders for ministry in the U.S. and across the globe.

Miguel Ángel

Miguel Ángel, originally from Central America, has taught in various settings throughout most of his entire life. He has been at his current institution for six years and teaches in multiple areas of practical theology. Miguel Ángel says that he did not become "Hispanic" or "Latino" until he entered the U.S. "Well, obviously growing up where I did, I was a part of the dominant culture. I know what it means to be a part of the dominant culture. I know what it means to not have to think about race because everybody's like you." He went on to describe how he has no

choice but to engage in racial issues because, as a Latino, he does not want the "dominant group" to determine his identity for him. For Miguel Ángel, religious identification helped ease the tensions he experienced in navigating his racial/ethnic identities. He expressed profound frustration with the way evangelical Christians in the U.S. often place their racial identity over their religious identity. For him, the tension between individualism and collectivism remains a constant in negotiating his racial, religious, and national identities. This struggle is one that Miguel Ángel continues to navigate. Miguel Ángel ultimately placed his religious identity as a Christian above his racial identity.

Alejandro

Alejandro is a practical theologian whose work centers on Latinx ministry. Alejandro came to the U.S. for graduate school and decided to remain here. In terms of understanding his racial/ethnic identity, Alejandro has said that "It's interesting because in [my home country] I never thought about [race]. I wasn't aware of it. Now that I look back, I realize I was the majority and that's probably the reason why I wasn't that aware of any racial or cultural differences in my country." Coming to the U.S. and landing in a large, diverse city, Alejandro was in for a rude awakening. "As soon as I landed I realized I am not the majority, I'm in the minority, and not only that, I'm a minority in the minority!" The Latinx population in his city was predominantly Mexican, which intensified his feelings of marginalization. Over time, Alejandro became hyper aware of how people perceived him as Latinx. "You walk out the door, and it's a battle. When I'm at home, I'm free." Alejandro's experience being a racially minoritized person in the U.S. has made him extremely conscious of oppression. As I explore in Chapter 5, Alejandro's consciousness of oppression has rendered his experience working in an evangelical seminary extremely marginalizing.

Elsa

Elsa has taught in areas of leadership and ministry, and has developed programs for Latinxs in evangelical seminaries across the country. Throughout her career, Elsa has been asked by her denomination to help reimagine their educational resources for uses in churches across the country. As a Spanish-speaker, she was generally tasked with translating English-language resources into Spanish for distribution in Latinx communities in the U.S. and around the globe. However, she made a conscious decision early in her career to not be tokenized. "You cannot ask our pastors to get on their pulpits and preach a Westernized message about Christ. You've got to stop and consider what their pulpits are, who their people are, and what the message needs to be." Fighting against tokenism has been a real struggle for Elsa but she maintains that being a part of her denomination has granted her opportunities to speak and minister in contexts she otherwise wouldn't have access to. "God has a purpose and plan for my Latinidad," she told me. "And part of God's purpose is to reach people, to change people, to transform people, it's to reconcile them to be in relationship with God." While navigating evangelical life has been a challenge for Elsa, she is thankful for the opportunities she has had in her denomination.

Aapo

Aapo has taught at his current institution for over two decades. He has extensive experience in teaching, leadership, and pastoring local churches. His research explores historical theology, leadership, and Latinx issues. Aapo grew up evangelical and has remained in the same denomination for roughly his whole life. He has held a number of leadership roles in the church and community and has been an advocate for the Latinx community on his campus.

Adelante/Forward

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce my participants and share their backgrounds in order to contextualize their experiences working in evangelical seminaries. As this chapter demonstrates, my participants come from an array of diverse backgrounds and represent a broad picture of the Latinx theological education community. While the stories shared in this chapter were only a fraction of what my participants shared with me, they nonetheless demonstrate how the participants have made sense of the interplay between their racial and religious identities. The following chapter shows how the participants drew on their identities as Latinx evangelical Christians in order to make sense of their experiences in evangelical seminaries.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Introduction

Biblical scholar Fernando Segovia (1994) once said that *la vida es una lucha* ("life is a struggle") for racially minoritized faculty in higher education. Scholars like Latina theologian Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz have confirmed this, as is evident in her books *En La Lucha/In the Struggle: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology* (2003) and *La Lucha Continues: Mujerista Theology* (2004). Similarly, Turner et al. (2008) wrote about "*Nuevas voces en la lucha*"—new voices in the struggle. As such, the theme *La Lucha*, "The Struggle," has come to characterize the academic experiences of Latinx theological faculty.

The initial purpose of my study was to understand the work experiences of Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries. However, as I spoke with my participants, I began to more fully understand Segovia's (1994) conception of struggle. My study became less about understanding my participants' general work experiences and more about how they endured challenges to their identities while creating new spaces for thriving. The purpose of my study thus became to understand what *La Lucha* looks like in evangelical seminaries and identify the strategies Latinx faculty have employed to survive and overcome *La Lucha*.

In the previous chapter, I introduced and highlighted the beliefs, perspectives, and stories of participants that helped me, the researcher, make sense of their experiences in evangelical seminaries. In this chapter, I provide a broad picture of *La Lucha* in evangelical seminaries and the strategies participants have employed to cope with such challenges to answer my two research questions:

1) What challenges do Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries face based on their racial/ethnic identity?

2) What practices allow Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries to endure challenges from their institutions?

As a counternarrative methodology demands that researchers place findings in direct conversations with the literature to show similarities and differences with prior research, I briefly touch on the literature before sharing my findings.

The Shape of *La Lucha* in Evangelical Seminaries

With regard to my first research question, I found that my participants faced a number of challenges related to their identities as racially minoritized faculty. For the sake of clarity, these challenges have been distilled down to three major themes: unfair labor expectations and misperceptions, struggles with White allies, and microaggressions. Together, this trifecta forms the shape of *La Lucha* in evangelical seminaries.

"Twice as Good": The Reality of Unfair Labor Expectations and Misperceptions

Sometimes I wish I didn't have this, but maybe something you'll hear from other people is... in the literature. It's called the minority tax and I feel it, you know, so you end up mentoring students, getting involved in minority issues and diversity issues over and above your regular job, which the Anglos just don't have to worry about. And so you end up being the recruiter, the mentor, the troubleshooter, on top of your regular job and so it gets tiring and then I do my ministry scholarship, I travel to different parts of the country and I mean, I get very tired, but you do it because it's your vocation, your calling. - David

***

The literature on racially minoritized faculty suggests that, in addition to the expected labor of teaching, research, and institutional and professional service, racially minoritized faculty

are expected to fulfill a variety of roles, including mentors, counselors, and advisors to racially minoritized students (Baez, 2000; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Stanley, 2006; Tuitt, Hanna, Martínez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009; Turner et al., 2008; Verdugo, 2003). Tierney and Bensimon (1996) have described this as "cultural taxation." The cultural taxation of racially minoritized faculty experienced in higher education constitutes an insidious form of implicit racism, embodying CRT's assertion that race and racism are central organizers of modern society (Solórzano, 1998). My participants frequently described cultural taxation and unfair labor expectations as challenges they experienced in evangelical seminaries.

Miguel Ángel knew what he was getting into, even at the beginning of his academic career. He described meeting a well-known Latinx professor at a conference who gave him the following advice:

> You are always perceived as "less than." You have to know about kind of a common story. In 2003, that's when I met [a scholar well-known in Latinx theological education] at an academic conference and I had just finished my PhD and was about to start my teaching career here in seminaries. She told me you will have to be twice as good as the other ones to be recognized. I was going through my notes, about two or three months ago, and it's still true. I was perceived as less than. If you're looking for specific examples, I can give you 10 or 20 or 30.

As this quote indicates, meeting this scholar was a pivotal moment in Miguel Ángel's career. He often referred to this scholar in his conversations with me as one who still continues to mentor him. When I spoke with Miguel Ángel about matters of extra labor, he sighed because he was tired. The labor that he as a faculty member of color is expected to perform was grating on his

soul. He was constantly reminded of his lack of worth in the eyes of his colleagues, as illustrated in the comment below:

> You are perceived less than, or they think you have your job because you are Latino. The other people think that you have some sort of preference or job security. It doesn't matter that I wrote 10 articles, have spoken to conferences, and that other person wrote one article, and spoke at one conference, but you are Latino you are perceived to have privilege. In daily life, it's completely the opposite. And then I'll try and explain these situations to them. Like last year that happened to me here at my institution, I was answering a similar question and was giving specific examples about how you always face some sort of a subtle discrimination, not just Latinos, but all minorities. And a man responded by saying, "well the problem is with all of you minorities, you just like to be the victims, you just want to be the martyrs."

For Miguel Ángel, stories such as these have become commonplace.

In the anecdote preceding this section, David refers to this phenomenon as the "minority tax." While many of my participants described experiences similar to his, David understood the vocabulary and was able to connect his experiences with higher education literature. Among the participants, David is perhaps the most distinguished in terms of his career. He serves on a number of boards, and has written several books and articles within the evangelical fold that both affirm and challenge evangelicalism, all of which lends him a unique perspective on the experiences of Latinxs working in evangelical seminaries. David has also described numerous instances where he was sought out to lead various initiatives and programs aimed at diversifying theological education. As a White-passing Latino, David is well aware that his colleagues would rather work with him than some of his Latinx colleagues who come off as "too Latino." He

realizes this is problematic but attributes his ability to blend into White settings while speaking with a Latinx voice to be a gift from God—an asset to be used for the liberation of people of color in predominantly White Christian spaces.

As a Latina, Elsa's experience has been remarkably different than David's. Elsa spent time in an established evangelical seminary in a director role and had a relatively good experience. In that role, she was entrepreneurial and the institution appreciated her work. She embarked on a new challenge at her current institution, however, the reception had not been as warm. Elsa began work as a director of Hispanic ministries and a faculty member in practical theology. "I'm sure you've come across this concept, and if you haven't, you'll want to research the 'invisible workload.'" When she told me that, I had to laugh, because as a Latinx graduate student, I am very much aware of the invisible workload.

Elsa had an excellent relationship with the former dean of her seminary but alluded to the invisible workload she was often expected to carry, even though she was unfairly compensated:

> None of this was intentional. But I very much found myself in this place where the seminary would not bring me on board full-time, but still expected me to work as if I were. And then wrestling with what that meant. So that was under the first phase under the leadership of a new dean, which was a good working relationship. We worked really well together, but still, even in the working well together, the absent mindedness or the not being able to connect the importance of making sure that the quality of work that I was offering the institution was rightfully compensated and, I mean compensated in terms of its title. And also compensated in terms of its financial remuneration.

What Elsa describes here is an unawareness from institutional authority figures that she was taking on a full-time workload developing programs for the seminary while only being

compensated for part-time. Once the dean with whom she had a great relationship left, the person who took their place began asking Elsa to take on even more responsibilities, including fulfilling several dean-level roles on an interim basis. Elsa said she could understand where the new dean was coming from since the seminary was still building its programs and credibility. Yet, things came to a tipping point for her when the new dean asked her to make coffee and make sure the lights were turned off when she left. At that point, she had had enough of the racism and sexism that marked her experience in that seminary. "It's that same White privilege that dominates our world," she explained. Elsa eventually resigned her many positions, not knowing where her next step would lead.

Alejandro experienced labor exploitation as well, specifically in serving on committees. His institution does not necessarily require faculty to serve on committees, but he has been asked to serve in the past. When he has served on committees, he noted that his perspective is often not valued. He refers to this work as a "more sophisticated form of serving on a plantation." For Alejandro, these committees became spaces of tokenization based on his Latinx perspective, as colleagues would listen to him and then ignore his perspective. These experiences have been incredibly frustrating for Alejandro and, as a result, he tries to be particular about the kinds of institutional service he takes on.

Despite the predominantly negative tenor participants shared regarding unfair labor expectations, several willingly involved themselves in issues of importance to the Latinx community. For instance, Annie said that she didn't know that committee service was a key component of faculty work. "They don't tell you this when they hire you as a professor," she told me. However, in the midst of the various committees on which she served, she found time to pursue institutional service that advanced the interests of the Latinx Christian community:

> There is a Hispanic conference at [our institution]. We are going to celebrate 40 years this year of having the Hispanic conference. Working on that has been on a voluntary basis. I have probably been there for about 10 years serving on the committee and we have moved the conference from almost nobody at the institution knowing about the conference to getting the institution to adopt the conference now and support the conference. So that has been a big accomplishment for us.

Annie has also partnered with Latinx and female faculty and staff to create programs that institutionalize a vision for student mentoring:

> In fact, a couple of staff members, females, and I were kind of doing [mentoring] on our own for about two or three years but we wanted to integrate what we were doing and have it become more formal. So I worked with the diversity committee, the diversity chief, and I cooperate with them doing that. … Currently, I am mentoring a couple of girls, female students, and we have gatherings with them.

As evidenced in the quotes above, Annie expressed a strong desire to serve the needs of Latinx and international students. When I asked her about whether or not she feels as though her labor is exploited due to her racial/ethnic identity, she was quick to say that no one has ever asked her to serve on a committee strictly because of her identity.

Aapo has had a long tenure at his institution. He described numerous instances where he experienced labor exploitation, especially in his earlier years. However, unlike the other participants, his tenure at his institution has granted him a unique perspective on how his labor is perceived by colleagues. Aapo did not go into great detail about specific instances where his labor was exploited or tokenized, but noted that the tokenization has been constant. While he has been at the forefront of creating spaces for Latinxs in his institution and has come to be known as

a mentor for Latinx students, he recognizes that all of the labor he has exerted is never permanent:

> You can't assume that steps taken in the past actually are permanent. In other words, an institution moves and then a new president comes in and then you have to reclaim those spaces again. I think that that's because our institution has historically had long presidential tenures, and that those before me claimed first under the president we had two present ago, but then, you know, formalized under the former president, I was able to build on and we got quite a ways… We're not there anymore because, under the new president, a whole lot of other things happened. And again, you almost have to refight some of the same battles.

He goes on to say that:

> We need to come to the reality of recognizing that when you're a minoritized person, there's nothing permanent. You can't assume that the battles that have been fought and won are going to even be acknowledged when a Pharaoh that didn't know Joseph comes on the scene and I don't think that's particular to my institution. I think that's common in the seminary system. And I don't think that's particularly evangelical seminaries, that's all across the board.

Here, Aapo describes how changes in campus leadership often mean a few steps back in advances made for racially minoritized groups. The example he uses is from the biblical book of Exodus, Chapter 1. In that passage of Scripture, a Pharaoh (king or emperor) came to power who "knew not Joseph," who was a benevolent ruler who cared for the people of God, the Israelites. The Pharaoh that rose to power went on to oppress the Israelites, leading to God's anointing of Moses to free the Israelites from the Pharaoh's oppressive rule. This biblical allusion is often

used to refer to those who come to power who lack institutional memory. For Aapo, Latinxs can continue to labor for their community, but their labor may be in vain or only temporary as they may need to refight some of their older battles.

David has seen that administration can often be unaware of certain realities. In fact, David has had an excellent relationship with the administrators of his institution. For example, he recalled telling the chaplain of his institution about Hispanic Heritage Month, to which the chaplain replied, "I had no idea that existed!" Due to David's conversation with the chaplain, the institution ended up celebrating the month without hesitation. The chaplain's office has leaned on David for potential Hispanic Heritage Month chapel speakers. "It's a symbolic move, but an important one," he commented. David was also very positive about the "movement" on his campus. A prominent leader in the Latino and Latina evangelical community was recently asked to join the institution's board, the Latino and Latina student group has been steadily growing, and the administration has been intentional in hiring more racially minoritized and female faculty. He opts for a more intentional pace in seeking institutional change:

> They're these undergrads, you know, seniors, they want it now. And I said, look, this is a 10-year project. You know, you're graduating. I'm staying. We need to build. You're laying the groundwork that you won't even see, but you've got to convince yourself of the process. Now what I'm seeing is that doesn't compute sometimes for 20-year-olds, 21-year-olds, they want it now and they're gonna to do the "*La Raza*" thing. But how to do it constructively for the long-term. Institutionally. That's my challenge.

David's concern is that students will move quickly through the institution, demand change, and then graduate. However, he wants students to gain better appreciation of the long-term task of institutional change. When David engages in institutional change efforts, he recognizes that his

actions will have long-term impacts that will extend beyond the traditional four-year career of college students. He thorough believes that his labor has been instrumental in helping Latino and Latina students and the broader community.

For my participants, unfair labor expectations were a primary challenge they faced in their institutions. Some realized that they needed to work twice as hard as their White colleagues to be perceived as competent and knowledgeable. Some sought to create spaces supportive of Latinx faculty, students, and staff. Most of the participants recognized that these unfair labor expectations were the product of living in a racist society and working in institutions that have yet to reckon with systemic racism. Institutional racism in the guise of unfair labor expectations also discouraged some of these participants from seeking leadership positions in their institutions.

"Representatives of Everybody": Struggles with White Allies

The participants also named working with White "allies" as a key challenge of being a Latinx faculty member at an evangelical seminary. Patton & Bondi (2015) define allies as those "who work for social justice from positions of dominance" (p. 489). My participants referred to this group by different names, such as "White progressives" or "White liberals." Patton & Bondi (2015) go on to suggest that "ally work is ongoing, requiring continual reflection, and perseverance. It involves moving beyond words toward actions that disrupt oppressive structures and understanding one's positionality in oppression" (p. 489). While White allies may be well-intentioned and may seek to diminish racism, my participants found them difficult to work with and engage, adding to an already difficult work environment.

In Roberto's experience, working with White allies has been tremendously difficult, especially in terms of leadership. He related a story to me about a conversation he had with his president, a White ally, regarding Robert's chances for a promotion:

> My former president, who is a very dear friend of mine, was looking for a senior vice president at the school and I had been a dean there already for over a decade. He chose someone who had never been in any kind of academic administration. And then he said to me that I was "too valuable" in the Latino programs that I was running for the seminary to be placed in the position. And I said to him "well, in effect, you were saying that you have someone who is rather incompetent to do the job, rather than someone who you think is competent because you are more useful over here." And he turned red, he blushed. And you know, he basically said in a sentence that a White man can lead a group including Latinos, but a Latino cannot lead a group that's composed of mostly White Americans.

Reflecting on his experience of missing out on the new position, Roberto said, "when you talk to other of my colleagues in academic administration, don't you see that as a common thread? They all say 'you're too valuable. You're too valuable.' And the reality is that that's not true. It's subtle racism." Roberto was honest about the barriers that face Latinxs in not only higher education, but also in evangelical higher education. To illustrate this point, Roberto told me a story about how he was nominated for the presidency of an evangelical seminary, only to be turned down due to questions about "qualifications":

> Same thing happened to me when I was put up for a president's job, the one who chaired the search committee, well they didn't say that to me directly. I found out later on that the same chair literally asked the committee, "do you think that people would give money to

> a Hispanic?" Wow. I mean would you say that about an Italian or a German? It's crazy to think about, but then again, on TV, you see us as the criminals and gang members and villains in the Clint Eastwood movies.

Here, Roberto highlights an experience all too common among leaders of color in higher education by connecting his experience to broader cultural narratives about Latinxs. Moreover, he described countless instances in which supposed allies betrayed his confidence.

Perhaps the most stinging of these experiences in theological education was when he came into his position as an administrator with three associate deans reporting to him. His predecessor had embraced a hands-off leadership style, which differed from Roberto's style of being connected to his associate deans and their collective responsibilities. On one occasion, the associate dean for diversity, a White woman, shared her plans for implementing diversity training for faculty. This associate dean wanted to include issues of sexual orientation in the training. Roberto, who is theologically conservative, wanted to stick closely to the viewpoint of the institution, which believes that sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman is wrong. Roberto told the associate dean that she could discuss issues related to sexual orientation, but from a theologically conservative viewpoint, not a "diversity" viewpoint, as he referred to it. He could tell the dean was not happy with him.

A bit later, at a meeting with his president, Roberto noticed that the very same issue of sexual orientation in diversity training was on the agenda. After some discussion between he and his president, Roberto decided to call the associate dean into the meeting:

> Then I called her in, I sat down with her and I said to her, "you're the associate dean for diversity. Correct?" She said, "yes." I said, "you report to me" three times. And I said, "you, white woman, went around me, a Latino male, to speak to a White man to get your

way. Doesn't that sound a little bit like, you know…." and she just blushed. She said, "oh, it was unintentional, it wasn't intentional." I said, "But you know intentions have nothing to do with it. You're the dean of diversity, okay. It's this subtle, deep-down racist attitude that you can go around me and I'm your boss. I could have you fired right now."

In this experience, Roberto highlights the tension that exists between racially minoritized faculty and those who claim to be "allies" in the struggle for equity and social justice. However, as my participants' stories suggest, these allies often fumbled when it came to understanding the unique struggles of Latinxs. In this particular story, Roberto describes the tension between the Latinx Christian community and the LGBTQ community. While this particular associate dean believed she was acting in a socially just way, she nonetheless exerted her White privilege to achieve her ends—all while positioning herself as an ally to marginalized peoples. Conversely, Roberto leaned into his male privilege, his position, and commitment to institutional values to dismiss his subordinate's concerns. This episode demonstrates the complicated nature of social justice work in evangelical seminaries and highlights how White allies can ignore the power dynamics of an institution and act without conscious reflection.

Aapo also expressed the difficulties of working with White allies. Aapo's particular seminary has embraced its reputation for promoting a vision for diversity in terms of personnel and specific programs. However, according to Aapo, the seminary is filled with "White progressives," whom he finds extremely objectionable to work with:

> White progressives sometimes give me more difficulty than White conservatives because White progressives *know they know*. Therefore, they feel quite comfortable touting themselves as representatives of everybody, but would never accept that, for example, a Latino could be representative of them… I'd almost prefer to work with White politically

> conservative folks because at least I know where the landmines are and where the bullets are coming from. The White progressive will tell you all the ways they use all the right language, but it's still about who's in charge. And *clearly* the White progressive knows better. I think that has been the ugliest… the hardest [challenge] of all.

Aapo went on to reflect that White allies tend to be more difficult to deal with than others because they tend to embrace a politically correct linguistic posture that exempts them from racial criticism. While Aapo struggled to make a difference in his institution, it wasn't the White conservatives who gave him the most trouble, it was the White, liberal allies.

One participant (who asked to remain nameless in this particular instance) discussed their disdain for White allies. "White allies are an interesting phenomenon and I'm still getting my head around that. Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's not so good, but they're passionate," they said chuckling. They went on to reflect on the dynamics between them, White allies, and the administration at their institution:

> Sometimes [White allies] can be very crusading types and they feel very good about themselves as they do this. But what happens is sometimes they don't get it because that's not their experience. Why are you speaking up? You don't even know what it's like. I appreciate your support. But what happens is because they can be vociferous and pushy, they turn off the administration because if you're looking for institutional change, what you need is patience and constructive work. If they keep pushing in their vociferous, crusading kind of way, the administration goes, "oh, there goes so and so again, we've heard it all," because sometimes these people will actually make statements publicly. I mean, it's just not helpful, but they see themselves as the righteous warrior.

For this participant, White allies were those devoted to social justice causes who had not experienced life as a minoritized person, yet believed they could speak on behalf of minoritized groups. This observation is similar to what Aapo's suggestion that White allies believe that can be "representatives of everybody." The participant went on to give two instances where White allies embodied this approach. In a committee meeting, this participant and others discussed what the title for the new chief diversity officer was going to be. While the committee agreed that "Chief Diversity Officer" was the best term for the position, the administration opted for a different title. According to my participant, one White ally was "incensed" at the new title of the position and wanted to protest the administration. During this process, my participant was in conversation with the administrative officers who made the hiring and titling decisions. "When we did the research nationally, that's the title they're using in schools like ours. So what ends up happening is these White allies are always very suspicious of the administration." This participant went on to say that sometimes they "feel like saying, 'okay, so you've read a book, you're a white guy and you're 60 years old,'" chuckling.

This participant also relayed an instance where a White professor in another department was let go for reasons unknown at the time. Some concluded that his class on the philosophy of race and justice, though popular, was being shut down by the administration. The White allies were outraged, sending emails and calling for the administration to rehire the professor. But my participant knew there were other reasons behind these hiring and firing decisions. Eventually, it was revealed that the department was terminating adjunct positions across the board but opened up a full-time position. The department ended up hiring a full-time the professor—a Latino! "So, you know, one of [the White allies], the next week came to me and said, 'you know, you were right on this.' I said, 'well, let's just give benefit of the doubt and…if we need to do things, we

can push. Let's just kind of go about this in a wiser way." For this participant, White allies ultimately can hinder institutional change more than helped it.

Jorge, too, had candid words for White allies. Referring to them as "liberal racists," he said "they're the worst. The conservative racists just hate you outright." He went on to say that White liberals will say all the right things, but then stab you in the back. Roberto, Aapo, and the unnamed participant all expressed similar sentiments. While evangelical seminaries tend to be predominantly White, conservative spaces (ATS, 2018; Conde-Frazier et al., 2004), my participants indicated that it was White allies/liberals/progressives who served as a source of frustration more often than their overtly conservative counterparts, adding yet another layer of challenges to an already challenging institutional culture.

"It's Bad, Man": The Compounding Nature of Microaggressions

The literature often describes how racially minoritized faculty are often the subjects of microaggressions (Sue et al., 2008). These microaggressions perpetuate the crisis of legitimacy that racially minoritized faculty experience in higher education (Zambrana et al., 2017). Unfortunately, Latinx faculty in theological education are no exception in their experiences of microaggressions (Hernández et al, 2017; Turner et al., 2008). For my participants, microaggressions were part and parcel of their experience. Their experiences affirmed what Solórzano (1997) described as a core tenet of CRT/LatCrit—the centrality of racial oppression. While microaggressions are often forms of "subtle" oppression (Zambrana et al., 2017), my participants perceived these experiences to be microcosms of larger structural forces that perpetuate racism against Latinxs.

For example, while in the process of hiring the new director of a doctoral program designed for Latinx pastors, Roberto explained:

> I'm looking for a director for one of our programs And I wanted somebody who can speak Spanish, a bilingual person, someone who's culturally Hispanic. And another faculty sitting on this committee with me and he says, "why can't we ask," you know, he mentioned one of our young faculty, a very talented young lady, and he said, "maybe we can have her learn some conversational Spanish and deal with it." And I said, "you know, here's the problem with something like this. When you're looking for something like that, an Anglo-Saxon person who can say when *buenas noches,* it's okay, but you get a Puerto Rican faculty member, you say, oh, "he has a heavy accent."

Roberto related several stories in which his colleagues similarly demonstrated tremendous ignorance regarding issues of race and diversity on a daily basis.

Alejandro's experience at his institution has been aggressively characterized by microaggressions. He finds joy in teaching students and mentoring, as many Latinx theological faculty do (Cascante, 2017; Hernández et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2008), but finds that the institution as a whole fosters a difficult working environment for persons of color. Alejandro's institution is in an urban environment and the student body consists of mostly racial and ethnic minorities. Despite the racial and ethnic makeup of the student body, he says that "this is not a friendly place for Latinos." Regarding leadership at his institution, he noted that "They'll greet you with a smile or a blessing, but if anything, [people of color] are a resource they can use. My opinion is only of value to them if it is convenient to them." He related several instances where his colleagues chided him for suggesting perspectives that were not aligned with theirs. Moreover, Alejandro observed that, if a racially minoritized faculty member wants to avoid microaggressions, they would need to stay quiet. Specifically, he says:

> You learn very quickly to stay quiet if you need the paycheck and you don't question the certain tendencies in lifestyle or other things, because then you become part of the 'others.' Not everyone thinks this way, that there is an institutionalized oppression in seminary education.

Alejandro also referred to the culture of his institution as fostering a "holy oppression." For Alejandro, being Latino and in the academy requires a kind of creativity that his White colleagues envy. A common example of a microaggression that Alejandro experienced was colleagues using his ideas without giving him credit:

> When you're creative, you know, again, if it is something that aligns with what they want, sometimes they will take it and they're not going to give you credit. They will never appreciate the fact that somebody else produced that idea or whatever it was.

And yet, that despite the daily racism he experienced, Alejandro continually expressed that he worked at his institution because of the paycheck. He lamented that, when he worked in a "secular" workplace, there was a culture of trust, but working in a Christian institution did not foster a trusting, hospitable environment.

Miguel Ángel has also experienced numerous microaggressions at his institution. He recalled one instance where he was walking on campus in jeans and a soccer jersey and a student called the police on him. There had been a robbery suspect wandering around campus, presumed to be Latinx, and the police confronted Miguel Ángel. This took place shortly after the election of Donald Trump in 2016. While this microaggression was particularly hurtful given the social milieu of at the time, Miguel Ángel described another instance where his department chair, after a discussion on budget cuts, told he and another Latinx faculty member that they were both "safe" because of their race. Miguel Ángel's institution has historically struggled to retain

racially minoritized faculty, and his department chair implied that the only reason he and the other Latinx professor were "safe" was because the institution could not afford to lose any more faculty of color. "I could go on for days" about microaggressions, Miguel Ángel told me.

Overall, microaggressions were a common occurrence for many of my participants, many of whom who described the pain associated with such words and actions. Together, their testimonies illustrate how the compounding nature of microaggressions made their experiences in evangelical seminaries especially burdensome.

Crear Nuevos Mundos/Creating New Worlds

The trifecta of unfair labor expectations and misperceptions, struggles with White allies, and microaggressions constituted the major struggles my participants have faced as faculty in evangelical seminaries. While the literature has highlighted how Latinx faculty have pushed back against *La Lucha* from the standpoint of working conditions (Turner et al., 2008) and disciplinary challenges (Alicea-Lugo, 1998), my participants sought to overcome *La Lucha* by ultimately creating new spaces for thriving. In seeking responses to my second research question, I found that, while some of my participants used their personal capital and positions to impact institutional change (as highlighted in the previous section), most (if not all) were more interested creating new spaces for thriving as Latinxs. This drive to create new spaces and knowledges was less about resisting *La Lucha* and more about following the call of God in their lives wherever it led.

Vocación/The Call: A Matter of Obedience and Service

I think about a document that I wrote in the late 90s. That's when I was trying to figure out what to do with my life. I was in seminary and I think, at that time, my goal was to be obedient to the Lord and be where He wants me to be, and to use the gifts He gave me to equip his church,

primarily through teaching and writing. Those are my primary gigs. So that's what I am trying to do, that's what keeps me going to be faithful, and to also to understand that the body of Christ…is another one of my values. The body of Christ is more wide, is beyond my institution, beyond my denomination. So I'm part of something bigger than myself that helps me to learn from others and to join the work of others. I mean, I don't have to be the one who brings all the change and be the savior. I just need to be faithful and learn from others. And I think that that's also helped me to be alive... and to keep going. -Miguel Ángel

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As I spoke with my participants, I noticed that nearly all of them described how their calling and vocation shaped their lives and approach to their work. In a qualitative study on Latinx faculty in theological education, Turner et al. (2008) found that Latinx theological faculty are driven by a sense of divine calling on their lives, specifically a call to seek social justice in their institutions, constituting a challenge to dominant ideologies (Solórzano, 1997). The participants in my study expressed a similar sense of divine calling, but one different from what Turner and her colleagues found. Specifically, my participants described their calling as a sense of obedience to the call they believed God had placed on their lives. While some described a desire to seek social justice as an aspect of their calling, obedience to God and faithfulness to one's sense of purpose figured more prominently in their lives and work. Moreover, their sense of call was not limited to theological education; some described an openness to leaving theological education to return to church ministry but believed that God had called them to theological education for a reason. Overall, however, leaning into their sense of calling served as an effective strategy in surviving the challenges they faced in theological education.

Jorge comes from a theological tradition that sees academic and ecclesial work as connected. Some Christian traditions tend to prioritize ecclesial work over that of the academy, but Jorge's tradition has always valued educational and ecclesial work similarly. Originating in the U.S., the earliest groups affiliated with Jorge's tradition founded numerous colleges and universities whose purpose was to train people for church ministry. "Name a Christian college off the top of your head and chances are we founded it," he told me, jokingly. Jorge told me that one of the early leaders of his tradition served as president for one of the early colleges and that he "was always a great preacher, a great pastor and administrator and a great author *and* professor." For those in his tradition, holding these identities and roles is "seamless, two sides of the same coin." Jorge went on to say that he is first and foremost a pastor/preacher and then a scholar. He described multiple experiences in his own theological education where he was taught by "professors who were horrible preachers," and vowed that, if he were to ever work in theological education, he wouldn't repeat the same mistakes. "I care more about the church and my students than I do my scholarship, and if you have a problem with that, too bad." Holding these multiple vocational identities as a pastor, teacher, professor, and scholar—as his tradition embraces and encourages—has allowed Jorge to serve in a myriad of Christian organizations, including churches, his denomination, and currently, an evangelical seminary. Several of my participants expressed holding these identities simultaneously. The benefit of this survival mechanism was that they did not necessarily feel tied to theological education; they could pursue other vocations if they sensed the Lord was leading them out of higher education.

In the anecdote at the beginning of this section, Miguel Ángel describes his sense of calling in terms of obedience and service. He discovered his sense of vocation while in seminary and sought to be obedient to the Lord in everything, which led him to pursue a career in teaching

and writing. Miguel Ángel has been teaching in various settings ever since, even before his teenage years. For him, obedience and service are the primary drivers that enable him to "be alive" and "keep going" even in the midst of challenging institutional circumstances.

David described a sense of calling tied to social justice, much in the way that Turner et al. (2008) described, but tied his calling to the church. Much like Miguel Ángel, David's seminary years were when his sense of calling became clearer. As he had grown up Roman Catholic and converted to evangelicalism in his college years, David was new to evangelicalism as a seminary student. In perusing his seminary's bookstore, he came across a book that piqued his interest. "What happened was, during my second year at seminary I think it was, I was in the seminary bookstore and I saw this cover... let me see, can I move away and get it?" David paused as I was speaking to him and went to his bookshelf to pull out a copy of a book entitled *A Theology of Liberation.* He continued:

> You can see the cover. So I see this book in the bookstore, which was in an evangelical seminary. The fact that it was there, was surprising going back in the late 70s, the last thing on the back of the cover was Gutiérrez and I just started reading it and then all this stuff, I mean, it makes perfect sense to me because of Latin America and my time there. So it makes perfect sense to me. So that's when I began to think how would it look like to be socially aware as an evangelical?

The Gutiérrez that David was referring to was Gustavo Gutiérrez, a prominent Latin American theologian known for his seminal works on liberation theology, which suggest that the primary thrust of the Christian teaching is social and economic liberation from oppression. This kind of theology has been met with suspicion by evangelicals, who tend to believe that the goal of Christian theology is individual liberation from the power of sin through placing their faith in

Jesus Christ. But the question David wrestled with is whether or not there was a way to synthesize these two theological orientations. David went to Latin America after seminary to teach at a seminary and there began to find his answers to his questions:

> And so, you know, then we go to Latin America and it's in the middle of the revolutions, and there was a war going on in Guatemala, and I'm getting students from all over the Americas at the seminary who are asking these questions. . . . And so I started getting interested in sociological stuff in the peace process. I'm reading literature from across the spectrum politically and theologically. And that's where I begin to see in this conversation with my Latin colleagues, not with my American colleagues, but with my Latin colleagues, *that teaching and education is for a reason that this is for social change, and personal commitments wrapped around the church. And so that's where I begin to see that teaching and learning is a vocation, not a career*. I mean, it is a career, but if I weren't doing this for Latinos, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. I don't know what I'd be doing. So everything gets defined along those lines. So that moves me into a certain set of political commitments.

Here, David's sense of calling and vocation is deeply entwined with his commitment not only to social justice and the Latinx community, but also to the church. He went on to say that his sense of calling and vocation pervades his life's work in biblical studies and Latinx issues. As I share later in this chapter, David's commitment to biblical scholarship and Latinx issues is a driving force behind his work as a faculty member in an evangelical seminary.

Alejandro also described his sense of vocation and calling as one driven by obedience and service. Experiencing a tug toward evangelicalism, Alejandro sensed a desire to help people

from an early age. He described helping people as a call on his life. For the time being, he is a theological educator, yet, he seeks to help people in every way he can:

> I just decided to really early when I was about 17 I wanted to pursue psychology because I felt that that was a profession that was gonna help me to make sense of my own issues, but also that was going to be able to provide me a lot of really good tools in working with people, in making sense of people's issues. And I didn't think I understood fully what that meant, but I don't remember making that conscious decision from that moment on. I have never ever felt more at home in terms of my training, my education, and in terms of what I do, even when I became a pastor. I went to a Bible Institute back home and pursue that. So I got more true, more formal training for that. But even being a pastor, I was a preacher. But I was, I think, the passive that tended to go more into the counseling part than anything else.

As the above illustrates, Alejandro's sense of calling led him to pursue a career in theological education, yet he continues to feel as though he could be led out of the field:

> But this is the thing though, I still feel that my calling is helping. I don't know if I will retire doing [theological education]. I'm really open to the fact that I may be doing something else in a few years. I don't know. I really don't know. *Ben, the older I get, I think the more I'm focused on the fact that I need to get closer to God rather than being closer to a calling* or to our profession or to anything like that. So I'm listening. *I am listening in, in whatever direction he wants to take me.*

Like Miguel Ángel, Alejandro is not necessarily intent on staying in theological education. As shared earlier in this chapter, Alejandro's experience in theological education has been extremely negative. However, he has coped with these experiences by leaning into his sense of calling.

Similarly, Elsa's sense of calling has enabled her to be very flexible when it comes to switching careers. She recounted a story where she was chosen to teach Sunday school at the age of 12:

> Nobody wanted me to be a Sunday school teacher, but I felt a vocational call to teaching. And they kept announcing in our church that they needed someone to teach the 3 to 5-year-olds. And I went to my mom and my father and I said, "I'm going to teach that class." I wanted to teach that class. I went to my pastor and told them I want to teach that class. Everybody said you don't have the age, the superintendent of the church said you can't teach this class. And I told my pastor, you have to help me. I'm supposed to be teaching this class. And they did. They let me teach the class and the majority of those kids are still serving the Lord today. Thanks be to God. But that really was my entry point into knowing that, yeah, I have this gift. That I had a creativity and an ability to not just take a bible verse but to bring it and teach it, bring it to life.

For Elsa, these early experiences helped her gain a sense of her call to teach in the church. Years later, while attending seminary, she had an unusual interaction with a professor:

> Probably one of my very first papers, I get it back and the professor wrote a little note that said, "during the break I'd like to see you." And so I said, this is just the beginning and I'm already in some kind of trouble here. So I go to him and he said, "while I was grading your paper, the Holy Spirit told me that you were going to become the leader of this new program, that you were going to build this."

This professor turned out to be correct about Elsa's vocational journey. She would go on to build the Hispanic ministries program at the same seminary she attended. While directing the program, she pursued a PhD and went on to work in a number of positions in her denomination. "I felt a

desire to advance whatever God was calling me to do for the Latino Church and for women in ministry." As I shared earlier in this chapter, Elsa left her most recent position due to the unfair and invisible labor expectations she had been experiencing for several years. When I asked her what was next, she showed she was not worried in the least. Part of the peace she experienced in transitioning out of her institution was due to her unique place within the denomination. "So the blessing is that I am a Latina, an evangelical, a PhD with administrative experience, and Christian. I have a lot of offers and I actually have some decisions that I need to make to rule out the institutions I do not want to work for!" Not only did Elsa's unique credentials and identity lend her confidence in the hunt for a new position, but so did her sense of calling. "God is good, I'm not worried."

For my participants, their work in theological education has a certain temporality. They know they need to be where they are at this current moment, yet remain open to other directions that God might lead them in. Some were pondering a return to pastoral ministry, while others were thinking about moving into administration. Their deep sense of vocation allowed them a certain nimbleness regarding their current work and allowed them to endure the struggles described at the beginning of this chapter and develop new spaces for thriving in their calling. These new spaces are detailed in the following sections.

Creating Space Between Academy and Church

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Latinx theologians have actively pushed against dominant ideologies in scholarship (Alicea-Lugo, 1998; Isasi-Díaz, 2004; Turner et al., 2008). Turner et al. (2008) have suggested that, "Latinas/os have had to and continue to struggle to challenge the dominant ideology that keeps them at the margins of the academy. Many of our interviewees… indicated that they remain committed to the fight because the reward is equality and justice "(p.

328). While challenging dominant ideologies is a core tenet of LatCrit/CRT (Solórzano, 1997) and is a key facet of the labor produced by racially minoritized faculty, my participants viewed their research as life-giving and positive, especially in regard to how their research benefits the broader Latinx community. This commitment to benefitting the Latinx community also manifested itself in their approaches to teaching, which I further describe in this section. While the need to constantly legitimize their experiences and knowledges was taxing for some, participants ultimately derived great joy from producing resources for the academy and the church that have helped bring attention to issues facing the Latinx community.

With the exception of Alejandro, whose institution was focused more on teaching, most of my participants indicated that they were expected to conduct research. However, in contrast to Turner et al's (2008) findings, some of devised research strategies that did not necessarily seek to decenter eurocentric ideologies and theologies. Instead, several participants described their cultivation of a number of research interests, many of which focused on the interplay between Christian theology, the Latinx experience, and ministry practice.

Being so steeped in the life of the church, Jorge's scholarship has focused on helping Latinx churches and communities do ministry more effectively. As previously mentioned, Jorge belongs to a Christian tradition that espouses a harmony between church ministry and theological reflection. As such, Jorge's scholarship covers not only academic topics like postcolonial studies, but also topics of ecclesial importance, like preaching, teaching, and church leadership. Rather than tell me about his specific research trajectories, Jorge reflected on the difficulty of being a bilingual scholar. For him, to be a "Latino researcher" means that you have to not only know the breadth of your discipline in English, but also disciplinary conversations taking place in Spanish. "This is a burden that our monolingual friends just don't have." He went on to describe how a

crucial textbook in his field written only in Spanish was only available in a seminary in Costa Rica. This specific textbook was out of print, but the seminary was able to send him a PDF copy. Since there is a dearth of theological literature in Central and Latin America, some people "pirate" books and sell them as PDFs, which Jorge said he didn't like because it promoted a spirit of "greediness" in theological community. For Jorge, being a Latino scholar means being able to work in bilingual and bicultural spaces for the benefit of the ecclesial community.

"You know, you're asking me things I haven't had to think about, so I appreciate this," Jorge said, laughing. In addition to his concerns about the availability of theological scholarship in Spanish, Jorge went on to describe two other key aspects related to being a Latino scholar. First, there is a need for Latinx scholars to educate people in theological basics. "In Latin America, there are many learned people, but there are many more who don't have a handle on the basics." To illustrate this point, he recalled teaching a certificate-level course at a seminary a long time ago and was astounded by the lack of biblical and theological literacy his students demonstrated. While he grew frustrated, he realized he was being a "snob," and that he needed to devote more of his writing and research to helping Latinx communities understand basic theological concepts. Jorge continues to write, speak, and teach in churches and Latinx community centers across the country as he embraces his role as a pastor and teacher.

The second aspect of being a Latino scholar, according to Jorge, was the need to demonstrate scholarly competencies among his peers.

> And so, when you are a Latino scholar, you need to be able to work at [the popular level]. But then when you go to certain tables, when they think that you're not *really* a scholar... They are so racist, they think that you've got in by some affirmative action thing. Then you have to wow them and show them who's boss.

To further demonstrate this point, Jorge related a story about how he was asked to give a lecture to a group of PhD students at his seminary on one of his research areas. Jorge has a doctorate, but not a PhD. Even among the group of students and professors who attended his lecture, one of the professors asked him to explain a theory to his students. “Even in a group like that, they didn’t have anyone qualified to teach them the theory!” he relayed. For Jorge, engaging at both the popular and scholarly levels is important if he is to exemplify his calling. On weekdays, he is lecturing at his seminary, but on the weekends, he is preaching at local churches in both English and Spanish. Cultivating competency in popular and academic topics proved to be a strategy that enabled him to succeed in a variety of venues, especially in his seminary. Miguel Ángel expressed a similar sentiment when he suggested that the books he has published in Spanish “don’t really count” to his colleagues, who privilege scholarship written in English.

David also commented on the need to cultivate different research topics of pertinence to ecclesial and academic conversations. His scholarship has historically focused on biblical studies and Latinx issues. However, he spoke of how the need to maintain a balance focus on one or the other to maintain scholarly legitimacy:

> Here’s another part that’s a burden because what I have found over the years, not always, but because of my involvement with Latin American stuff because, you know, I got involved with [several academic organizations] way back in Latin America in the 80s and I would fly up for the meetings. And now the last 10 years doing Latinx stuff what can happen is I get boxed in, Oh, “you’re the Latinx issues guy” and they don’t take me seriously as a biblical studies scholar. So what I find myself doing is actually continuing with the Latinx stuff, but then taking on extra projects in biblical studies because I don’t want to be boxed in. And actually, if I do good biblical studies work, it gets published

> and my work tends to be in the Prophets or ethics. If I can do good work in that, that gives me credibility on the Latinx side and vice versa. And that's been extra work, to be perfectly frank. *It's extra tax in scholarly work to maintain credibility in the guild.*

David went on to give specific examples of how this interplay manifests itself practically. On one occasion, shortly before our interview, he was asked to write two book endorsements. One book was about Latinx theological education and the other was on biblical ethics. These book endorsements are time-consuming for David, as they require him to give each book a hearty skim, taking away time he could spend on more significant projects. However, for David, these small projects were necessary for him to maintain a foot in both worlds. Additionally, David was asked to edit a series of books in biblical studies. "[Latinx issues] are my passion, so I have to take on projects such as [being the editor of a book series] so that I can be considered a biblical studies guy and then feed my interests in Latinx issues." While there is much overlap between the kind of biblical studies work David conducts and his interest in Latinx studies, he makes use of a separate research agenda to maintain legitimacy in both areas.

When I asked David about his philosophy of teaching, he invoked the word "*picar*," which means "to poke" in Spanish. For David, *picar* means getting at some of the assumptions students make in their thinking that require deconstruction. Mirroring his overall strategy for navigating institutional politics, David's pedagogical strategy is to "win students, not defeat. I need to think long-term." When it comes to teaching predominantly White students, he extends a bit of grace. "There are Anglos who are very sincere and want to learn, and there are those who are going to push back. You can teach them through intimidation or 'I know more than you do,' but that again, that's not helpful." Instead, David's goal is to expose students to the breadth of conversations taking place in his discipline:

> I teach a course here, on new voices in the discipline. So we look at Latin American, and I get it in conversation with U.S. Hispanics and then we look at South Africa, conversations with African American and Southeast Asian scholarship, conversations with Asian American scholarship, then women's studies. So the goal is to expose students to different ways of reading and the kinds of decisions that are made in those conversations.

David also mentioned that his students have been very receptive to the kind of textbooks and coursework he assigns. Every now and then, he'll receive some strong pushback from students, but he finds he has been able to respond to these moments effectively.

Roberto, who is also in biblical studies, approaches his work in a similar way. He fashions himself as one who maintains evangelical theology while problematizing the colonial project. At the top of each of his syllabi, Roberto writes under the description of the course that he teaches from a postcolonial perspective; that is, "from the underside of mainstream society." He related this approach to his identity as a Latino man, "a citizen, but also an immigrant, a second-class immigrant from the beginning." Positionality remains an emphasis of his. "I make it a point to always tell the students 'you will always have who you are as part of the interpretation, whether you are a woman, Black, or Latino.' Acknowledging this is a good step." Since Roberto teaches biblical studies, he tries to remain "close to the text," meaning he tries to teach the biblical text in its original context. But since the biblical text is subject to a spectrum of interpretation, he puts the text through different lenses. "I also try to find readings from women, Blacks, Whites, Latinos, whenever possible. Last time I was teaching, I remember I didn't have a book by a Latino, so I just told them 'I'm the commentary because I'm Latino (*laughs*)." When asked if he received pushback from students or other faculty, he said that he used to receive some

pushback from faculty, who would call him "liberal," but those concerns have subsided over the years. For participants like David and Roberto, their teaching has functioned as an extension of their research agenda, creating space for Latinx perspectives while preparing students for the challenges of ministering in today's world.

Meanwhile, Aapo's scholarship has focused primarily on issues of historical theology; that is, the way that people throughout history have conducted theological work and thought about theological issues. Aapo has most recently applied this framework to issues pertinent to understanding Latinx religious identity in the United States. His earlier work, however, was less about "fighting the man," as he stated, and more about helping the Latinx community, particularly Latinx Protestants, understand themselves. Over time, however, through various books and articles, he started to subvert dominant narratives around Latinx religion (both Protestant and Catholic) to uncover the power dynamics present in American society. His approach in his earlier career was relatively similar to David's, but Aapo has grown more comfortable in challenging dominant norms due to the strong reputation he holds at his institution.

Miguel Ángel had been active in a professional organization for over 15 years, but recently made a decision to exit the organization. The organization was initially supportive of his work in practical theology and he has benefited greatly from the connections he's had made through the organization. Miguel Ángel's leadership in his field has been recognized by various scholars, and as a result, he was invited to join the board of this professional organization. As he shows here, his plan was to engage in some of the critical conversations that have been taking place in scholarship across disciplines, such as issues related to racism, sexism, and nationalism:

> Part of that is, I think, it reaches a point not only for this organization, but also in evangelical seminaries. And that's part of the Trump effect, right? When you have all this discrimination rising and then people are speaking and saying, "hey wait, that's not right, let's talk about this issue…The #Metoo movement last year and women's issues, everybody else is like, "I don't care. I mean, it doesn't affect me." So you reach a point where you say, "we're the only ones affected," and they weren't speaking. So you want allies who can at least to show some empathy or at least to put in practice.

Miguel Ángel went on to describe his process for working on the board. In the first year, he wanted to listen to the voices around the table and see what he could contribute. The second year, he gained formal responsibilities on the board. The third year was when he decided to speak up:

> When there was a time to plan the conference, I said, "well, let's revisit this issue of race and social justice. And I think it's important to bring some women also as well." And there was a lot of pushback. It came to a point where I was emotionally tired and said, "I don't want to keep fighting this." I mean, you don't want to, but you need to... You reach a point where you have to choose your battles.

When I asked Miguel Ángel if he was ever going to attend his organization's professional conference again, and he said he'd probably choose other professional conferences when the time came. Miguel Ángel's research is still quite broad, engaging in practical theological conversations with some work related to race and social justice issues. While he has challenged the dominant ideologies of his organization to the point of resigning from the board, his practice of cultivating numerous research interests aligns with that of participants like David and Aapo.

Surprisingly, Annie did not heavily invest her scholarly energies into Latinx-related issues. Coming to the U.S., her research interests had very little to do with the Latinx community, instead focusing on broad issues of practical theology. She had an advisor, a White man, who was especially supportive of her academic career, inviting her to co-write a few articles and guest edit a journal with him in the area of practical theology. Her specific work in her subfield led to an invitation to become the editor of an international book series, which was positively received. Despite not exclusively focusing on issues of pertinence to the Latinx community, her work has an international flair, which has put her in touch with scholars from across the globe. However, a recent invitation to publish an article on the spiritual formation of U.S. Latinxs has redirected her work:

> And now after writing this article on spiritual formation with Latinos, I think the Lord has put some burden in my heart to continue to do more research with Latinos, but here in the States. . . . So my desire is to see if I can get a grant or something that could help me to conduct more larger research.

The above indicates that Annie does not root her desire to do more research with evangelical Latinx communities in a critical framework. Rather, she frames it as being a spiritual necessity. Annie was the only participant who referred to her research in this fashion. Ultimately, while the majority of the participants wanted to maintain scholarly legitimacy in their institutions, they developed research agendas geared toward supporting the work of Latinx churches and communities. The third space between the academy and the church was where they naturally found their work gravitating. Coincidentally, the majority of my participants were in fields of practical theology and those who were not still wrote works of practical significance for the Latinx church. Blending theological and practical concerns was natural for my participants as

this third space between the academy and the church was where they believed their work would have the greatest impact on people outside the academy.

Donde Esta Mi Gente?/Where Are My People?: Finding Community

By the time I spoke with Roberto, I realized that a theme around community or collective work was present in my interviews. Going into this research, I had anticipated that the role of building or finding community might be important, but Roberto's interview helped me confirm it. "Roberto, I'm finding that a lot of my participants have described finding community in non-evangelical spaces since there are so few Latinxs there to begin with. Has that been true for you?" He replied with a quick and confident, "that is correct."

As mentioned back in Chapter 2, there are a number of organizations in existence that seek to support Latinxs in theological education, chief among them are the Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) and the Association for Hispanic Theological Education (AETH). The HTI primarily supports doctoral students in theological circles and employs Latinx theological faculty as mentors. AETH gives resources to leaders of Hispanic Bible institutes, with several faculty and professors involved in their work. A finding that emerged over the course of my research was that Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries tend to find community outside of evangelical seminaries and organizations.

Miguel Ángel describes how he often has to find spaces outside of his seminary to discuss theology or social issues. He often finds himself walking to the university across the street and having conversations with professors (Latinx and non-Latinx) in sociology and political science. But when it comes to discussing sociopolitical issues with colleagues in his evangelical seminaries, he has had little luck. Below he describes a tension that many

participants have experienced; the need to find community outside of the workplace or disciplinary gatherings:

> We face a tension that White evangelicals don't face. For the most part, White evangelicals are very set apart in their beliefs when they align their theology and their political social perspectives. There are groups that are more conservative or more liberal, but for Latinos—all minorities in evangelical circles typically align with White evangelicals in terms of theological belief. We have these social concerns but we don't completely fit with the mainline, liberal seminaries. We're kind of in a limbo. And then you see this tension that is reflected in groups like La Communidad (of Hispanic Professors of Religion), ETS (The Evangelical Theological Society) and you have the American Academy of Religion, which is more liberal. Most Latino professors will meet at the liberal gathering, not because they align theologically, but because that's the group where we feel most comfortable. There's not a Latino group in my organization. So you keep bringing these issues until you reach the point of saying, "there's no point" of remaining at the White evangelical gathering.

Here, Miguel Ángel explains the phenomenon of identifying more with theologically liberal Latinos than he does theologically conservative White faculty. This tension has led him to seek community in professional gatherings that don't necessarily align with his theological beliefs. He continues to have a tenuous relationship to professional organizations.

Like Miguel Ángel, David described the importance of finding community outside of evangelical institutions and gatherings. Upon entering his new seminary, he sought to connect himself and his students to various organizations and spaces that would be supportive. He was invited to serve on the board of a Latinx theological organization with which I was familiar. I

asked him if he was the only evangelical on the board, to which he responded "yes." He went on to say that, in some ways, his experience as a Latino evangelical academic is pretty isolating. On one hand, he is one of only a few Latinxs on his campus, but when he enters a Latinx theological organization space, he is the only evangelical:

> So what I have found is at [this organization] I'm the token evangelical, and that's changing a little bit because they now recognize that they need evangelicals because of the demographics, but they don't know what that means or what that looks like. So, you know, they'll say, well [David], "how do evangelicals do this?" The token is on the steering committee, and here on the campus it's like there's nobody else.

The particular organization with which David is affiliated, like many Latinx theological organizations and spaces, is dominated by Roman Catholics and Mainline Protestants. However, as David points out, the growth of Latinx evangelicalism in the U.S. has led organizations like this one to attempt to accommodate this growing population. Some of David's Latinx students have become a part of this organization as well, which has helped them build community outside of their institution.

Roberto described a different experience than even that of Miguel Ángel and David. Working in theological education, Roberto has come to know many of the "key players" in Latinx theological circles. He spoke very highly of the friendship he shares with a prominent scholar in his field:

> He is a wonderful scholar and is a dear, dear friend of mine, but he's a lot more liberal than me, but we share the same passion and that's it. That's the idea that, you know, also what makes us unique as Latinos and he brings to mind when we call "*teologia en conjunto*," that we all do together as a group. And you know, it doesn't bother me that

> he's Catholic and I'm not that. Now we have big theological differences, but we are brothers in Christ and we work together towards this goal, advancing the Kingdom. And that's something that, at an evangelical seminary, they find it very, very hard to see a person like me. At [my previous institution] that was part of their biggest angst against me.

As Roberto describes here, the friendship he enjoys with this particular scholar is life-giving, despite their differences. Roberto's willingness to engage with a scholar from a different Christian tradition than his own was a source of anxiety for his colleagues. He went to list the names of Latinx scholars from different traditions whom he considered close friends and colleagues. In reference to one particular colleague, he said:

> I haven't had a problem with him—we see things differently. I have to be who I am and let him be who he is. And so that's something that an evangelical can't grasp about us. And part of it, I think it is, is that, you know, this is going to sound very arrogant—I think we understand the doctrine of grace a lot better!

The doctrine of grace refers to the idea that God is patient with us despite our shortcomings, and Roberto employs this language to refer to the "grace" he has with his brothers. While he and his friend do not agree on all theological issues, they nonetheless have been able to find community with one another:

> People come up to me all the time, people ask me, why are you so ecumenical? You know, because every morning I look in the mirror and I say, "if not by the grace of God." I'm reminded I'm a horrible human being, and how am I going to make a judgment that this brother is not a disciple of Christ? Now, I will not have him teach here, and that's a

> different story, right? But still, I don't negate his value to the Kingdom. I'm actually thinking about bringing him here for a lecture next year.

Roberto's friendship with his colleague stems from a desire to find community with a fellow Latino even though they hail from different theological traditions. As a leader in an evangelical school, Roberto will not allow his colleague to teach there because of their significant doctrinal disagreements, but that does not prohibit him from finding other opportunities to experience community, such as inviting his colleague to deliver a lecture series.

In the anecdote that began this section, I shared my interaction with Roberto regarding the theme of finding non-evangelical Latinx community. I wanted him to speak directly to this finding because of his rich wisdom that has resulted from decades spent in the church and in theological education:

> I think that, you know, I think that *teologia en conjunto* ("theology in conjunction") came out of necessity because we found out that we share more in common with friends outside of the seminary because of our common heritage and common experiences and we find a lot of support with each other. And so we are willing to forego their foibles as it were. But that also is a sign of grace because...that's how God looks at us. He looks at us, he sees the good in us, not the bad that we often do. Thank God for that. Otherwise we'd all be in deep trouble!

Roberto went on to say that evangelical seminaries tend to keep a tight rein on doctrinal beliefs, and those who deviate even slightly on this are generally excluded from seminary employment. He described an instance to illustrate his point. He was hiring for a position in biblical studies and the top candidate expressed a common belief held by mainstream scholars in biblical studies but that was not held officially by his seminary. A colleague who also interviewed the candidate

told Roberto privately that he had secretly held the same position as the candidate but could not say so publicly. This same colleague went on to tell the hiring committee that they should not hire the candidate because of his viewpoint on a particular issue, even though he had privately told Roberto the opposite. Roberto chided him for not being fair to the candidate. For Roberto, this instance revealed to him how exclusive evangelical seminaries can be about their doctrine and culture. This tendency to create borders is what leads scholars like Roberto to seek community elsewhere. For Roberto, the community beyond seminary walls is life-giving and positive, enabling him to continue working in an environment that he often finds to be antagonistic.

In sum, this chapter indicates how vital it was for participants to create spaces for community, and how those spaces were essential to surviving and thriving in their work. They found and built spaces for support, encouragement, and friendship with other Latinx academics outside of their institutions, the latter of which were frequently spaces for hostility and delegitimization. Moreover, these friends often worked in non-evangelical Christian (mainline or Catholic) institutions. Friendship and camaraderie among fellow Latinxs (and to a lesser extent, non-Latinxs with similar worldviews) across denominational lines was thus crucial to my participants' survival.

Adelante/Forward

While my participants faced numerous challenges as racially minoritized faculty in predominantly White religious institutions, their overall response to these challenges is one of resistance and creating new spaces. Many wanted to maintain a place in the theological academy, but their work often engaged topics and communities outside of the theological academy. While some pushed against the discrimination they received in their institutions, many also sought to

create new spaces for themselves to thrive in their call from God, their teaching and research, and their relationships with others Latinxs.

CHAPTER 6: INTERPRETATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Grounded in the literature on Latinx theological faculty, and guided by a conceptual lens of LatCrit/CRT, the two research questions that drove this study were:

> *1) What challenges do Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries face based on their racial/ethnic identity?*
>
> *2) What practices allow Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries to endure challenges from their institutions?*

My conceptual framework and literature framed these questions and allowed me to generate meaningful data that contributes to the literature. Below, I provide a synthesis of my findings.

In answering my first research question, I found that Latinx theological faculty face many of the same challenges as racially minoritized faculty across higher education. My participants described institutional cultures in which they were expected to serve on various committees, publish at a higher rate than their White counterparts, and mentor Latinx students. Some expressed concern and discomfort with White counterparts who labeled themselves as "allies," or those who said the right things and expressed outrage over injustice, but whose actions my participants considered to be atrocious. Moreover, my participants described several instances in which they experienced microaggressions from fellow faculty and administrators. While this made their institutional environments challenging, several leveraged their positions and sought to further the cause of Latinx representation and support on campus. Several participants remained hopeful that change could happen on their campuses, which provided an answer to my second research question. Overall, the challenges that Latinx faculty face in evangelical seminaries are similar to those faced by racially minoritized faculty in higher education broadly, with the exception of theological differences and debates.

Despite experiencing numerous challenges in their workplaces, my participants described how they had created spaces for thriving that included engaging issues and communities outside of seminary walls. My participants frequently wrote about the immigration crisis, issues in multicultural settings, a host of political issues, and religious issues from a broadly Christian perspective. They functioned as "public intellectuals" driven by a concern for how God was moving and working in the world. While many of their colleagues engaged in this kind of scholarship, they saw the benefit of speaking at churches, conferences, and multicultural gatherings as a means for creating a third space where their scholarship would have immediate impact. To creatively imagine such spaces, they leaned into their sense of calling or vocation. Many of my participants believed that God had placed them in their position for a purpose, primarily to teach and prepare future ministers. This calling allowed them a sense of vocational flexibility. In other words, theological education was not so much a career goal for them, but more a place that God had led them to for a specific season. Some participants were in the midst of seeking new employment opportunities, as they believed God was leading them elsewhere. They knew they could leave theological education at any moment if they believed God was leading them into a transition.

Knowing that theological education might not be a permanent location allowed participants to teach and conduct research on topics of theological and pastoral interest, primarily topics of importance to the Latinx community. While challenging dominant ideologies is often conceived as an unjust reality that racially minoritized scholars must endure, my participants believed that the purpose of focusing their research and teaching on Latinx issues served more to benefit the Latinx community rather than decenter Whiteness.

Speaking of the Latinx community, since my participants were positioned in predominantly White theological institutions, they sought Latinx colleagues and friends outside of their institutions. These friendships were crucial for helping them survive the marginalizing nature of their institutions and to their development of a support network. In sum, despite the challenges they faced as racially minoritized faculty in predominantly White institutions, participants cultivated and created alternative spaces that enabled them to survive and thrive in their institutions, acts they described as driven by a sense of calling from God.

Interpreting *La Lucha* in Evangelical Seminaries

The purpose of my study was to understand the challenges Latinx faculty face in evangelical seminaries and how they survive and thrive amidst such challenges. As Cascante (2017) has suggested, the struggles faced by racially and ethnically minoritized faculty in theological education are the same as racially and ethnically minoritized faculty who work in higher education broadly. The present study thus confirms Cascante's (2017) conclusion in this regard, as my participants consistently noted that they experienced unfair labor expectations compared to their White counterparts, suspicion of their academic credentials, and daily discrimination from their fellow colleagues.

From the perspective of CRT/LatCrit and the literature on racially minoritized faculty, labor exploitation is a symptom of inherently racist systems, yet my participants held mixed perspectives on this practice. Some recognized that they performed more labor than their White counterparts, yet believed they could serve as agents of institutional change for racially minoritized faculty, staff, and students. Participants like David tied this notion to a sense of calling and vocation (which I discuss later in this chapter), while Elsa was driven out of her position by the unyielding demands placed on her by seminary leadership. The participant with

the longest tenure at a single institution, Aapo, spoke of how futile efforts to seek institutional change can be when turn over in seminary leadership is so frequent. These stories are consistent with the literature that see racially minoritized faculty operating under marginalizing structures but also leveraging these structures to the benefit of their communities (Baez, 2000; Johnson et al., 2017).

The literature on racially minoritized faculty suggests that the service work in which they tend to engage, including mentoring and community activism, bears less on promotion and tenure than research and teaching (Jayakumar et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2017). My participants rarely mentioned promotion and tenure, mainly because their institutions have moved away from a strict policy on tenure. Evangelical seminaries are often not research-heavy institutions and therefore tend to have less rigorous promotion and tenure policies. My participants' negative experiences were thus less related to issues of promotion and tenure and more about how their colleagues perceived their labor portfolio. As such, their colleagues' racial assumptions are rooted in CRT/LatCrit's concern with the centrality of race and racism in modern society (Solórzano, 1998). As some institutions begin to move away from traditional practices of promotion and tenure, researchers must remain cognizant of how unfair labor expectations for racially minoritized scholars exist even in the absence of rigid tenure guidelines.

Despite racist perceptions from their colleagues, participants willingly engaged in activities that benefitted themselves and the Latinx community. This finding confirms the literature that suggests that racially minoritized faculty, in spite of institutional expectations, will engage in labor that benefits marginalized communities (Jayakumar et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2017). Seeking institutional change was a primary concern for many of my participants and they recognized that their efforts toward such were temporary in nature. Participants with more

experience at their institutions felt a greater ease seeking change than those with less experience and capital.

LatCrit also enabled me to make sense of the specific forms of discrimination my participants experienced based on their Latinx identities. As Olivia, Pérez, and Parker (2013) has suggested, LatCrit "examines ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact educational structures, processes and policy discourse that affect Latinos" (p. 142). As described in the previous chapter, participants experienced discrimination based on several aspects of their Latinx identity, including doubts about their ability to lead with a "Hispanic accent," Latinx-specific racial slurs, and condescension towards issues of importance to the Latinx community. Participants experienced discrimination common to racially minoritized faculty in higher education, but received specific discrimination based on their racial/ethnic identities. Punctuating nearly all of my participants' concerns was the social and political climate in which the study was conducted. The election of President Donald J. Trump in 2016 served to legitimize White supremacist ideologies that marginalize Latinxs and other racially minoritized groups. However, in spite of this, the 2016 election also empowered them to continue developing scholarship of benefit to the Latinx Christian community. Thus, the societal treatment of racially minoritized peoples makes its way into higher education institutions, and recent anti-Latinx sentiment is present in evangelical seminaries in a heightened way compared to other higher education institutions.

White allies proved to be another challenge. Some participants echoed the sentiments of Spanierman and Smith (2017), who asked, "How can dominant racial group members, who benefit from a racially stratified system, work effectively to foster racial equity and justice?" (p. 607). The literature suggests that White allies, though well-intentioned, often perform ally work

at individual rather than institutional levels (Patton & Bondi, 2015; Spanierman & Smith, 2017). Moreover, as Thompson (2003) has noted, "The desire to be and be known as a good white person stems from the recognition that our whiteness is problematic, a recognition that we try to escape by being demonstrably different from other, racist whites" (p. 9). This leads some White allies to overreact to racially charged situations and center their own perspectives rather than partnering with and listening to minoritized groups (Crowfoot & Chesler, 2003; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Patton & Bondi, 2015).

Edwards' (2006) three types of aspiring White allies provide important insight into how the participants of this study perceive White allies: (1) allies for self-interest, who serve those with whom they have a personal relationship yet remain unconscious of systemic oppression; (2) allies for altruism, who seek social justice yet remain unaware of their own biases and who want to be perceived as heroes to marginalized communities; and (3) allies for social justice, who seek to move beyond individual acts of justice and direct their efforts toward social structures. My participants often dealt with allies who fit the first two categories, and grew especially frustrated with those in category two, the allies for altruism. Specifically, participants perceived these allies as "representatives of everybody" or "righteous warriors," who often ended up centering their own "outrage" rather than partnering with marginalized communities to seek systemic change. From the perspective of CRT, these allies ended up perpetuating racial hierarchies by virtue of seeking to act on behalf of marginalized groups. As hooks (1989) suggests:

> When liberal whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism…they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure or racist domination and oppression that they wish to see eradicated. (p. 113)

In other words, individual acts of justice are more attractive because they result in immediate rewards, while the work of social justice requires longer, more sustained engagement (Patton & Bondi, 2015). My participants believed that White allies were well-intentioned but lacked the patience to engage in long-term social justice work in their institutions.

The presence of White allies in evangelical seminaries demonstrates that there are personnel who want to create more just and equitable spaces for racially minoritized groups, yet do not have the intellectual tools to engage in social justice work or fully grasp the systemic nature of racism. Evangelical seminaries are PWIs and often make many missteps in addressing systemic racism. The presence of White allies means that, while conversations on racial justice are taking place, White allyship taxed participants in significant ways. Aapo even suggested that this was the "ugliest" challenge of working in an evangelical seminary. Given this, further research must describe how White allies can become "allies for social justice" as Edwards (2006) describes, and how White allies can work more productively with racially minoritized personnel in theological education.

Microaggressions also were commonplace among my participants. From the perspective of CRT, microaggressions are "systemically mediated by institutionalized racism (i.e., structures and processes), and guided by ideologies of white supremacy that justify the superiority of a dominant group (whites) over non-dominant groups" (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014, p. 1). Racial microaggressions reinforced participants' sense of otherness in their institutions and led to feelings of alienation and discontent. The frequent presence of microaggressions against my participants was especially challenging, as they work in Christian institutions, which purport to be welcoming and hospitable spaces. However, as noted in Chapter 4, most of the participants grew accustomed to the casual racism of a society that centers Whiteness and viewed their

institutional experiences as symptoms of larger socio-historical forces. Several of my participants related story after story of microaggressions that rendered their experiences extremely marginalizing. David did not mention any significant microaggressions during our interview, but this is most likely due to his biracial identity and ability to pass as White. In fact, David mentioned that his ability to pass as White was a "gift from God" to be used when seeking justice for racially minoritized groups. In other words, the more participants were able to pass as White, the fewer microaggressions they seemed to experience.

La Lucha in evangelical seminaries mirrors the struggles that racially minoritized faculty experience in all institutions of higher education. However, struggles that are common in higher education institutions, such as misperceptions from colleagues, the foibles of White allies, and microaggressions based on Latinx identity were the specific challenges that my participants faced in evangelical seminaries. CRT and LatCrit enabled me to account for these realities and contextualize such institutional experiences as rooted in broader anti-Latinx and racist sentiments that perpetuate Whiteness as normative.

***Resistir La Lucha*/Resisting the Struggle and Imagining New Ways of Being**

While the struggles participants faced were unsurprising from the standpoint of CRT/LatCrit, the strategies they employed to push against said challenges were novel. For instance, participants sought to create their own spaces for thriving, rooted in their sense of calling from God, which led them to cultivate scholarship for the Latinx community and establish collegial friendships with other Latinx scholars from non-evangelical Christian traditions. While *la vida es una lucha* ("life is a struggle") for racially minoritized faculty, these findings provide a counternarrative to the literature on Latinx faculty in theological education that resists the downplaying of individual spirituality and faculty agency.

Calling and Vocation

While finding fulfillment in teaching and in relationships with students, the participants in my study nevertheless used coping mechanisms that went beyond the classroom and student relationships. For example, they thickly described their sense of vocation and calling, which enabled them to find joy and pleasure in their work, much like Cascante (2017) and Hernández et al. (2017) have described in their work. Interestingly, and perhaps paradoxically, my participants' sense of vocation and calling not only enabled them to continue finding meaning and purpose in their work, but also opened them to the possibility of leaving theological education to pursue the call of God in their lives. In other words, the sense of vocation and calling that enabled participants to stay in theological education was the same sense of vocation and calling that granted them the freedom to leave theological education and pursue another profession. Participants were less attached to the work of theological education and more committed to following the will of God. In fact, by the time I finished data collection, two participants had already moved into roles outside theological education.

Turner et al.'s (2008) study demonstrated that, across different types of theological schools, Latinx faculty center "a social justice purpose" (p. 329) in their work. They also suggest that participants often entered theological education based on a sense of calling or vocation (Turner et al., 2008, p. 332). Drawing from a CRT/LatCrit framework, it is no surprise that Turner et al (2008) viewed their participants' calling as centered on social justice. While my participants did describe a commitment to social justice, they often described their sense of calling as a matter of "obedience" to God. Their work in theological education was an extension of the calling that they believed God had placed on their lives when they were younger. Some received a call to teach, which led them to theological education. Others received a call to simply

be obedient, as their position in theological education was a result of following God into institutional life. As such, the present study provides a nuanced account of Turner et al's (2008) characterization of Latinx theological faculty as driven by social justice. My participants were able to embrace a robust, individual spirituality rooted in their calling in addition to seeking to influence institutional structures.

The present study demonstrates the need for thicker accounts of vocation and calling in the lives of faculty. Traditionally, the concept of vocation or calling has meant the integration of one's faith commitment with their life choices and practices (Cunningham, 2015). From a broadly Christian perspective, vocation and calling has meant living out "one's spiritual calling concretely and specifically in all the social spheres in which they live, offering each and every part of life as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God" (Schuurman, 2016, p. 58). However, definitions of vocation and calling in higher education literature often remove spiritual or sacred language. For instance, Hansen (1995) conceptualized calling as the "crossroads of public obligation and personal fulfillment" without reference to the sacred or spiritual (p. 3). Researchers who seek to understand how faculty interpret the drive or purpose behind their work must probe their participants about how they view vocation and allow space for the exploration of their spirituality.

Scholarship *for* the Church

Many of the participants of my study all conducted research on issues of importance in the Latinx Christian community and sought to incorporate Latinx perspectives into their teaching to varying extents. Participants like Aapo and David have been lauded for their work on Latinx issues among their colleagues, and people like Miguel Ángel and Annie have started to engage in similar work. As previously mentioned, Latinx faculty have sought to legitimize their knowledge

and perspectives in the midst of institutional and disciplinary environments that privilege Western ideologies (Alicea-Lugo, 1998; Turner et al., 2008). Turner et al. (2008) found their participants sought to challenge dominant ideologies, realized the work was hard, but remained "committed to the fight because the reward is equality and justice" (p. 328).

While some participants sought to challenge dominant ideologies in the classroom and in their research, others cultivated an interest in Latinx issues parallel to traditional discourses in their respective disciplines. Participants like Aapo and David wanted to maintain legitimacy in their disciplines while exploring issues of personal importance to them and the Latinx community. Miguel Ángel also spoke in terms of cultivating a variety of research interests to maintain legitimacy in all scholarly areas. While Turner et al. (2008) found that their participants conducted research on Latinx to subvert dominant ideologies, the bulk of my participants framed their research and teaching activities to minister to the Latinx students in their midst and support the broader Latinx community. From the perspective of LatCrit/CRT, my participants were not only interested in subverting dominant ideologies, but also in centering their experiences as Latinxs (Solórzano, 1997). Teaching and conducting research on Latinx issues served as a means for leveraging their positions as professors and teachers to provide broader leadership to the Latinx Christian community.

The drive to cultivate parallel research interests confirms the broader narrative that racially minoritized faculty have perceived as being "biased" (Stanley, 2007; Zambrana et al., 2017). Several of my participants mentioned that their colleagues did not view their scholarship as legitimate, which led to them to pursue other more "legitimate" lines of inquiry. This finding affirms the conclusions of Antonio (2002) and Segura (2003), who found that racially

minoritized scholars often employ socially conscious methodologies to study marginalized communities.

While my participants ultimately viewed cultivating parallel interests in traditional disciplinary discourses and in Latinx issues as positive, the delegitimization they experienced from their colleagues was nonetheless discriminatory. In discussing the results of their study on racially minoritized faculty, Zambrana et al. (2017) has suggested that "they encounter colleagues and supervisors who suggest that their racial/ethnic status makes them unqualified and unintelligent and experience a crisis of legitimacy as a result, yet simultaneously express discomfort at the idea of attributing these processes to racial dynamics" (p. 225). Indeed, while the participants of my study did experience a legitimacy crisis, they attributed it to the hierarchy of the theological academy; there are "higher disciplines," such as biblical studies and theology, and "lower disciplines" such as counseling, education, and preaching. This bifurcation between disciplines fosters a culture that delegitimizes the work of those called to provide intellectual resources for those called to work in marginalized communities. Thus, while some of my participants' colleagues attributed their skepticism to a disciplinary hierarchy, such skepticism is rooted in an institutional culture that continues to center Whiteness.

Overall, while affirming the literature on faculty of color and their research, my research also challenges the literature in two significant ways. The first challenge to the literature is that my participants partially attributed their colleagues' suspicions regarding the legitimacy of their scholarship to an implicit hierarchy of disciplines in the theological academy. Theology and religious studies often occupy a lower rung on the academic hierarchy in general, as the modern university is essentially a secular space. However, evangelical seminaries are not immune to a hierarchy of disciplines. In theological circles, disciplines like theology, biblical studies, and

church history are often considered to be more rigorous and academic than disciplines in practical theology, like Christian education, counseling, missions, and pastoral ministries. While most of my participants were situated in practical theology, the ones who were not still perceived that their forays into practical issues facing the Latinx community were viewed with suspicion among their academic colleagues. Thus, while scholars may attribute the delegitimization of certain disciplines to historical inequities, further research must be done to understand the invisible hierarchy of disciplines in the theological academy visibly impacts the perceived legitimacy of racially minoritized scholars. Understanding the nature of disciplinary hierarchies will also benefit those researching higher education in general as it such hierarchies also exist in mainstream institutions of higher education.

Second, despite naming challenges to the legitimacy of their scholarship, my participants believed that their scholarship served a higher purpose of benefitting the Latinx church community. The broader narrative of the literature emphasizes the extra labor faculty of color endure to legitimize their knowledges (Solórzano, 1997; Turner et al., 2008; Zambrana, 2017) without leaving room for the possibility that faculty of color may also derive joy from such labor, constituting a more complicated interpretation of the academic labor of racially minoritized faculty.

Working on scholarship that addresses Latinx issues was a method of surviving and thriving in institutions that delegitimized participants' scholarship. Many spoke positively and proudly of the work they have done in fostering dialogue with colleagues on issues of importance to the Latinx Christian community and of the positive feedback they have received from churches and organizations who have benefitted from their scholarship. Thus, while their colleagues were skeptical about the rigor and objectivity of their scholarship (Antonio, 2002;

Segura, 2003; Zambrana et al., 2017), my participants sustained themselves in their work by seeing the fruit that had come from their work—the many churches and organizations that served the Latinx Christian community. Given this, researchers must allow for a thicker understanding of scholarship from racially minoritized scholars when conducting studies into their labor, especially the possibility of such work deriving from a sense of calling.

Communidad… Based on What?

Key to my participants' survival and thriving in evangelical seminaries was developing relationships with other Latinx theologians and scholars who could share their experience. Seeking community took the form of participating in academic conferences specifically for Latinx scholars, even if such conferences were inhospitable to evangelical perspectives. Scholars in evangelical seminaries often attend large conferences focused on the academic study of religion, such as the American Academy of Religion (AAR) or the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), while also attending smaller evangelical gatherings, such as the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS). Participants often described attending evangelical gatherings that were predominantly White and would thus attend larger conferences like AAR or SBL to meet with fellow Latinxs. While my participants were firmly evangelical, they felt more comfortable with Latinxs from more liberal theological traditions. This finding is consistent with the work of Griffin et al. (2011), O'Meara (2015), Yun et al. (2016), and Johnson et al. (2018), who have asserted that racially minoritized faculty will build external communities of support to counteract the negative effects of working in a PWI. However, a key distinction between my study and the literature is that my participants sought to create community among Latinxs of differing faith perspectives and worldviews. This is a phenomenon that researchers might explore further, seeking to answer research questions like: When racially minoritized faculty seek to create

external communities, do they do so based on race, gender, worldview, calling, or a combination?

Complicating Research with Chicanxs/Latinxs

Regarding the identity dynamics present among my participants, the men in my study were often the ones who took a more proactive role in seeking institutional change. Among these men, the ones who were born in the U.S. indicated more success in countering institutional racism. For instance, a White-passing, American-born Latino like David was able to advocate for institutional change successfully while another participant born in another country and unable to pass as White might not have garnered the same kind of success. Moreover, the older participants of my study seemed to be more successful in advocating for institutional change, while the younger participants lacked the capital to do so.

Among the women in my study, Elsa firmly sought to enact change on behalf of Latinxs in her institution, but realized that she was unwilling to endure the harsh conditions without proper compensation. Annie, who is further along in her academic career than Elsa, is only now beginning to advocate specifically for Latinx issues at her institution and in her discipline. As previously mentioned, Annie has sensed that she is being called to a ministry of writing for the benefit of the Latinx Christian community. She comes from Central America, and thus has had a different kind of experiences than many Latinas in the U.S. Elsa, however, was born in the U.S. and was especially conscious of the racism and sexism present in theological education.

Given the above, researchers should take care to consider factors like gender, age, and country of origin in research with Latinxs. As Latinxs are not a monolithic group, it is important to attend to the wide array of diversity represented within the group by honoring the ways they might refuse classification based on racial, ethnic, religious, and gender identities. The field of

Chicanx/Latinx Studies (CLS) has evolved over time, beginning as a movement of Chicanx students seeking to legitimize their own knowledges and histories as a means of humanizing themselves and their communities. As others have observed (Davalos et al., 2002; Flores, 1997), the field of CLS has expanded beyond the Chicanx experience to include the perspectives of other Latinx groups. The complexity of Latinx identity has pushed the field to embrace an intersectional perspective that recognizes the interlocking system of oppression that impacts multiple identities. It is thus vital that researchers in higher education recognize the complexity of Latinx identity, including the roles religion and spirituality play in daily life and culture more broadly, as well as how other identity markers interact with racial/ethnic identity.

The Limits of CRT/LatCrit and Theoretical Possibilities

As previously mentioned, the conceptual lens of CRT/LatCrit undergirding this study fell short in accounting for several of the dynamics at play in the lives of my participants. Like Paradise (2014), who suggested that CRT and its attendant theories tend to perceive religion and religious institutions as inherently oppressive, I found this lens incapable of providing the kind of liberation required for minoritized groups to experience equal treatment under the law, in their institutions, and in society in general. Paradise (2014) argued that a vital spirituality was the driving factor behind many of the great liberation movements of the last two centuries, including the abolitionist movement and the Civil Rights movement. My findings align with Paradise's (2014) assertion and empirically extend his initial argument in a few key ways.

First, a robust spirituality was at the core of my participants' experiences. Put another way, my participants experienced a relationship with God that drove them to pursue careers in theological education as means of training ministers for ministry in Latinx communities. CRT, with its emphasis on challenging dominant ideologies and centering the experiences of racially

minoritized groups, does not necessarily account for this finding. While participants did engage in such activities, they were driven less by a desire to achieve those ends than by being obedient to the call they believed God placed on their lives. As Paradise (2014) noted, while abolitionists sought to end the subjugation of enslaved Africans, they were ultimately driven by a call of God to do so. CRT is thus able to account for ends and results, but not necessarily the deeper, more intangible factors that motivate the pursuit of racial and social justice, especially spirituality.

Second, human proclivities toward evil (as taught by orthodox Christianity) must also be considered by CRT researchers. Paradise (2014) has suggested that "it is necessary to acknowledge and address corruption at the individual level" (p. 176). However, CRT researchers are often hesitant to acknowledge the role of corrupt individuals in constructing unjust and inequitable social structures. Meanwhile, my participants were able to imagine a new world based on their religious convictions and connect with others out of their own *individual* senses of calling. This suggests that CRT theorists can find value in acknowledging the role that racist individuals play in perpetuating systemic racism while simultaneously interrogating inequitable structures that allow these individuals to gain institutional power.

Third, my participants cultivated research interests that benefitted Latinx Christian communities. While CRT/LatCrit would suggest scholarship that comes from marginalized populations are a means of challenging dominant ideologies and centering the experiences of marginalized populations, my participants believed their work was for the benefit of the growing population of Latinxs in their ministries. CRT's primary task of subordinating oppressive structures in society seems to ignore that religion can be used both as a mechanism for the destruction of marginalized communities as well as a mechanism for their empowerment. The results of this study thus suggest the importance of remaining attentive to how marginalized

communities discuss the meaning of their products, particularly when they do so to seek to aid their communities rather than challenge dominant ideologies by centering Whiteness.

Overall, my study confirms to many of CRT's assertions, but also presents the possibility for a thicker, more nuanced approach to understanding how religion can serve as a liberating force in the lives of marginalized communities. CRT researchers must account for how institutional religion is intertwined with broader, marginalizing forces, as well as for how church communities can be outposts of empowerment for marginalized communities.

Implications for Higher Education Researchers

This study was grounded in a robust and growing literature on racially minoritized faculty and Latinx theological education. It therefore contains several implications for researchers in the field of higher education.

First, higher education researchers should take care to attend to more personal aspects of faculty work lives by more directly valuing how they view and approach their work. While researchers studying racially minoritized faculty have rightfully highlighted the socio-historical and political forces that shape said faculty's work experiences, further exploration is needed into the nuances of faculty work experiences. For instance, had I drawn solely on CRT/LatCrit for this study without leaving room for reflections on spirituality, institutional challenges would have been the predominant theme of this dissertation. Attending to matters of spirituality and worldview allowed me to gain a thicker understanding of how my participants approached their work. Researchers would do well to similarly attend to the intangible qualities that motivate faculty to pursue specific research topics and engage in specific service activities. While racial/ethnic identification may play a key role in how racially minoritized faculty approach their

work, as many have suggested, spirituality, family concerns, and worldview might also play a key role.

Second, and relatedly, researchers cannot afford to ignore the role of spirituality in the lives of people in higher education. A growing body of literature concerned with the place of spirituality in the modern academy attests to this, indicating that spirituality continues to play a role in the lives of many (Astin, 2004; Astin & Astin, 2003; Espinoza, 2018; Jablonski et al., 2001; Lindholm, 2007; Lindholm & Astin, 2008; Lindholm et al., 2013). While the present study was conducted in a context where spirituality was an expected and necessary trait of study participants, researchers could better understand faculty work motivations by exploring research participants' spiritual lives. Moreover, since racially minoritized groups tend to be more religious than Whites (Pew Research Center, 2018), researchers must also begin to attend to the role of spirituality in the lives of racially minoritized faculty.

Third, there is benefit to exploring institutional types that do not figure prominently in the literature. The higher education literature tends to emphasize the perspectives and needs of large research universities and tends to do so at the expense of exploring smaller, less-prominent types of institutions. For instance, Levin, Jackson-Boothby, Haberler, & Walker (2015) have suggested that while racially minoritized faculty comprise nearly 25% of faculty in community colleges, most of the literature on racially minoritized faculty centers on their experiences in four-year colleges and universities. A major benefit of researching institutions that exist on the margins of higher education scholarship, such as theological institutions, is that such institutions do not have the privilege of scholarly self-study like comprehensive and R1 institutions do. Marginal institutions can thus benefit from the work of researchers, as research can help them make sense of their structures and seek context-specific solutions.

Recommendations for Practice: Evangelical Seminaries

A number of practical recommendations for evangelical seminaries have also emerged from this study. While many could be added to this section, I have chosen to highlight four that are of utmost importance for evangelical seminaries based on my study.

An Intentional, Top-Down Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice

Evangelical seminaries promote a vision for diversity and equity in their institutions, yet have a difficult time embodying these values. The mission and vision statements of many evangelical seminaries purport to be welcoming, diverse, and hospitable toward those from marginalized communities, yet institutional cultures, policies, and personnel act in ways that do not always align with the institution's stated vision. While White allies tend to populate these institutions, their actions often perpetuate individualistic assumptions about the nature of racism that remain unconscious of systems and policies that further oppress marginalized groups. Boards and those in leadership should take care to understand that visions for diversity must go beyond improving interpersonal relationships and shift toward creating structures and spaces that empower, support, and energize the work of racially minoritized faculty, staff, and students. Institutions can achieve structural diversity by diversifying their ranks, including their boards and cabinets, to better represent the changing demographics of the nation. Moreover, as Alejandro said, it is important for racially minoritized groups to not only have a space at the table but also to have a voice. While racial/ethnic representation is important, even more important is actually listening to the perspectives of such groups and generating policies based on their perspectives.

While a vision for diversity, equity, and increased representation is important, true change can only occur when evangelical seminaries recognize their complicity in Whiteness.

One encouraging example of this is Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Fuller hosted a talk by Willie James Jennings from Yale Divinity School who called the institution to repent for its complicity in Whiteness, ultimately asking "can 'white' people can be saved"? (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2017). The president of Fuller, Mark Labberton, a White male, responded by calling himself to silence and repentance, recognizing how Fuller has perpetuated coloniality and White supremacy, and how they have further marginalized racially and ethnically minoritized groups. He encouraged the audience to "sit with this for a long time," and dismantle the Whiteness and White supremacy of the institution, in addition to "forms of the academy that are considered sacred" (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2017). His statements were met with several "amens" and thunderous applause. Such powerful rhetoric must be accompanied by meaningful action, which entails tension and discomfort, as Labberton suggests. But the work of true diversity, equity, and inclusion means decentering the knowledges and experiences of the White population and create spaces where all can thrive.

Hiring Racially Minoritized Faculty

As Hernández et al. (2017) has suggested, evangelical seminaries must remain attentive to demographic realities if they are to survive. The rapid expansion of Latinx evangelicalism in the U.S. and the need for educated ministry professionals means evangelical seminaries will continue to see growth among Latinx students. This growth will yield more Latinx students who will be looking for institutions with faculty who can share their experiences and do theology in a Latinx voice. While hiring more racially minoritized faculty is a common recommendation in higher education literature, hiring racially minoritized faculty at evangelical seminaries is not only a move toward diversity and inclusion, but also a draw for Latinx students. Furthermore, as this study has demonstrated, Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries often have to look beyond

their institutions for community. Hiring more racially minoritized faculty will help alleviate the feelings of isolation and invisible labor Latinx faculty experience in such institutions.

Diversifying Curricula

My participants also illustrated how they intentionally employed resources from minoritized perspectives as a means for legitimizing their own experiences, as well as to expose students to the diversity of the Christian tradition. As the U.S. becomes increasingly diverse, evangelical seminaries must remain cognizant of how their curricula may or may not be preparing their students for the modern world. Seminary students will need to engage a diversity of minoritized Christian perspectives to better understand and minister to marginalized communities. Evangelical seminaries must encourage faculty to engage the work of racially minoritized scholars and incorporate such works into course syllabi. This strategy would serve to help legitimize the intellectual work of racially minoritized scholars and lead seminaries toward becoming more hospitable spaces for racially minoritized students.

Diversity Training

As my study indicates, White allies, i.e., those in a place of power who seek to create more just and equitable conditions for marginalized groups, often held an individualist perspective on racism and thereby end up centering their own outrage rather than partnering with marginalized groups. White allies and leaders would benefit from diversity training through the framework of structural racism so they might be more attentive to how race, gender, and class oppression are embedded in the structures of higher education and academic disciplines. Diversity training in critical perspectives can help faculty and staff think about and effectively respond to the challenges that racially minoritized groups face in society and in evangelical institutions.

Recommendations for Practice: Evangelical Churches

While this study explored evangelical seminaries, the implications for evangelical seminaries are evident. Evangelical seminaries and churches often run on a symbiotic relationship: seminary students become pastors and leaders of churches, who will then raise up new pastors and leaders who will attend seminary. This study can provide direction for churches interested in issues of diversity and inclusion to ensure that they are becoming more hospitable places for all.

Honest Remembrance

As noted in Chapter 2, American higher education was built on colonial foundations that have shaped the ways present day institutions function. Evangelical churches in the U.S. were similarly birthed in the context of European colonialism. However, some evangelical groups, such as the Wesleyan Church, were founded on a platform of faithfulness to Christian teaching, abolitionism, and women's rights, seeking to bring together emphases on both personal and social transformation (Black & Drury, 2012). Since then, denominations like these have lost their socially conscious voices and blended into a generic evangelicalism that tends to emphasize individual transformation (Black & Drury, 2012). Moreover, many evangelicals reacted against the so-called "social gospel" of the early 20th century, which highlighted issues of social justice while diminishing the importance of personal spirituality. Evangelical churches must grapple with their complex histories of oppression and liberation, and reclaim a broad vision for personal transformation and social justice. An "honest remembrance," as I have termed it, would enable White evangelical churches to reimagine how they can create more hospitable spaces for racially minoritized groups, especially Latinxs.

Embracing Diverse Biblical/Theological Perspectives

In seeking to benefit the Latinx Christian community, the participants of this study put forth a particular set of theological resources for the church and the academy. Evangelical churches, which are predominantly White, would benefit from engaging these resources to better make sense of our current racial/ethnic milieu. Espinoza (2018) suggests that, in order to better demonstrate the riches of the Christian tradition, Christians "must not only explore the historic works of the faith, but also the work of those whose perspective is deeply rooted in a history of oppression" (p. 89). This practice enables Christian leaders to bring a more "conscious perspective" to theological work, and "broaden the ways in which we speak into current events from a theological perspective" (p. 89). Not only should pastors and teachers in the church seek fluency in matters of biblical teaching, they should also draw on the resources from Latinx and others minoritized theologians to remain faithful to the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and maintain relevance in a rapidly changing world.

Intentional Inclusion

It is not enough for evangelical churches to preach a message of individual and personal transformation; they must also be inclusive of racially minoritized leaders. Bringing a diversity of voices to the table and listening to perspectives that have traditionally been marginalized in church circles is necessary for evangelical churches to better accommodate racially minoritized groups. As Alejandro pointed out, he was often invited to the table, yet his voice was unheard, and, as such, the institution maintained the status quo. Evangelical churches cannot afford to preach a message of inclusion while privileging only White male voices.

Adelante/Forward

This study caused me to reflect on my own experiences as Latinx Christian aspiring to a career in theological education. As I mentioned in my introduction, the Latinx Christian community, and more broadly, the entire Christian community, is a group for which I care deeply. However, my love for the church does not preclude me from challenging the dominant ideologies that it espouses. This study allowed me to examine the challenges that Latinx faculty in evangelical seminaries have faced and how they endured such challenges. In so doing, I sought to highlight a group of faculty who are not only marginalized by the racial environment of the U.S., but also by the literature on racially and ethnically minoritized faculty. By highlighting the specific challenges they have faced and the spaces they have constructed for their own endurance, I have demonstrated that more work must be done in creating equitable spaces for racially and ethnically minoritized faculty, especially those who work in theological education.

The participants in my study were exceptionally honest about their experiences, which challenged me to be honest about my own. As I began this dissertation, I was a graduate student working through new knowledge and vocabularies to describe my experiences. As I wrap up this project and enter an institution similar to those of my participants, I am hyper-conscious of the challenges that await me. However, as one who is in leadership and carries influence over numerous areas of the institution, I am committed to creating spaces that are equitable for all marginalized groups. Just like my participants, I seek to create a new world based on the foundations of justice, hope, and faith. I am, like them, called to *la Lucha.*

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

Interview Part #1: Biographical Background

To begin, I am very interested in hearing about your journey to becoming a professor at an evangelical seminary. For this interview, I will be asking you to describe a bit of your life story, such as your upbringing, faith development, educational history, and vocational understanding.

Prompt 1: Upbringing

1. Could you describe for me where you grew up?
2. Do you have any stories that would exemplify the kind of home you grew up in?
3. Is there anything else you would like to share about your background or upbringing?

Prompt 2: Faith Journey

1. If you attended church growing up, please you describe the kind of church you grew up in. If you did not attend church as a child, how did find out/hear about church?
    a. In your faith journey, did you experience any seasons of doubt? If you did, what drew you back to a place of relative certainty in your faith?
2. Could you describe how you became evangelical?
3. How would you describe your relationship to your faith or the church right now?

Prompt 3: Racial Identity

1. In what ways have you come to understand your racial/ethnic identity?
    a. Can you think of any times in which you experienced discrimination due your racial/ethnic identity?
    b. Are you willing to share any times in your life where you felt a tension between your faith and your racial identity?

Prompt 4: Vocational Understanding

1. What are the circumstances that led you to pursue a career as an academic?
2. What institutions did you attend to receive your training?

Prompt 5: Tying up Loose Ends

1. Are there any other stories you'd like to share with me that would give me a sense of who you are as a person?

Interview Part #2: Narratives from the Evangelical Seminary Context

For this part of the interview, I would like to focus on your work in an evangelical seminary. I will ask you questions related to your service, scholarship, and overall sense of the seminary context.

Prompt 1: Evangelical Seminary Context

1. Could you describe for me how you came to work in an evangelical seminary context?
2. Could you share any positive experiences working in your school?
3. Could you share any negative experiences working in your school?
4. Can you think of any times when you experienced racism/discrimination at the seminary?
5. What are some of the activities you enjoy most about your work (teaching, writing, research, camaraderie, etc.)?

Prompt 2: Service

1. Could you describe some of the service activities you engage in (mentoring, advising, committee work)?
2. Do you perceive that you spend more time in service activities than you do teaching or scholarship?
3. Does your institution recognize the labor you expend on service activities?
4. Could you describe any instances where you were chosen for a service activity (committee, chapel speaker, mentoring, etc.) based on your racial/ethnic identity?
5. Are the kinds of service activities in which you engage considered for promotion and tenure?

Prompt 3: Disciplinary Perspectives

1. How did you become interested in your current research areas?
2. How do you sense your colleagues view your research?
3. Do you think your institution embraces the perspective you bring to the table?
4. Have you written or published anything your colleagues might view with suspicion?

Prompt 4: Closing Interview

1. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experience working in an evangelical seminary?

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