Candidate Emergence in Times of Threatening Rhetoric: **A Critical Race Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Women of Immigrant Origin**

Jessica Rodriguez-Montegna

Department of Political Science

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

Universidad De Granada

Escuela De Doctorado De Humanidades Y Ciencias Sociales Y Jurídicas

Instituto De Migraciones

Programa De Doctorado En Estudios Migratorios

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen & Solvay Business School

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CANDIDATE EMERGENCE IN TIMES OF THREATENING RHETORIC:

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WOMEN OF IMMIGRANT ORIGIN

Author: Jessica S. Rodriguez-Montegna

Co-Directors: Prof. Dr. Aurora Álvarez Veinguer and Prof. Dr. Silvia Erzeel

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To my sons and husband

without whom this dissertation would have been done two years ago.

Thank you for all the beautiful moments of distraction. Let our new chapter begin!

To all the women of immigrant origin who courageously work towards

creating stronger communities in their new home countries.

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Abstract

Historical patterns of the intersecting systems of oppression of women have been woven into the U.S. social fabric. For decades, the manifestation of those patterns have also been present in both the feminist and anti-racism movements. Women of Color have often been left without the representation of their intersectional needs and have been denied the recognition of their work in both movements. Women of immigrant origin have also been rendered invisible throughout history, but their involvement in community-based organizations has created increasing opportunities for them to claim their political voice; this has been no easy feat given the obstacles they continue to face due to their immigrant, gendered, and racial/ethnic identities. Nevertheless, women of immigrant origin have taken the reins to find solutions to the troubling political environment their communities have faced following the candidacy and Presidency of President Trump.

Past studies have focused on the motivation of specific groups such as women or immigrants in running for political office, but there is a lack of research concentrating directly on women who migrated to the United States or daughters of immigrants to the U.S. In particular, few have examined candidate emergence of women while applying an intersectional analytical lens. Building on prior research which has mostly taken a quantitative analysis through large scale surveys, this study focuses on a qualitative methodology in analyzing women's narratives to help fill in the gaps of understanding how immigration experiences, race/ethnicity, and gender are at play for women of immigrant origin as they emerge as political candidates.

Taking a closer look at women of immigrant origin living in the Northwest U.S. state of Oregon, this thesis will analyze the following research question: In the post-2016 era, what

are the narratives of women of immigrant origin as they emerged as political candidates in the United States? Sub-questions include:

1.) What are the discourses of immigrant, racial/ethnic, and gendered experiences of women in the United States that have marked their lives? and

2.) What are the immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered discourses behind women's motivation to run for elected political office post-2016?

Through in-person qualitative interviews, findings reveal how immigrant history, race/ethnicity, and gender drive motivations to run for political office during times when political rhetoric targets candidates' identity groups. In the post-2016 political environment, in which racial discrimination, xenophobic rhetoric, and threats to women's rights were pervasive, women of immigrant origin believed that the cost of not running for office outweighed the race-, immigrant- and gender-based obstacles to attaining office.

This dissertation is taking up the call to give voice to a small but growing elected group of leaders who are defying the odds of winning their elected seats. It challenges readers to reexamine the candidate emergence process in the United States by evaluating the immigrant experience within an intersectional framework. Thus, incorporating an intersectional analysis will reveal a broader understanding of the candidate emergence process for women of immigrant origin.

Keywords: candidate emergence, women, immigrants, critical race theory, intersectionality, Oregon.

Abstract (Dutch version)

Historische patronen van onderdrukking van vrouwen met intersectionele identiteiten zijn verweven in het sociale weefsel van de VS. Decennialang waren die patronen ook aanwezig in de feministische en antiracismebewegingen. Vrouwen van kleur bleven vaak achter zonder de representatie van hun intersectionele noden en hun werk werd in beide bewegingen niet erkend. Vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond werden door de geschiedenis heen ook onzichtbaar gemaakt, maar hun betrokkenheid in lokale organisaties opende de deuren om hun politieke stem op te eisen. Gezien de obstakels waarmee ze geconfronteerd worden, zowel met betrekking tot hun migratieachtergrond en genderidentiteit alsook hun raciale/etnische identiteit, was hun kandidaatstelling geen gemakkelijke opgave. Desalniettemin hebben vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond zelf naar oplossingen gezocht voor het verontrustende politieke klimaat waarmee hun gemeenschap werd geconfronteerd na de kandidatuur en verkiezing van president Trump.

Eerdere studies hebben zich gericht op de motivaties van groepen zoals vrouwen of immigranten om zich kandidaat te stellen voor een politiek ambt, maar er is een gebrek aan onderzoek dat zich rechtstreeks concentreert op vrouwen die naar de Verenigde Staten zijn gemigreerd of op dochters van immigranten in de VS. In het bijzonder zijn er weinig studies die het naar voren komen van vrouwelijke kandidaten hebben bestudeerd vanuit een intersectioneel analytisch perspectief. Voortbouwend op eerder onderzoek dat zich voornamelijk baseert op een kwantitatieve analyse van grootschalige enquêtes, richt deze studie zich op een kwalitatieve narratieve analyse om de leemten op te vullen in de manieren waarop gender, ras en nativisme een rol spelen bij vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond, wanneer zij naar voren komen als kandidaten. Door nader in te gaan op vrouwen met een

migratieachtergrond die in de noordwestelijke staat Oregon wonen, zal dit proefschrift de volgende onderzoeksvraag analyseren:

Wat zijn de narratieven van vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond wanneer zij naar voren komen als kandidaten voor een politiek ambt in het post-2016-tijdperk? Subvragen zijn onder meer:

1.) Wat zijn discoursen van de immigrant-, raciale/etnische en gendergerelateerde ervaringen die het leven van vrouwen in de Verenigde Staten hebben getekend? en

2.) Wat zijn de immigrant-, raciale/etnische en gendergerelateerde discourses van de motivaties van vrouwen om zich kandidaat te stellen voor een verkozen politieke functie na 2016?

Door middel van persoonlijke kwalitatieve interviews onthullen de bevindingen hoe de intersectionele identiteiten van immigratiegeschiedenis, ras/etniciteit en gender de motivaties bepalen om zich kandidaat te stellen voor een politieke functie in tijden waarin de politieke retoriek zich richt op hun identiteitsgroepen. In het politieke klimaat van na 2016 waar raciale discriminatie, xenofobe retoriek en bedreigingen voor vrouwenrechten alomtegenwoordig waren, zijn vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond van mening dat de kosten om zich niet verkiesbaar te stellen voor een politieke functie zwaarder wegen dan de belemmeringen op grond van ras, migratieachtergrond en geslacht om die functie te verwerven.

Dit proefschrift gaat in op de oproep om een stem te geven aan een kleine maar groeiende gekozen groep leiders die trachten om verkozen zetels te winnen. Het daagt lezers uit om het proces van kandidaatstelling in de Verenigde Staten opnieuw te onderzoeken door de immigrantenervaring te evalueren binnen een intersectioneel kader. Zo zal de invloed van intersectionaliteit een breder begrip onthullen van het proces van kandidaatstelling voor vrouwen met een migratieachtergrond.

Abstract (Spanish versión)

Los patrones históricos de opresión hace las mujeres que padecen de sistemas interseccionales las mujeres, han estado entretejido en el tejido social de los Estados Unidos. Durante décadas, la manifestación de esos patrones también estuvo presente en los movimientos feministas y antirracistas. Las mujeres de color a menudo se quedaron sin la representación de sus necesidades interseccionales y se les negó el reconocimiento de su trabajo en ambos movimientos. Las mujeres de origen inmigrante también fueron invisibilizadas a lo largo de la historia, pero su participación en organizaciones comunitarias abrió las puertas para reclamar su voz en la política. Emerger como candidatas no ha sido una hazaña fácil debido a los obstáculos que enfrentan por sus identidades de inmigrante, de género y racial/étnica. Sin embargo, las mujeres de origen inmigrante han tomado las riendas para encontrar soluciones del preocupante entorno político que enfrentó su comunidad, tras la candidatura y presidencia del presidente Trump.

Los estudios anteriores se han centrado en la motivación de grupos como las mujeres o los inmigrantes a la hora de presentarse a un cargo político, pero faltan investigaciones que se centren directamente en las mujeres que emigraron a Estados Unidos o en las hijas de inmigrantes en Estados Unidos. En particular, son pocos los estudios que han examinado la aparición de las candidaturas de mujeres con un lente analítico interseccional. Sobre la base de revisiones de investigaciones relacionadas, en su mayoría se han realizado análisis cuantitativo a través de encuestas a gran escala, pero este estudio se centra en un enfoque metodológico cualitativo que tiene relación sobre el análisis de los relatos de las mujeres, y comprender cómo son las experiencias de las mujeres de origen inmigrante cuando surgen como candidatas políticas y entran en juego las categorías de inmigración, raza/etnia y género. En esta tesis se

analizan las mujeres de origen inmigrante que viven en el estado de Oregón, en el noroeste del país y, se plantea la siguiente pregunta de investigación:

¿Cuáles son las narrativas de las mujeres de origen inmigrante que surgieron como candidatas políticas a partir del año 2016 en Estados Unidos? Las subpreguntas incluyen:

1.) ¿Cuáles son los discursos que marcaron las vidas de las mujeres en relación a las experiencias inmigrante, raciales/étnicas y de género en Estados Unidos? y

2.) ¿Cuáles son los discursos que motivan a las mujeres a presentarse a un cargo político, según las experiencias inmigrante, raciales/étnicas y de género después del año 2016?

A través de las entrevistas cualitativas, los resultados apuntan a cómo la historia de las mujeres inmigrantes, intersectadas con las categorías raza/etnia, inmigración y género, impulsan para presentarse a un cargo político en tiempos en que la retórica política se dirige a grupos con estas identidades. En el entorno político posterior a 2016, en que la discriminación racial, la retórica política anti-inmigrante y las amenazas a los derechos de las mujeres eran omnipresentes, las mujeres de origen inmigrante pensaban que al no presentarse a las elecciones tendrian consecuencias mas graves al comparación de los obstáculos que se enfrentarían como candidatas de origen migrante.

Esta tesis recoge el llamado para dar voz a un pequeño pero creciente grupo de líderesas electas que desafiaron las probabilidades y ganaron los puestos en las elecciones. Desafía a las y los lectores a reexaminar el proceso de emergencia de las candidatas en Estados Unidos, donde la experiencia de los inmigrantes se evalúa dentro de un marco interseccional. Así, la incorporación de un análisis interseccional revelará una comprensión más amplia de la emergencia de las candidaturas de mujeres de origen inmigrante.

Palabras clave: emergencia de candidatas, mujeres, inmigrantes, teoría crítica racial, interseccionalidad, Oregón.

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Introduction

The Journey of my Research Questions

This research is based on qualitative interviews with and survey data about women[1] of immigrant origin[2] living in the Northwestern state of Oregon in the United States, who ran for and were elected to political office following the 2016 U.S. presidential elections.[3] This thesis analyzes the narratives and lived experiences of women of immigrant origin during their candidate emergence process post-2016. Immigrants and children of immigrants were selected as part of the study because research shows that there is a shared lived experiences of oppression based on their immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered social identities (Enriquez, 2015; Reny & Shah, 2018). Likewise, children of immigrants had increased from 15.1 percent of the U.S. population in 2000 to 22.8 percent in 2019 (Migration Policy Institute, 2020). In the state of Oregon, elected officials that identify as being of immigrant origin[4] have been difficult to distinguish prior to 2016 because of a lack of disaggregate data based on this important identity. Nevertheless, as anti-immigrant political rhetoric increased during the Trump campaign and administration, more political candidates began to share their immigrant origin stories with the voting public. This dissertation analyzes the stories of some of these political candidates—specifically, women who identify as being of immigrant origin—in the state of Oregon.

With the rise in immigrant populations across the globe, more attention is being given to their descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation in elected office (Dyogi Phillips, 2017;

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1 In this study, the term "women" refers to cisgendered women, because all of the participants in this study selected that term in a demographic survey.
2 I define women of immigrant origin as women that have origins in a developing country in the global south, either someone that has immigrated to the United States or someone who is the daughter of one or two immigrant parents. Immigrant origin will be used to reference anyone—male or female—under this definition.
3 All names of participants in this study have been changed to protect the identities of research participants.
4 Immigrant origin refers to people who were born outside of the United States and are now living in the United States, or those who are native to the United States and have one or more parents who immigrated to the United States.

Hero & Tolbert, 1995; Reingold et al., 2021; Reny & Shah, 2018). Extensive research has documented the disadvantages for women and People of Color[5] while running for office (Hancock, 2007; Junn and Brown 2008; Prestage, 1991; Reny & Shah, 2018). Other scholars have studied "the evolution of political ambition" (Lawless & Fox, 2010) and the anti-immigrant rhetoric link with political behavior (Pérez, 2015a), lending support to the new wave of research which has argued for the advantages of People of Color running for office (Bejarano, 2013; Dittmar, 2020; Reny & Shah, 2018). This dissertation contributes to this under-researched area through a qualitative analysis approach by evaluating the testimonies of participants.

This introduction navigates the reader through the journey of my research questions: what guided me towards an analysis of candidate emergence through the social constructs of identity, despite my original research objectives to discover the link between transnational relationships and political motivation. Initially, I wanted to see whether the connections participants maintained to their country of origin[6] and its people helped shape their political aspirations. The interview process, which took place over a 28-month timeframe, provided time for me to process the research findings as they emerged. Participants recounted the social conditions of their lives in the United States and articulated the development of their growing awareness of inequity through those lived experiences. My original research interest was not focused on the ways in which participants articulated their political motivation, but by aligning my research questions to better reflect their shared experiences, I began to see patterns of motivation emerge from their stories. Through their lived experiences of discrimination, participants reported that they developed stronger connections to their multiple identities, clearer views of social justice,

[5] People of Color is a term that is widely used in the United States and was also part of the discourses of participants. Therefore, it will be a term in capital letters and used to represent a unified body of people who have experienced similar immigrant and racial oppressions.
[6] Country of origin refers to the country in which a person or one or both of their parents were born.

and increasing confidence in their ability to transform policy and representation. This study contributes to a promising and growing literature on candidate emergence among immigrant origin women and offers one of the first qualitative perspective on this topic; as such, it provides an initial point of departure for future analysis.

This chapter is divided into three parts. In *Examining Situated Knowledge,* I look at how my lived experiences and interdisciplinary background led me to my original research questions. Then I offer my process of reexamining my original intent and how the shifting of my research questions provided the space for participant's experiences to come to light. In the section, *Where Are the Women of Immigrant Origin in Political Office?* I go into detail about my original research questions, my purpose, and my search for participants. *Discovering Their Positionality*, elaborates the process where participants revealed the way they viewed identity and its role on political motivation. *Conclusion: Re-centering the Analysis.* To conclude, I offer the *Organization of the Thesis*.

Examining My Situated Knowledge

It would be an error to begin this work about the lived experiences of women of immigrant origin without explicitly discussing my situated knowledge and positioning (Haraway, 1988). I identify as a daughter of immigrants with the socio-cultural privilege of growing up with documented parents. Because I lived close to Mexico, in the state of Texas, a territory that my ancestors—from the little I know—had belonged to for many centuries before me, I was able to travel to Mexico often as a child to play with my cousins and build connections with my grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Because of that privilege, I identify as a Mexican-American, with a strong emphasis on Mexican. I learned Spanish from my parents and Mexican relatives; I wasn't allowed to move outside of our immigrant Latin American circle, except in school;

and family meals formed an important part of our cultural traditions. My family welcomed and supported many documented and undocumented newcomers into our home upon their arrival. The fears that undocumented families experienced, we felt to some extent in our home as well. In my own life, I have experienced episodes of racism, classism, and xenophobia for as long as I can remember. To this day, I am still unpacking the ways in which these experiences have shaped my path. Even during the research and writing of this thesis, I have had to go through many moments of reflection, healing, and restoring so I could continue to share the stories of the women that I have interviewed, stories that have reflected so much of my own experiences. Writing a dissertation is a difficult task in and of itself, but writing on a topic so close to one's own experiences is a particular burden ripe with opportunities for healing. Finding "our vision of social responsibility" has a direct link to the "experiential rational process" we as researchers among the marginalized have obtained (Borda, 1979, p. 33). I am well aware that it is a privilege to have the time to reflect on my experiences, but this work doesn't come without a price. For researchers of color who examine issues of oppression, I am not yet sure that the price is worth paying.

When I look back at my childhood as a daughter of immigrants, my fondest thoughts are of my grandparents in Mexico and their generosity with their community. My parents continued to uphold that value at our home in Texas by offering support to the immigrant community we belonged to. Volunteerism was a major part of my young life and continued into adulthood. While later living in Oregon, I worked with organizations whose aim was to unify legislative agendas among the Latinx[7] community. I also worked on governor-appointed commissions to

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7 Over the past couple of years, there has been a move by communities in the United States, whose lineage is based in the Americas, to separate themselves from imposed labels rooted in colonized histories. The term Hispanic, which centers Spain in its identity and excludes Brazil, has been rejected by some and began to be replaced in the early 2000s in an attempt to depart from colonial connections. Latino was used to replace Hispanic by a new generation but has more recently been criticized as a gendered term that excludes non-binary people and women. In an attempt to establish a more inclusive umbrella term, while recognizing that people in

help the state develop strategies for improving the conditions of women and girls. During that time, communities of color began to identify the political spaces in which their representation was nonexistent. Strategies among communities of color began including the need for political representation. When I began this Ph.D., those strategies were beginning to give fruit through trainings aimed at increasing political participation. I began to wonder whether the values of community engagement that I had experienced as a child were also present among immigrant origin women in Oregon. My time in Oregon and my childhood experiences lead to my interest in researching the lived experiences of women of immigrant origin in elected office. When I first began my original research in February 2017, I was guided by the work of Levitt (2004) and Pescinski (2010) who discussed the importance of country-of-origin connections and their link to immigrants' political participation in their home country.8 Three concepts shaped my conceptual framework at the time:

1. Transnational belonging: Migrants have a strong sense of belonging both to their country of origin and home country (Levitt, 2004).

2. Political Engagement: Migrants who were politically engaged in their country of origin are more likely to be politically engaged in their home country (Pescinski, 2010).

3. Political support through associations: Migrant women receive support through associations to become politically engaged (Gutiérrez, 2010) and thus garner the existing social capital of associations to achieve their political agendas (Canales & Zlolniski, 2000).

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the Americas who were colonized are not homogeneous, the term Latinx was introduced. As an English word, Latinx has mostly been used in academic elite, white circles and its pronunciation in Spanish is not linguistically possible. Thus recently, Latine has been developed as both a non-binary and Spanish word that can globally represent a complex and growing community in the United States (Noe-Bustamante, et al., 2020) In daily life, people who belong to any Spanish-speaking community will identify with any of the above terms, which is the beauty of cultures with such complex and diverse histories. For this paper, I will refer to anyone from the Americas whose roots derive from a Spanish-speaking country as Latinx. My reason derives from my study participants' preferences to use this term as their survey responses and narratives exemplify.
8 Home country refers to the country immigrants have settled in.

These concepts resonated with me, and I found myself thinking about how they correlated with my own experiences. Since Oregon was in its inception of electing immigrant origin women to office, it was an opportune time to investigate candidates' motivations to run for office and examine them against this initial framework. Given that the women of immigrant origin I wanted to interview were among the first immigrants to be elected to office in Oregon, would their motivation fit into any consistent frameworks, such as those that Levitt (2004) and Pescinski (2010) had described? The time was right to examine their stories. My initial research questions focused on the transnational elements in the identity of immigrant origin women in elected public office.

Embedded in my initial inquiries was a desire to connect the values and resources that countries-of-origin connections can give to migrants. I wanted to see if U.S. immigrant origin women explicitly described their countries of origin as a place where they were taught to become politically engaged. What I learned was that, in fact, for the women that I interviewed, those lessons did not occur in their country of origin, but in their new home country as they navigated the difficulties of racial/ethnic, xenophobic, gender and language and phonotype discrimination. Political engagement grew as these women came together with other immigrants to build upon their shared knowledge and resources. I had to remove the preconceived, romanticized notions I had developed in my head regarding the ties that immigrant origin women had with their countries of origin to allow them to define the sources of their knowledge and motivation.

Where Are the Women of Immigrant Origin in Political Office?

Defining the purpose for my research—conducting interviews with women of immigrant origin in elected office—led to many roadblocks. It felt at times like I was searching for a needle in a

haystack. I began gathering names and investigating the question of exactly who the women of immigrant origin were that held elected offices in the United States in 2017. My initial search was slow and tedious, as I searching rosters in national and state elected bodies, and researched individual candidate websites to determine if the elected individual identified as an immigrant or a child of immigrants. There were no clear data sets with individuals from any country of origin that I could find. Ultimately, I was able to collect over 30 names and emails of potential participants; I contacted them and began interviews in June 2018.

After 12 months of reaching out to potential participants and conducting interviews, I entered into a joint Ph.D. program with Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). Although I was able to capture the stories of eight women living across the country, there was not enough data to reach saturation nor to link common themes. It was at VUB where I was introduced to the political science literature on representation that began to explain the stories of these women. Even with these amazing stories, I needed more perspectives to see if there was a common link between the stories of the women. At that point, two years into the Trump administration, zealous anti-immigrant rhetoric had produced a collective reaction among many disenfranchised communities, including immigrant communities. One of those reactions was an increase in reports highlighting immigrant origin candidates. I discovered organizations working to train immigrant origin individuals for office, and, although the names were highly protected, they pointed me to media reports of groups of immigrant origin candidates across the country running for office. All of a sudden, it felt like an explosion of immigrant origin candidates were being recognized and highlighted in several media outlets. Soon, I had an additional 61 names to contact for a second round of interviews which began in June 2019. In total, 93 people were contacted to be interviewed and 21 interviews were conducted. Out of the 21 interviews, 16 form part of this research analysis.

Discovering Their Positionality

Although during the interviews several questions were asked that focused on the before and after of running for office, as mentioned, my original interest had been to center the transnational experiences and ties that immigrant origin elected officials maintained. Thus, I asked interviewees the central questions pertaining to their transnational connection and their candidacy: "Did you connect with family, friends, or organizations in your country of origin for support or guidance?" The answer was a resounding "No." Participants relayed stories of their own or their parents' experiences in their country of origin, which gave them a deep understanding of their country of origin's cultural practices and identities. With that knowledge came a sense of belonging to their communities and families, both in the United States and in their country of origin. Although participants acknowledged and stayed connected to loved ones in their country of origin, not one saw them as a source of support during their campaign. Hearing these stories, introduced a new perspective on the direction of this dissertation.

The intersection of oppression was a central discourse among participants. Women of immigrant origin shared stories about how their immigrant, racial/ethnic, and gendered social constructs gave root to many moments of oppression throughout their lives. Thus, examining intersectional frameworks was critical to include in this dissertation. The setting for this study also made it necessary to discuss the historical context of immigrants in the U.S. and the post-2016 environment in which participants found their political callings. Another important point of departure for the analysis of women of immigrant origin's voices is the examination of the literature on political participation, motivation, and representation. Other research that looks at the candidate emergence process for women and immigrant origin people allowed me to have a clearer understanding of the themes and patterns in their narratives (Celis & Childs, 2020;

Dittmar, 2020; Dyogi Phillips, 2017; Fox & Lawless, 2004; Lawless & Fox, 2017; Reny & Shah, 2018).

Nina Lykke (2010) exemplifies a positionality in her work that I have come to acknowledge in my own. She describes herself as a "guide" that takes travelers (the reader) through a scenic route commenting on what she observes and is within her understanding. Yet, she refrains from providing an absolute or final determination about what she sees, but helps answers the traveler's interests and questions about what they are seeing, thus encouraging them to draw their own conclusions. As the author of this dissertation, I cannot disregard the intent of such paper to provide a final conclusion regarding the interviews I conducted for this study. But as a guide, I will take the reader into my understanding of the countryside, what I see in the landscape I navigated and most importantly why. The next section of this chapter will begin to answer the why of my positionality and how it came to be. The why and the how both helped shape the perspectives I bring forth in this dissertation.

A few months back, my son and I built a kaleidoscope from a kit we purchased at a science store. The kit consisted of three long mirrors, a lens to see through, an outer tube to hold the instrument intact, and several small and colorful beads which would form the images once it was properly assembled. As I looked back on this process, I connect the assembling of the kaleidoscope with the process I took in this dissertation. Although the mirror in itself is a powerful tool, because you are able to see, observe, and describe what is in front of it, a transformative occurrence came when those three mirrors were united properly. When the mirrors are formed into a triangle and the beads are contained together, the images that can be viewed through the lens bounce from one mirror to another creating a unified depiction of what originally was a one-dimensional shape. Although the beads on their own are beautiful, joining

them together so they are reflected among the three mirrors formed new and larger images of reality. This is the beauty of an interdisciplinary approach to research.

Certainly, I see the immense value that one discipline can bring to an issue by providing a deep and focused analysis, but this is not always the ideal. Bos and Schneider (2016) have incorporated methods from both the political science and psychology field of study, which has introduced a new understanding of the gender gap in interest in political office. This study takes inspiration from that perspective by looking at research in three distinct fields that helped to frame the candidate emergence process of women of immigrant origin. Feminist studies, in particular Black feminist studies, illuminated the nuances of the lived experiences of Women of Color (Collins, 2000), psychology helped bring together the process of decision making under threatening environments (Calogero, 2017), and political science established the historical steps in candidate emergence (Silva & Skulley, 2019). The ideas in this dissertation are the result of the alignment of relevant work from these three disciplines so they, like the kaleidoscope triangle, could interact and reflect new and larger images of reality. The voices of the participants that I interviewed helped me to realize that their stories could not be shared, much less analyzed, by holding up only one mirror.

The participants in this study brought attention to the need to discuss how politically threatening environments influence the candidate emergence process for women of immigrant origin. Their voices transformed my original queries into a deeper exploration of how evaluating the role of race/ethnicity in candidate emergence is also fundamental to changing political climates. Linking identity-based motivation and inspiration from an interdisciplinary approach to the evaluation of this study, supported my analysis and my decision to look beyond

my initial inquiries and turn instead to the insights that grew out of the narratives of participants.

Organization of the Thesis

My purpose in this research is to analyze the connection between the lived experiences of women of immigrant origin in the United States who decided to run for political office after 2016 and won their race. The central research questions guiding this analysis:

In the post-2016 era, what are the narratives of women of immigrant origin as they emerged as political candidates in the United States? Sub-questions include:

1.) What are the discourses of immigrant, racial/ethnic, and gendered experiences of women in the United States that marked their lives? and

2.) What are the immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered discourses behind women's motivation to run for an elected political office post-2016?

To answer these questions, I analyze three forms of data: field notes, audio recording of interviews and their transcripts, and demographic surveys filled out by participants. In-depth personal interviews were conducted with 10 women serving in an elected position in Oregon as of the date of their interview. Women of immigrant origin in this research identify themselves as cisgender women who have immigrated or are children of immigrants to the United States. The voices of three men of immigrant origin in Oregon were integrated in the findings to take a closer look at the role of gender in the political positioning shared by the 10 women in this study. Though three interviews cannot establish correlations or conclusions, they are provided as a starting point for future research, as discussed further in Chapter 7. Likewise, interviews with three women of immigrant origin living in other locations than Oregon in the

United States were incorporated to give a small and brief glimpse at distinct, national political contexts.

This research was conducted in an inductive manner, hearing from women of immigrant origin learning of their self-identified identities before analyzing how those identities influenced their paths to political office. In this study, I intend to bring Critical Race Theory literature into conversation with the research on candidate emergence for women and immigrants in the United States. Therefore, this dissertation begins with an evaluation of immigrant, gendered, racial/ethnic experiences throughout history in Chapter 2. I contextualize the immigration stories by peeling back the historical layers of immigration and the myth of a post-racial society. In addition, I examine how race/ethnicity became a social construct, look at the parallel movements of suffrage and anti-racism, and discuss the illusion of a unified oppression in feminist circles, thus leading to intersectionality to explain the positioning of Women of Color. Chapter 3, I will present the pathways for women of immigrant origin to elected office. It will reveal the deep history of community organizing which have given entry to immigrants to political life. In Chapter 4, I will begin sharing the findings by first introducing the methodological foundation and analytical approach of this study. Special attention will be given to my role as the researcher in the mentioned approaches. In Chapter 5, I will introduce the stories of participants as well as discuss the initial findings of this qualitative study. I will frame the findings using tenets from Critical Race Theory to explain the narratives of participants. Chapter 6 will continue to share the voices of participants, in particular what motivated them to run for office and what led to their candidate emergence in a post-2016 era. Chapter 7 concludes this dissertation by discussing the main findings and offering recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2
Examining
Intersectionality
Through a Critical Lens
Framework:

A Brief U.S. Sociohistorical Account of Immigration, Race/ Ethnicity and Gender

Introduction

Throughout U.S. history, a false narrative emerged that classified Native people in the Americas as outsiders (Brayboy, 2005) and women as second-class citizens (Saini, 2017). In this chapter I will present a general contextual picture of how the marginalization of immigrants, racial/ethnic[9] groups, and women developed over time. The aim is to bring forward a brief account of how Native people became articulated as the immigrant and how race/ethnicity and gender became systemically marginalized[10], socially constructed markers of identification. Evaluating the current system of these oppressions requires an analysis of how those systems were built.

In the first section, *Critical Race Theory: Evaluating the Tenets of Normalcy of Race and Intersectionality,* I will introduce the theory that acknowledges how social markers impact the lives of People of Color, thus bringing together the two main findings in the narrative of participants presented later in Chapters 5 and 6. *A Brief Approach to U.S. Immigration Experiences*, will relate the historical patterns of racial scripts used throughout history to

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9 Race and ethnicity will be presented together with a forward slash in between each word. This falls in line with other studies analyzing racism, which will be presented throughout this dissertation. Additionally, participants used both terms interchangeably and therefore race/ethnicity is the best way to represent the findings around issues of racism in Chapters 5 and 6. Although race was originally used to examine biological and genetic distinctions, it has been scientifically disproven that race is a biological component in determining genetics, therefore there are no races (Duster, 2009; Cosmides, 2003). In fact, race is a socially constructed concept formed from the oppressive legacies of slavery and colonialism (Hall, 2017). "Differential racialization" is the process of marginalized groups racialized at different points in time according to the needs of people in power. Oppression of a particular group is determined by the social political and economic demands of that time (Delgado & Stephancic, 2007). Ethnicity on the other hand is the cultural, linguistic, and religious practices that groups share, including colonial and migratory histories (Cornell & Hartmann, 2007). Given their shared systems of oppressions, race/ethnicity will be written together to demonstrate that race does not exists, through it is weaponized against People of Color.

10 Marginalized, untapped, or historically excluded communities refers to people who have been denied access to social and economic prosperity. They are communities with the potential to thrive in society, but are untapped resources. These communities include racial and ethnic populations, women, and those in low socio-economic situations. Through social media, People of Color are calling for terms that reflects a perspective based on the assets the groups represent. Unlike terms such as marginalized or historically disadvantaged groups (Williams, 2000), untapped refers to existing knowledge and skills that has yet to receive a mainstream recognition (Ukaegbu, 2017). It is the intent of this dissertation to use terminology that brings acknowledgement to the assets that People of Color possess yet have been rendered invisible for centuries.

evaluate the use of political discourse that denigrates immigrants in the United States and in particular in Oregon where this study is situated. Looking to *The Post Racial Myth: Framing the Post-2016 Threatening Political Environment under a Racial/Ethnic Evaluation*, I will discuss the illusion of a post-racial society and make connections to how racial/ethnic minorities are situated in a post-2016 era. The fourth section, *Gender as a Category of Identification,* will help provide a brief introduction to the sociohistorical construction of modern-day women. In *Women's Suffrage and the Abolitionist Movement: The Black HERstory of Parallel Movements,* I examine the women's suffrage and abolitionist movements and will describe how the two groups developed mutual support for one another at their inception, and relate how through the years that unity became fraught with divisions. Caught between the two groups were Black women, who fought for liberation among both groups, but never benefited from their victories. *Challenging the Illusion of a Unified Oppression: The Birth of Intersectionality*, will follow feminist theory and the perspectives of Women of Color who were mostly ignored or challenged within feminist circles. This section is dedicated to their struggle to be recognized within a mostly white, middle-class construction of feminism. This chapter is also dedicated to the trajectory of Women of Color[11] through the anti-racist and feminist movements that failed to include their discourse, and the emergence of Critical Race Theory as a response. *Feminism within Critical Race Theory* takes into account how the intersect of systems of oppression defines the lived experiences of Women of Color. In this section, I will center the contributions of feminists to understand the vital framework of intersectionality in understanding the lives of Women of Color, while also acknowledging the

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11 Women of Color is used to represent a unified experience of oppression among marginalized women from third world origins. "Women of color…is not an ethnicity. It is one of the inventions of solidarity, an alliance, a political necessity that is not the given name every female with dark skin and a colonized tongue, but rather a choice about how the resist and with whom" (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p.100). I will use this term throughout this dissertation, even when discussing the analysis of interviews given the term was used by participants. Although I am aware that the term is not used within the European context, I will use in capitalized form it to show the importance given in the narratives of participants and within the social context of this study.

intersects immigration has with those systems. It will elaborate on Critical Race Theory and its tenet of intersectionality as an approach for bridging the historical divide between the anti-racist and feminist movements.

Critical Race Theory: Evaluating the Tenets of Normalcy of Racism and Intersectionality

Critical Race Theory (CRT) began as a movement in the United States legal field during the 1980s to examine how racism was imbedded in the law. It questioned the idealism and liberal perspective of the post-civil rights period and pushed for a focused critique on social justice theory and praxis (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017.). The CRT work of Kimberle Crenshaw (1991), Derrick Bell (1992), Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2017), Angela Harris (2012), and Daniel Solorzano and Lindsay Pérez Huber (2020), to name a few, has been viewed as a quest for social justice through academic scholarship by examining race, racism, and power dynamics within changing political and historical contexts. As a theoretical lens, it aims to get to the root of inequalities by evaluating racism in systems and institutions and labeling the other forms of racism beyond the traditional, narrow definition of overt acts of discriminations, such as during the Jim Crow era (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1989; Solorzano and Huber, 2020).

The social field of education has adapted and incorporated CRT in much of their work. Seeing it's value in analyzing inequities in society, more social scientists are acknowledging the potential to further expose systematical racism in their research (Carbado & Roithmayr, 2014; Westerveen, 2020). New theoretical branches have also been developed. Branches relevant to this research examine racialization based on immigrant status, language and phenotype, accent, and surname, such as Latina Critical Race Theory (Huber, 2009) and Asian Critical Race Theory (Chang, 1993). Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) also emerged to expose the racialized and political position American Indians have as belonging to sovereign nations in

the United States (Brayboy, 2005). These branches center exposing the oppression of their respective communities, through methodology tools like *testimonios* or storytelling from those impacted by immigration centered political discourses. Each assesses the role of "nativistic racism" in the lives of People of Color by evaluating how belonging and contributions are questioned irrespective of citizenship status (Chang, 1993; Huber, 2009; Huber & Cueva, 2012; Solorzano and Huber, 2020; Wing, 2003). Building on those tenets is TribalCrit's emphasis that colonialization, a Eurocentric knowledge and power structure, is pervasive in U.S. culture and threatens the existence of Native Americans (Brayboy, 2005).

Racism is centered in the CRT framework because it is seen as an ever-present issue serving the interest of the dominant group—white elites and working-class whites—and, most importantly, it is at the root of the disenfranchisement of People of Color. Without the acknowledgment of its existence, racism cannot be eliminated (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). CRT peals back colorblindness, arguing that it is impossible not to see race/ethnicity[12] given the social-historical process which established racism as a U.S. cultural norm. Racism is part of life in the United States and is experienced by People of Color through multiple forms, including microaggressions and institutional racism. *Microaggressions* are unconscious or conscious subverted messages to People of Color which aims at keeping a racial hierarchy of white supremacy. It has the power to cause extreme and lasting psychological harm (Sue, 2010). *Systemic* and *institutional racism* are interchangeable terms used to identify the policies which maintain the existing troubling conditions for marginalized societies. When examining outcomes in, for example, the legal process or education, it becomes notable how consistently

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12 This dissertation does not enter into a deep theoretical debate about the differences and use of race and ethnicity as an identity. I use the notion of race/ethnicity because it has derived directly from interviews.

the practices within systems fail historically excluded communities (Delgado and Stefancic, 2013).

Kimberly Crenshaw (1989) introduced a concept which broke away from the "single-axes framework" that had been prevalent in both feminist and ethnic studies (p. 139). She introduced the term *intersectionality* as an analytical tool to examine the culminative effects of identities on judicial outcomes on African Americans; later the use of the term expanded to include feminist and anti-racist perspectives and theories. Crenshaw speaks about Black women, her "starting point," as individuals whose multiple yet intersecting experiences of identity-based oppressions are seldom considered in research (1989, p. 140). As Crenshaw initially defined it, "intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism," and therefore needs to be evaluated as two social constructed markers of identification that were continually present in the lives of Black women (1989, p. 140). The voice-of-color thesis states that each Person of Color has a perspective of how racism has impacted their experiences. Those experiences give People of Color the authority to speak on matters of racism as experts (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Therefore, experiencing oppression based not just on race/ethnicity, but on gender as well, is a lived experience that Women of Color have faced and can speak with authority on its impacts. This dissertation gives women of immigrant origin a platform to share their truth.

Critical Race Theory has been misunderstood and attacked from far-left extremists who seem to believe that "teaching" CRT in schools will teach kids to hate white people. The fact that CRT is not a subject in itself, but an analytical framework to examine the social conditions of society, is lost on them. In 2020, then-President Donald Trump signed a Presidential Executive Order that issued for all federal departments a ban on using CRT and other words that linked

to the assessment of social conditions based on race/ethnicity, such as the word *disparities*. School boards across the U.S. are still being attacked for refusing to ban CRT in the classrooms. Mind you, as previously explained, CRT is not a subject that can be implemented in the classroom, but mounting pressure and violence has forced many school board members to vote against its use. Similarly, in other parts of the world attacks on CRT have also taken place, one such attack was made by the Minister for Equalities in the United Kingdom, Kemi Badenoch. Now more than ever it is vital to turn to CRT as a tool to examine the structural inequalities that develop the social and political environments mentioned above. To that affect, I will begin the next section by discussing a brief history of the experiences of immigrants in the United States. I will also bring forward the immigration policies and landscape in which this study is situated, post-2016.

A Brief Approach to U.S. Immigration Experiences

Banning immigrants from entering the U.S. or prohibiting their legal status have been common tactics used throughout U.S. history. These tactics aim to stop the flow of migration and keep families apart, thus resulting in the loss of connections and support systems necessary for immigrant communities to thrive in new environments (Towler & Parker, 2018). Dating as far back as 1825, racial scripts to vilify Mexican immigrants have been apparent in political discourse. The Governor of the State of Cuahuila and Texas established a contract to colonize 500 families in "empty" land with Stephan F. Austin overseeing the task. It stated,

> He [Austin] shall be obliged not to admit in the new Colony Criminals, Vagabonds, or Men of bad Conduct or Character, and Cause and such as are within his limi[ts] to leave it and should it be necessary he shall drive them out by force of arms. (Austin, 1825)

The ideological desire to maintain closed borders and dispel "threats" to the progress of Texas as an independent state drove anti-immigrant sentiment and tactics, which led to the Texas Revolution. Mexicans and Mexican Tejanos were removed from the new Texas territory as a result of the 1848 Mexican Cession (da Vinha & Dutton, 2018). Within that discourse was the deliberate tactic to paint Mexicans as vile criminals lacking "American values." These same patterns are seen throughout the history of immigration policy of the United States, which I will elaborate throughout this dissertation.

After the 1848 Mexican Cession, in which the United States took control of more than 500,000 square miles of Mexican territory, the United States began to guard its borders from immigrant newcomers (Abrego, 2014; Dreby, 2020; Enriquez, 2015). In a similar vein to Mexican immigrant slander, there were two communities that have been notably impacted by the same racial script of immigrant invasion rhetoric. In 1882 the U.S. turned to a distinct target through the Chinese Exclusion Act, allowing states to remove Chinese immigrants (Lee, 2003). With the U.S. in an economic decline after the Civil War, anti-Chinese labor leader Denis Kearney placed blame on the immigration of the "Chinese pets." After he contributed to the wave of anti-Chinese sentiment which led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Kearney pointed his anti-immigrant discource to a new target, though in his eyes they were one in the same (Chang, 1993). In 1892, a Sacramento reporter recorded Kearney stating,

> [The] foreign Shylocks [who] are rushing another breed of Asiatic slaves to fill up the gap made vacant by the Chinese who are shut out by our laws…Japs…are being brought here now in countless numbers to demoralize and discourage our domestic labor market. (Lee, 2003, p. 33).

The "new invadors" were seen as a threat and concern and that alarm rang loud in the White House, leading to the anti-Japanese Alien Land Laws of the 1920s and, eventually, the catestrophic internment camps of Japanese-Americans during WWII. Grouping distinct racial communities into one category because of a perceived commonality—whether it be language, appearances, or country proximity—is another racial script successfully used in the anti-immigrant movements. Denis Kearney used this tactic in his grouping of Chinese and Japanese immigrants as similar threats to the U.S. economy. Presidential candidate Donald Trump also utilized this racial script when he refered to the "Mexican threat."

At the launch of his candidacy in 2015, Donald Trump used a tactic that history has proven to be essential to gain public support for controversial immigration policies. He labeled Mexican immigrants the source of the U.S. drug problems, called them criminals and rapist, and vowed to build a wall paid for by Mexico (Huber, 2016). In 2016, during a presidential debate against Secretary Hillary Clinton, then-candidate Donald Trump defended his immigration policy of building a wall between Mexico and the United States and removing amnesty opportunities for all immigrants. During his campaign, in what have become infamous words, Trump stated, "we have some *bad hombres* here and we're gonna get 'em out" (Dias & Ahmed, 2016). Anti-immigrant rhetoric coming from a political candidate was not new, but the fervid response from Trump's following seemed to signal a new wave of acceptance of this racialized messaging and a growing, receptive audience.

Some studies posit that recent immigrants have held on to their cultural and linguistic traditions more than European immigrants have in the past (Marcelli & Lowell, 2005; Zhou, 1999). Those that see immigrants as a threat to the white hegemonic social structure, advocate for further restrictions of immigrant rights to citizenship as an attempt to impact their influence (Geyer,

1996; Huntington, 2004). While campaigning, Trump promised to build a wall between Mexico and the United States as part of his stated plan to keep out any foreigners that were not contributing to America. The momentum behind this promise echoed throughout the campaign and even during his time in office with chants from supporters of "build the wall" (Fox Business, 2016). The harnassing of anti-immigrant sentiment and the postioning of immigrants as outsiders working to strip away 'American values' proved to be successful tactics for Trump.

After Trump took office, the anti-immigrant fervour continued. Trump incorporated a strict Zero Tolerance Policy, which resulted in the separation of undocumented families crossing the boarder. This caused a ripple effect of fear and dispair across immigrant communities (Pérez, 2015b). The lack of an immigration reform policy throughout the Trump presidency contributed to the separation of families. Laura Enriquez (2015) labels this as "multigenerational punishment" through the form of "structural and symbolic legal violence" which impacts not only the undocumented individual, but also their U.S. born children (p. 941). The impact was felt across borders, where once family separation had been a short-term situation, it was now sustained long-term through Trump's immigration laws. Drawing from the "No Fly" restrictions that had been put into place after 9/11, the Trump Administration implemented a Muslim Ban, which limited people from several Middle Eastern countries from entering the United States (Totenberg & Montanaro, 2018). These laws had a tremendous impact on families divided transnationally, often causing trauma and economic insecurity that will continue to ripple into the following generations (Towler & Parker, 2018).

Fording and Schram (2018) analyzed Trump's discources to determine what elements drew the voting base to vote for him. They discovered that Trump's discourse against African Americans, Immigrants—in particular the Latinx community—and Muslims, produced an

outgroup hostility that mobilized dormant voters in the 2012 election. These messages along with with economic insecurity and race-based hate contributed to expanding the number of voters favoring Trump, particularly among poor, rural, and uneducated populations. Fording & Schram (2018) found that Trump's white heterosexual male identity increased his base and contributed to his victory This study showed the level of weight that Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric had on the 2016 election cycle and in the growth of people's acceptance of threatening rhetorical towards distinct racial/ethnic, gendered, and immigrant groups.

Oregon's Immigration History

Waves of hate crimes since the election of the 45th president have been well documented (Edwards & Rushin, 2018; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2018; Huber, 2016; Schaffner, Macwilliams & Nteta, 2018), but of course the oppression of immigrants has long been present in the' social fabric of the United States. Oregon has been no exception, participating in the Chinese Exclusion Act of the 1880s, the anti-Japanese Alien Land Laws of the 1920s, and the internment of Japanese during WWII. "Operation Wetback" which targeted and deported Mexicans living in the United States had one of its strongest impacts in Oregon (Gonzales-Berry & Mendoza, 2010). The institutional failures to provide healthy living conditions to guest workers is a recent example of the subjugation of immigrants in Oregon (Tamura 1993; Tuttle, 1999). This history sets the stage for the disparities faced by immigrants and their families.

For Women of Color, historical oppressions have been costly. Women of Color in Oregon face the highest rates of poverty compared to their white counterparts (Women's Foundation of Oregon, 2016). Although all women suffer a pay gap, Mexican women earn 51 cents on the dollar compared to white men. A stark difference between white women who earn 78 cents for every dollar earned by a white man (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2018). When

systems of oppression intersect—race/ethnicity, immigration and gender—women of immigrant origin are faced with challenging living conditions.

Although there is a lack of data specifically illustrating the status of women of immigrant origin as a whole, a few reports give us a glimpse to their situation. In Oregon, for example, 70 percent of African immigrants and refugee women who are single and have children, live in poverty (Curry-Stevens & Coalitions of Communities of Color, 2013). The lack of data about the status of women of immigrant origins is part of the challenge in advocating for their advancement. As of now, only those who live in such conditions can know the extent of the issues they face.

The use of overt political tactics to oppress non-whites was purposefully woven into Oregon's history. The foremost attack on historically excluded communities was in 1859 when Oregon became a state and developed its constitution, which included exclusionary laws targeting People of Color. It wasn't until 1926 that these sections of the constitution were repealed. During the 1980s, 140,000 people living on the outskirts of Portland, most of whom were refugee and immigrants, were annexed and thus denied the essential sanitary services that any community would have needed to thrive (Haque, 2019). The denial of access to systems to help families move away from poverty, such as the ability to acquire financing to buy a home or move to a neighborhood with appropriate school options, kept immigrants and People of Color in poverty. Still today, Oregon is one of the whitest large cities in the United States, with a population that is over 75 percent white, non-Hispanic according to the 2017 U.S. Census; and for many People of Color, Oregon continues to be an unwelcoming place (Bell, 2014; Janmohamed, 2017).

Steeped as it is with a racist and xenophobic history, Oregon offers an interesting perspective. Over 22 percent of the Oregon population is either foreign born or children of immigrants (American Immigration Council, 2017). The immigrant community in Oregon has increased over the last decade, and Mexican women in particular, who have followed their family to Oregon, have been settling and building social ties in their new communities (Gonzales-Berry, Mendoza, 2010, p. 174). People of Color face economic, health, and social disparities throughout Oregon. Organizations such as the Coalition of Communities of Color have researched the systemic oppressions that have sustained the supremacy of the white population in Oregon, naming a long history of educational, workforce, and social discrimination against People of Color (Curry-Stevens et al., 2010). Nonetheless, Oregon is also considered by many to be a liberal haven, touting some of the most progressive policies in the nation and having one of the highest number of women in elected office. This contradiction is not lost on People of Color residing in Oregon and is the context in which the lived experiences of the participants in this research sit. In the following section I will further elaborate on the political context of this study and the racial/ethnic systems developed over time.

The Post Racial Myth: Framing the Post-2016 Threatening Political Environment under a Racial/Ethnic Evaluation

With the election of President Barack Obama in 2008, the argument that the United States had firmly planted itself as a post-racial society slowly unraveled as the social, health, educational, and economic disparities among People of Color remained prevalent. This evidence pushed back on the idea that race was no longer a needed analytical component in social research (Carbado & Roithmayr, 2014). But the prevailing discourse of post-racialism during the Obama era helped to legitimize the decades old ideology of colorblindness (Crenshaw et al., 2019).

Although lacking a unifying definition, colorblindness can be labeled as a concept that many conservatives tout as the reason racism should no longer be a relevant discourse (Crenshaw et al., 2019). Colorblindness has also been used to invalidate racism by rendering experiences invisible, like in the case of Indigenous peoples (McKay, 2019).

The idea that people don't see color is unfounded in both psychological and neurological research testing for colorblindness and racism. Studying racial bias during moments of perceived threat reveals the cognitive control process as it relates to psychological and neurological behavior. In Payne and Correll's (2020) study, respondents were given images of both Black and White people holding either a weapon or a harmless object. Biased perceptions of Black people led to an increase in misidentification of the object they were holding as a weapon. In fact, white people actually holding weapons were perceived as unarmed at higher rates (Payne & Correll, 2020). Additionally, neurological research reveals the prevalence of implicit biases against Black people. A study conducted with white subjects reported the activation of the amygdala, cells near the base of the brain that give meaning and response cues to images, when shown Black faces in covert ways. Even without having a direct image of Blacks portrayed as angry or violent, fear and anxiety were measures in white subjects as they were shown those images (Payne & Correll, 2020). The ingrained fear of Black people is so prevalent, that it is used as a tactic to unite people against particular groups or Black people in power.[13]

During President Obama first term, Donald Trump spoke at the 2011 Conservative Political Action Conference to declare his interest in running for the presidency (Farley, 2011). During

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13 Although I am using neurological research to argue an imbedded race-based response to Black people, it is in no way a defense that racism is a biological response, but a social learning that has been taught and thus manifest through measurable physical and emotional responses.

that speech, Trump set forth a false narrative that would carry him into his candidacy and eventually into office. He said,

> Our current President came out of nowhere. Came out of nowhere. In fact, I'll go a step further: the people that went to school with him they never saw him, they don't know who he is. It's crazy. With no track record. . . . He didn't go in wars, he didn't go in battles, he didn't beat this one, that one, have enemies all over the place. Nobody knew who the hell he was. (Farley, 2011)

With 43 percent of Republicans believing that Trump's claim was true, the questioning of the citizenship of President Obama led to a rise in nativism across the country. Trump's claims went even further: he began to question Obama's ties to Kenya, alluding to a connection with ISIS, and he suggested that Obama was Muslim, when in fact he was a practicing Christian (Gentile, 2017). Of course, Trump was playing into the fears of those who viewed African Americans as untrustworthy and dangerous. He brought together an anti-immigrant and racial/ethnic component to his rhetoric. Although he never explicitly named it, race/ethnicity was at the forefront of Trump's discourses. Trump successfully used the social historical hierarchy between racial/ethnic groups to benefit his campaign rhetoric. To understand what that means, I will now present an abridged evaluation of racial and ethnic identity formation and hierarchy over time.

Stuart Hall (2017) examines racial identity through defined systems of classification that have settled social order among multiple groups. Racial groups are viewed as having signifiers attributed to their race, negative or positive, so others know where they fit and how they should participate in society. Those signifiers, Hall argues, attribute to a "racialized knowledge about differences" and thus,

has the power to organize everyday conducts as well as the various practices of groups toward one another, and such knowledges enter deeply into, and profoundly disfigure, the culture of the societies in which they are operative over long periods. (Hall, 2017, p. 68)

Therefore, although race is a category that cannot be debated through biological-genetic or physical distinctions, one cannot escape it because it is formed though other social means. Thus, race becomes a "floating signifier," ever evolving in its definition because it is guided by culture and emotions rationalized by society and disguised as truth (Hall, 2017, p. 64; Hall & Jhally, 1997). Hall (2017) argues that by viewing race in this way, it can shift our understanding of cultural differences to recognize that ethnicities are "the shared languages, traditions, religious beliefs, cultural ideas, customs, and rituals that bind together particular groups" (p. 83). Most significantly, it can help us analyze how race has been weaponized politically, socially, and historically.

For example, Natives of the Americas had their history erased and, in its place, a new story was created that identified them as savage and uneducated people. This process established an image of the non-human Indian. For when something is not human, they do not deserve any rights (Grosfoguel, 2016). This process was just one of the many tactics used in what Lorenzo Veracini (2010) labels as settler colonialism.[14] People who have been characterized as savage or uneducated were denied their own history as a culture deep in mathematical and agricultural advancements. Lacking cultural relativism, the story of Natives to the Americas was invented

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14 Settler colonialism is defined as a societal design, not a singular event, to establish a new political order and social group through the invasion of lands, the elimination of its native people, and building wealth through the removal of natural resources from the land by means of forced slave labor. Although other forms of colonial practices such as migration are linked through the practice of settlement to new territories, the former definition is what distinguishes settler colonialism from other forms of migration practices (Arvin et al., 2013; Veracini, 2010)

by colonizers, much like the story of African Americans in the United States was, as I will touch on later in this chapter (Ostler & Shoemaker, 2019; Veracini, 2010).

Science has also played a role in perpetuating racism in the United States. Early scientific studies, embedded with discriminatory and unethical methodologies, that once claimed that there were biological differences between humans of white, brown, and black skin color, have long been discredited (Biddiss, 1976). The concept of race was used to assign importance to certain individuals based on early "scientific" beliefs that superior intellect separated the white individual from others (Darwin, 2009; Knox, 1850). Robert Knox (1850) published "The Races of Men," and claimed biological and intellectual superiority of the white race over his subjects, African male descendants. His theories were based on false assumptions about African male physical and intellectual attributes, or lack thereof, solely based on the evaluation of one subject (Peck, 2021c). But long before there were such studies, the origins of white supremacy can be traced as early as 1478. Examining the roots of racism makes clear how the European belief in white supremacy, settler colonialism, slavery, present-day racism and even sexism, exist in present day. This history grounds the understanding of race/ethnicity and gender, helping us move from theory to understanding the lived experiences of those most currently impacted by history.

Racism is akin to colonialism in ways that can no longer be ignored. Yet, although overt colonial practices have ceased for many centuries, racism is a lasting result of past European practices when countries believed they had the right to take wealth from "savage" cultures. The belief of the White culture as supreme can be traced to 1478 when the Pope Sixtus IV approved the Spanish inquisition, a process of legitimizing the genetic purity of Christians from Morish and Jewish families. In "Exterminate All the Brutes," Raoul Peck (2021a) examines the birth

of white supremacy and the legal framing of race based on bloodline. The religious sanction and conviction of white supremacy led to centuries of the extermination of cultures with wealth and power coveted by European countries. Such as in the Mexican territories during 1612 when Spanish colonial authorities ordered a *limpieza de sangre* (a purity of bloodline) in response to suspicion of African slave uprisings (Martínez, 2004). Practices like these have had a direct impact on today's society. Peck reveals the historical patterns of the conditions of genocide, initially used to eliminate Native Americans between the 1500s to the 1800s (Peck, 2021a). Yet because European colonizers believed Africans were less human than Native Americans, enslaved Africans were positioned at the lowest social order of the new world (Peck, 2021b).

This brief yet important social-historical summary relays some of the ways race was developed to weaponize groups of people. Many attempts by politically liberal people to abolish racial divides presented held hand-in-hand with the argument that "everyone is the same," but this position contained an unspoken caveat that this was true only if that "sameness" was reflective of a white middle-class liberal culture (Hall, 2017). Thus, *sameness* becomes synonymous with a call for assimilation. Current arguments that focus on racial difference, whether they be for or against unity, are in fact arguments about ethnic differences, the cultural practices among groups. Beginning in the 1970s the antiracist and decolonial movements celebrated the ethnic diversity among themselves. Hall (2017) writes that this claim transferred into cultural identities of those ethnic differences. Today, it is the "specificity of different cultural traditions" and the "shifting of signifiers in political struggles" that have become the focus of how identity is conceptualized within groups (Hall, 2017, p. 95, 99). Therefore, Hall (2017) claims that in the same vein as race, ethnicity can become a floating signifier.[15]

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15 Given Hall's (2017) explanation of race and ethnicity, I would like to reiterate that my written use of race/ethnicity throughout the rest of this dissertations derives from participant's interchangeable use of these terms. This is was also applied in this way since there was not an analytical examination of participant's understanding of the two terms as it was used, an analysis that is not a central focus of this dissertation.

An essential aspect of examining racial/ethnic identity is to define racism. Ramón Grosfoguel (2016) defines racism based on the "hierarchy of superiority/inferiority" and what is considered human (p. 10). He states,

> The people classified above the line of the human are recognized socially in their humanity as human beings and, thus, enjoy access to rights (human rights, civil rights, women rights/ or labor rights), material resources, and social recognition to their subjectivities, epistemologies and spiritualities. The people below the line of human are considered subhuman or non-human; that is, their humanity is questioned and, as such, negated…the extension of rights, material resources and the recognition of their subjectivities, identities, spiritualities and epistemologies are denied." (Grosfoguel, 2016, p. 10).

For Grosfoguel (2016), racism is also experienced through ethnic characteristics and phonotypes, which go beyond skin color, the traditional marker of racism. Those markers are what positions a person into the "zone of being and non-being" (p. 11). While some systems of oppression operate in the zone of being for a person, they can mutually have identities that operate in the zone of non-being. For example, a transexual, white, lower-economic-class person is placed in a zone of non-being due to their sexual orientation and socio-economic status, but still operates within a zone of being due to their race. How systems of oppression and privilege allow identities to intersect and converge is reliant on the culture of society (Hall, 2017). The intersect of social markers can therefore, *at times*, position someone within privilege (Lamas Canavate, 2007).

Because socially constructed identities can live within and outside of privilege and are reliant on social norms to define those lines, the notion of identity is defined by Aurora Álvarez Veinguer (2001) as "fragmented and fractured…never singular" in nature, but "the result of

multiple constructions along different and sometimes intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions" (p. 72, my translation). Since an ever-evolving culture controls what an identity signifies, there is not one definition of an identity form that has been able to transcend over time and cultures. In the European context, the identity labeled "Black" has more of a distinct history and acceptance among Black diaspora communities than in the United States (Hall, 2017). Even within Europe, Spaniards acknowledge Black identity in distinct ways due to their history (Toasije, 2009) as compared to the Belgians Black diaspora (Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw, 2009). Therefore, race as an identity, for example, has varying definitions across time, locations, and societies and can be used in varying ways in a diverse set of people's identity formation. Ethnicity, also functions in the same way (Hall, 2017).

Gender as a Category of Identification

Before discussing gender, it is worth noting how this research situates the category of women. Chandra Mohanty (1984) assesses the role of categorizing "women" in analysis and provides a clear argument for resisting the tendency to evaluate women as a cohesive group solely based on gender while ignoring the influence of social and power networks on their positions. She questions the validity of making a case for gender as the sole reason for women's oppression. Doing so "assumes men and women are already constituted as sexual-political subjects before they enter into the arena of social relations" (p. 340). Although her arguments are based on the category of "third world women," or women living in the global south, her position rings true to how Women of Color in the United States connect to their experiences (hooks, 1984; Sandoval, 2000). Women have been portrayed in research as having less power in political circles by direct consequence of gendered stereotypes rather than looking at the systemic attributions to those varied perspectives (Dolan, 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2005; Koch, 2002; Leeper, 1991).

Culturally, sex is the biological feature of a person that sets them as a male, female, or intersex individual, all of which are distinct from gender (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Gender is the social and cultural expectations that determine behavior and attitudes. They are learned and change with time and context (Schiebinger, 1999). For Butler (1990) "gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed" (p. 278). Gender is therefore nonexistent. Within many cultural communities, gender is not only performed by the self, but is socially imposed and creates limits to the ways women are allowed to perform, or not, and how they are licensed to interact within their own culture and outside of it. Therefore, gender intersects with other forms of identities such as class, culture, and race/ethnicity (Anzaldúa, 1983, Crenshaw, 1989, hooks, 1984). In political science and migration studies, gender has been a defining category that has moved the needle of political inclusion and resettlement of refugees with tactics such as implementing political gender quotas and migration asylum seeking. Gender is seen as a universal political issue, whereas race/ethnicity is not. That is because both men and women belong to most political parties, whereas racial/ethnic groups are seen as predominantly belonging to a specific party (Htun, 2004). Therefore, in this paper, gender is incorporated because it has been a social and historical identity that has defined how people move towards a path of elected leadership. Although there is a large body of important literature which goes into debate about the terms sex and gender and their historical and social significance, this dissertation does not enter into a deep discussion because that debate was not analyzed within the stories shared by participants. What is important to understand as a context for this work, are the sociohistorical patterns of gender-based oppression.

Gender in Colonial Times

To begin to review how history began to use gender as a form of oppression, it is important to acknowledge the role of women as far back as pre-colonial times. Very little is written about the role of women before colonization. Peck (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d) himself fails to mention any reference to women in his four-part documentary series on colonialization and race. This is an invisibility of women all too familiar in colonial and racial historical analysis (Bradford, 1996). But the role of women during this time period can be analyzed from two standpoints: the select few with power and authority (Probasco et al., 2017; Ronald, 2007) and the many women who suffered at the hands of Spanish and other European colonizers (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Hunt, 1989).

Although tales during the era of exploration are dominated by men who "conquered" and "discovered," within those chronicles are women who led the strategies to colonize the Americas. One of the most visible figures was Queen Isabel, or *Isabel La Catolica* as she was known, who reigned from 1474–1504. Queen Isabel financed the voyage of Christopher Columbus to what he believed would be a shorter route to India and its riches. After claiming the Caribbean for Spain, he returned to Queen Isabel to describe the new lands, their wealth of resources, and the Natives of the region (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). After having conflicting feelings about the slave practices the Spanish inflicted on the new Christian Natives, the Catholic church proclaimed they were too human to suffer the cruelty of enslavement. As such, eyes were turned to funneling enslaved Africans instead as the Church viewed them as sub-human and incapable of converting to the faith (Peck, 2021b). As discussed, this was an initial inclination to labeling a racial/ethnic hierarchy. Under the ruling of Isabel La Catolica colonization practices were justified by the need to spread the Catholic faith and family ideals (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014).

Queen Isabel was not the only monarch that perpetuated colonialist practices, many other women also ruled under the same ideals. Poets, painters, and storytellers describe Queen Elizabeth I as a virtuous Queen whose expeditions to the new continent during the 1580s established a peaceful rule over savages. The mass production of those literary accounts validated to the world the right for England to settle and take from the Americas (Stróbl, 2017). France, Belgium, and other European nations such as the Netherlands followed suit (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). Isabel Clara Eugenia, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands and daughter to Philip II of Spain, ruled from 1621–1633. Further from her diplomatic affairs in negotiations, trade, and military strategies in the Spanish Netherlands, Isabel was a councilor to her nephew Philip IV of Spain. Her role went beyond that of a Governor, and she was well known as a trusted advisor to the King of Spain as he expanded his rule across the world (Paranque, 2017).

Monarchies were not alone in helping to perpetuate the European ideals of racial purity and gender roles. White women who travelled with their husbands to the new world, and single women working as teachers and health providers, also contributed to establishing and maintaining the new social order (Ware, 2015). These few examples depict the roles that white women had in colonization. Beyond the family and the gendered ideals they helped maintain, their presence launched the institutional fear of Natives and enslaved African's through the notion of violence against white women. Laws across the world were incorporated to kill those suspected of attempted rape on white women (Ware, 2015). In the United States, that legacy was continued through the lynching of enslaved Africans, and later African American, Mexican, Native American, Chinese immigrants, and Italian immigrant men (Carrigan & Webb, 2003; Crenshaw, 1989). Notions about the protection of the female white woman in the new world became so ingrained they carried over into a general fear of the other, particularly

the immigrant and the racialized individual. The historical connection between gender and race/ethnicity during colonial times is one that needs further exploration and cannot be ignored in this study. That connection cannot be fully linked without first understanding the role of Native women before and after colonization.

In pre-colonial times Indigenous women were leaders in their own right (Denetdale, 2006). They built and managed democratic systems, and they were political leaders and healers. As the new settlers unraveled Indigenous democratic systems, the sovereignty once held by Indigenous women was dismantled with the incorporation of European patriarchal family structures (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). Embedding a male hierarchy in the new world culture would provide a struggle for a feminist agenda which I will later discuss in this chapter.

Throughout centuries new settlers were given sanction to kill Indigenous women, children, and elders as the promise of land loomed over their hopes for prosperity and autonomy (Peck, 2021d). When this legacy is evaluated, the link between the current U.S. racial tensions can be historically analyzed through the evaluation of the conditions of genocide[16]. Tactics such as extermination, forced removal from lands, slavery, and contempt for aliens are all conditions which allow genocide to be socially accepted and acted on (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Peck, 2021a). Those traits are seen throughout history and even among the current conditions of migrants in U.S. detention camps (Parsons Dick, 2020) and the forced removal of People of Color through gentrification (Haque, 2019). As Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (1995) writing reveals, we must acknowledge the past to understand the meaning of our present.

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16 The concept of genocide was introduced in the United Nations convention of 1948 as a response to the Holocaust. The U.S. ratified it in 1988 with no retroactive implications for past actions against Indigenous or other populations.

Even as Indigenous lives were threatened by European-lead atrocities, the African slave also fell victim to genocide conditions. Their forced removal from their homelands and enslavement leaves no doubt about the methods of elimination. Native and African women were faced with an intersect of oppressions due to their race/ethnicity and sex. They were put to work in harsh and back-breaking conditions and were also victim to rape by European settlers. Their children formed a distinct population of half European ancestry and given new names for their race, such as mestizo and mulatto people[17] (Manning & Trimmer, 2013).

As discussed earlier, Robert Knox's work on the biological inferiority of Africans were eventually discredited. But before that occurred, it impelled others to build upon his "scientific" findings, which later, and set the stage for a racist and sexist research agenda. One of the scientists who was influenced by Knox's work was Charles Darwin. Darwin is best known for his theories on the evolution of man through natural selection, but also wrote about the inferiority of women to men based on his theory of sexual selection (Darwin, 1981, 2009). Darwin validates this theory by pointing to the advancement of animals, such as the male peacock which over time developed an elaborate display of feathers to attract a mate. In the same way, men had to develop physical and mental superiority to attract a wife to reproduce children and in turn, through natural selection, man has become stronger and more intelligent than women (Darwin, 1981).

The counter-arguments by women right's activists and female scientists, which occurred after the publication of Darwin's *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871, are not well known. Women like Caroline Kennard, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, and Charlotte

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17 Mestizo refers to people of European and indigenous ancestry while mulatto refers to those of European and African lineage.

Perkins Gilman argued against Darwin's assumptions, often pointing to the contradictions in his writings. Kennard, for example, wrote to Darwin before his death and described how his lack of understanding of the diversity of women's experiences made his theories false. She discussed the social conditions of poor working women, who worked the same laborious conditions as their husbands, making pennies to their dollars, and returning home to continue to work in the household. Yet, for Darwin, gendered social conditions were not a result of inequities, such as a lack of career and financial opportunities for women. These arguments point to Darwin's biases, another man's opinion that is more telling of the sexist culture he benefited from than of a profound scientific discovery (Saini, 2017). Connecting back to the claims of biological superiority of races, arguments for gender superiority ran in a parallel form to argue its claim.

Although many women, such as Eliza Burt Gamble (1894) wrote about the contradictions of Darwin's theories of women's inferiority, the damage was done. The science of biology maintained a sexist and racist framing for many decades to come. In addition to the false evaluation of African males and white middle-class women, the lack of representation of Women of Color, those impacted by the intersects of both fields of research, is one of the ways their invisibility in society was maintained. In the section below, I will take a closer look into the history of the women's and abolitionist's suffrage movements while centering the invisibility of Black women within both movements.

Women's Suffrage and the Abolitionist Movement: The Black *HER*story of Parallel Movements

The women's suffrage movement had a clear vision, with voting rights came political power, a quest that rang true with the abolitionist as well. But opposing strategies to achieve suffrage

for the abolitionist and feminist made it difficult for Black women to find their place in either liberation movement. The lack of implementing strategies, based on both racial and gendered experiences, left them out of the conversations and leadership roles.

During a time when Black people continued to be enslaved in southern states, the first official petition for women's voting rights was introduced in 1846 to the New York state legislature by six women from Jefferson County, New York: Eleanor Vincent, Lydia A. Williams, Lydia Osborn, Susan Ormsby, and Anna Bishop (AAUW, 1989). But the road to the 19th Amendment was long after the introduction of the idea by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the 1848 Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York (National Parks Service, 2015).

Initially, the suffrage and abolitionist movements were linked through a shared commitment to equality for all. Abolitionist Frederick Douglass was one of Stanton's most important initial supporters, although not many joined that group as the claim for the right to vote for women was deemed to be too radial for its time (Nelson, 1979). Black women involved themselves in both movements, taking on the work with little to no recognition. Few accounts of the history of Black women in the fight for suffrage are available, but their participation was vital. Barred from attending women's suffrage associations, African American women used the platforms available to them, such as churches and schools, to move the issues of feminism and anti-racism forward. These are practices that are to this day still used (Bada et. al., 2006; Bagby, 2009; Frederick, 2014; Moore, 2005; Verba et al., 1995). But their voices were seldom heard within the women's suffrage and abolitionist circles (Bailey, 2020). Although strong partnerships were developed between suffragist and abolitionist men, the racial tensions between Black and white women in the suffrage movement were continually present.

An example of those tensions occurred during the 1851 Women's Right's Convention when Sojourner Truth gave her famous abolitionist and woman's right speech "Ain't I A Woman?" Before her address, crowds of women yelled to deny her from speaking for fear of dividing the movement with her pleas to incorporate the racial oppression of black women (Crenshaw, 1989). Nonetheless, Sojourner Truth spoke,

> That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man —when I could get it— and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (National Parks Service, 2017).

Sojourner Truth's speech is one of the first public articulations of the intersectional oppressions Black women faced at the time. She spoke about the white woman's positioning in society and the lack of acknowledgement of the situation that Black women faced. Although both Black and white women lived under male subordination, white women's subordination was seen as more comfortable experience than what Black women underwent.

With the civil war breaking out to abolish slavery in the south in 1861, the feminists call to take on the abolitionist fight was promoted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She pressed women's rights activists to set aside any conflicts between them and abolitionists, though later proclaimed it as a misstep to advance their cause (Davis, 1981; Nelson, 1979). Throughout the years of the civil war, and beyond, promising victories were held in both movements. President

Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all southern slaves in 1863. All the while the suffrage movement pushed for states to enact women's voting rights, given that the U.S. Constitution granted each state the right to decide who could vote (AAUW, 1998).

When the Civil War was won by the North in 1865, an attempt to unify the women's suffrage movement with the abolitionist movement resulted in the American Equal Rights Association (ERA). It was led and headed by leaders of both movements such as Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Lucy Stone, and Frances Watkins Harper. Although this unity was a promising step to achieving universal suffrage, the leadership of the ERA was plagued with characteristics of the past. Black women were seldom represented in leadership positions of power and Black men only held symbolic positions of leadership. The true work of drafting resolutions and managing the organization was led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Accounts of abolitionist men canvassing for Black men's suffrage, but not a universal suffrage, added to the mounting mistrust between Black men and white women in the ERA. Those tensions left the African American woman's perspective out of the conversation. Their unique perspective as both women and African Americans could have shaped new strategies for moving the ERA forward, but they found themselves in an all too familiar position, stuck between the two groups and mostly ignored (Nelson, 1979; DuBois, 1978).

Attempts by white women to work against the abolitionist and feminist movements cannot be ignored, thus this section cannot continue without first acknowledging another set of women who pushed for the Confederacy and the ideology of racial/ethnic and gendered hierarchy. The United Daughters of the Confederacy aimed to honor the fathers, brothers, and husbands who died fighting to maintain slavery in the south. In partnership with other Confederate groups,

their goal was to rewrite history by assuring that it was told and written to honor confederate soldiers and to deny that the Confederate goal in the Civil War was to maintain people in bondage as that implied that they were on the wrong side of history (Case, 2002). Monuments were erected across the country under the leadership of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, they fought for assistance to confederate soldiers, and paved the way for public schools to teach a false historical account of the Civil War, one that omitted the mention of slavery (Cox, 1997). Even today, their work to create an ahistorical version of the Civil War is felt. For example, a 2018 study from the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that only eight percent of high school students could name the reason the Civil War was fought (Shuster, 2018).

As reconstruction moved forward, it became clear that the franchise of Black men was at the forefront of a national political agenda in order to protect the Civil War victory against slavery (DuBois, 1978). In 1868, the 14th Amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States, a victory that not only Black people in the United States benefited from, but immigrants as well. Including immigrants in the franchise was important for Frederick Douglass. It is with the 14th Amendment that immigrants throughout U.S. history have been able to become citizens and vote. This angered suffragist because they felt they, white women, should have the vote before immigrants, and Black men for that matter (hooks, 2015). In 1969, the ERA members met for what would be the last time to vote on endorsing the 15th Amendment. In a plea to white suffragists for their support, Frederick Douglass gave the following speech,

> When women, because they are women, are dragged from their homes and hung upon lamp-
> post; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed upon the
> pavement; when they are objects of insult and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger

of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have [the same] urgency to obtain the ballot. (Davis, 1981).

Douglass's speech put into sharp focus the distinct experiences between them, yet it lacked recognition of the Black women's experiences as repressed women under the thump of both white and Black men, as well as white women. Black women were living Douglass's brutal account of the Black experience just as much as men in addition to the gendered oppression they faced within and outside of their communities. Their experiences were continually ignored in debates over voting rights. The 15th amendment would not only leave out white women's right to vote, but African American women's as well. Black women had nothing to gain, yet they supported the franchise of Black men. Black women knew that the fight for racial justice needed their support, even though it meant putting their needs aside once again (hooks, 2015). Ida B. Wells wrote a striking piece linking voting with the end of attacks on Black people called, "How Enfranchisement Stops Lynching." She wrote, "[w]ith no sacredness of the ballot there can be no sacredness of human life itself. For if the strong can take the weak man's ballot, when it suits his purpose to do so, he will take his life also" (Wells Barnett, 1910).

With tensions mounting between white feminists and abolitionist men, the unity between both groups could not sustain the aftermath of the ratification of the 15th Amendment. The amendment was seen as a blatant sexist strategy to maintain the disenfranchisement of women by officially naming for the first-time men as the only franchised citizens (Davis, 1981, Nelson, 1979). The 15th Amendment, ratified in 1869, established the right to vote to men of any race including former slaves. The abolitionists won their long-fought battle for recognition as citizens of the country in which they had been enslaved in for centuries. Women's quest for suffrage was divided and angry at what they considered an attempt to further oppress their right

to vote (hooks, 2015). Never mind that terrorist groups like the Klux Klux Klan and multiple Supreme Court rulings made sure that the promise of Black liberation failed, as reported clearly by Ida B. Wells during her time (Duster, 1970). Still, women's rights leaders were angered that their right for suffrage was set aside in the U.S. Constitution.

After the victories of the 14th and 15th Amendments, Black woman continued to struggle to find their path towards freedom from not only the patriarchal bondage within their cultural structures, but the larger societal racial structures as well (hooks, 2015). In 1880, the National American Woman Suffrage Association, now known as the League of Women Voters, was formed, excluding Black women from membership (Nelson, 1979; Watkins, 2016). In reaction to being ignored, in the late 1800s and early 1900s African American women established various organizations across the country to push for their civil and voting rights. The National Association of Colored Women, founded by Josephine St. Pierre and Charlotte Forten Grimke, and the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago, founded by Ida B. Wells, are two organizations that continued to support suffrage for all women. The presence of Black male leaders, like W.E.B. DuBois, and Black women leaders such as Mary Church Terrell, was continuous during the struggle for the 19th Amendment (Watkins, 2016). They saw their suffrage as a future electorate for their causes. The initial introduction of the woman's suffrage amendment to Congress titled the Susan B. Antony Amendment, was in 1878, but it wasn't until over four decades of strategic organizing, advocacy, and civil disobedience, that the 19th Amendment was passed by Congress in 1919 and received state ratification in 1920 (AAUW, 1989). Finally, all women were granted suffrage, but African American women faced state-sanctioned barriers which prohibited their right to vote (Bailey, 2020; Watkins, 2016).

Neither the suffrage movement of Black men nor of white women addressed the needs of Black women. Once again, they were caught in the spaces of the in-between (Anzaldúa, 1987), among patriarchal and racial injustices, with neither movement willing to incorporate their approach to liberation. After the 19th Amendment, women continued to work on other issues, including the right for Black women to vote, but the first wave of the feminist movement began to fade (Grady, 2018). As the years passed, women were not only still expected to maintain a subordinate position within their family structures, but those expectations were also characteristic of workplace and other social environments (DuBois, 1978).

The gendered practices introduced during settler colonialism made it difficult to shift culturally gendered norms. It wasn't until they realized that the vote did not produce the patriarchal liberation that the suffrage movement had hoped for, did women unite once again for their social emancipation during the second wave feminism period of the 1960–1980s. The following is an evaluation of how Black, Latina, Asian, and other feminist of color feminists approached second wave feminism with a critical perspective based on their experiential knowledge and faculty, carving out their own space in the feminist agenda of the time.

Challenging the Illusion of a Unified Oppression: The Birth of Intersectionality

The exact years of second wave feminism in the U.S. varies, but for this section I will use the decades of the 1960s through the 1990s, when feminists of color challenged white-centered feminist theory with their own experiences in the feminist movement. I begin by examining the feminists that centered their theory in the experiences of white middle-class woman. Then I will look at feminists of color who developed "a topography of consciousness in opposition" to a "U.S. hegemonic feminism" (Sandoval, 2000, pp. 46, 53). Lastly, I will examine how the theology of white feminism restricted activists from putting feminist theory into practice,

leading to the juxtaposition of class, gender, sexual, and racial experiences and the birth of what has come to be known as intersectionality.

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedman has been credited with launching the second U.S. feminist wave because of the book's popularity among millions of mostly white middle-class housewives. The concept of women needing to go beyond their home and their children to find their place in society spread like wildfire (Grady, 2018). An increase in feminist writing brought Elaine Showalter (1985) to critic feminist scholarship and develop a unified theology. Chela Sandoval (2000) calls the second wave feminist scholarship "U.S. hegemonic feminism" and points to Showalter's three-stage framework of feminist consciousness as the model which defined feminist writing, and also omitted the perspectives of diverse female voices and experiences (p. 46). In Showalter's first-phase, feminists advocated for women to be seen as equal to men. In her second-phase, feminist literature looked to highlighting the habitual experiences of women, marking them as distinct, rather than equal, to men's experiences. Here, feminist scholars used Marxism to turn away from the first-phase scholarship into labeling the social structures which produce a dependency on men. The third-phase feminism positioned women as assets and looked to their qualities to mark men as different than women, not as in the second phase. This phase brought about the first, yet limited, discussions of race/ethnicity in feminist theology. The category of socialist, or radical, feminist began to emerge as a way to classify the scholars calling for an acknowledgement of race/ethnicity in scholarship (Showalter, 1988). It was during this third phase when racism was acknowledged in feminist discussions. Lydia Sargent (1981) admitted that "racism, while part of the discussion, was never successfully integrated into feminist theory and practice resulting in a strong Black feminist protest against the racism (and classism) implicit in a white feminist movement, theory, and practice" (p. 18).

Throughout these phases Women of Color battled for recognition and for white feminists to acknowledge the impact racism and poverty had in their lives. Audre Lorde said it best when she stated, "today there is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word SISTERHOOD in the white woman's movement. When white feminists call for 'unity,' they are misnaming a deeper and real need for homogeneity" (Sandoval, 2000, p. 45). Other Black feminists had the same opinion.

> It was a mark of race and class privilege, as well as the expression of freedom from the many constraints sexism places on working class women, that middle class white women were able to make their interests the primary focus of [the] feminist movement and employ a rhetoric of commonality that made their condition synonymous with 'oppression' (hooks, 1984, p. 6).

White women's frustration with the patriarchy was rooted in their limited societal options outside of the household. Restricted as they were, these options were still available to white women, and, thus, their experience was rooted in gender discrimination and not oppression. In turn, the absence of options that characterized the experiences of African American women is the experience of the oppressed (hooks, 1984). The feminist movement in its inception disregarded social conditions in order to create a unified existence among women. For the woman's movement, the false definition of oppression rested on the biological sex, male or female, and not on the systems that shut out all women including Women of Color. They carried forward the falsehood that women belong to one group only due to their subordination to men and not to the systematic use of oppression one group uses against another.

White women, although they found themselves dominated by white men, were also in a position where the social systems and politics allowed them to dominate over, and be seen as better than, women and men of color. In turn, Women of Color were dominated by all men and white women and were not socially positioned to have control over any other group (hooks, 1984). Women of Color were the caretakers of white women's homes and children when they were given the choice to leave the household and build their professional worth. Women of Color had to negotiate a day off or a salary increase with their white employer. Their value was diminished as they took on the roles that the white woman had left behind. Bell hooks (1984) discusses this by first examining the contributions from Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and Leah Fritz's *Dreamers and Dealers* that perpetuated a false ideal of a collective oppression all women can relate to. Yet, there is a lack of understanding the differences between oppression and discrimination. The role which Women of Color have historically held puts them at the bottom of the social, economic, and political hierarchy.

This positionality plagues Women of Color in all sectors. Constance Carroll (1982) wrote on this in regard to African American women in academia. She goes on to discuss the dilemma of choosing between anti-racist and women's rights work. She urges African American women to not retreat from the women's movement nor the Black movement, but to embed themselves in both and advocate for their experiences to be counted.

During the era of the second wave of white feminism, Black feminists were challenging the notion of a unified oppression by establishing their own praxis and theory grounded in their "interlocking" experiences (Smith, 1982).

A Black feminist approach to literature that embodies the realization that the politics of

sex as well as the politics of race and class are crucially interlocking factors in the works

of Black women writers is an absolute necessity. (Smith, 1982, p. 159)

As African American women (Bambara, 1970; Beal, 1995) created spaces for frameworks of gender, class, sexuality, and race to intersect, other Women of Color also paved the way to ground theory in their socially constructed markers of identification. Mexican American women (Cotera, 1976), Asian-American (Chow, 1987) and Native women (Morgensen, 2012) worked to push against the unified oppression rhetoric of white feminism by acknowledging the differences between each other's lived experiences. Those differences fueled a creative space for developing theories of inclusion as I will further elaborate in the next section (Collins and Bilge, 2016).

Also emerging as an opposition to second-wave feminism, U.S. Third World Feminism rejected the philosophy of a unified female oppression and looked to the varying identities of Women of Color to show the multiple systems of oppressions they navigated. Women of Color in the United States connected with Third World Feminism due in part to the anticolonial framework. Foundational decolonial theologies from men such as Pablo Freire (1972), Aimé Césaire (1955; 2000), and many others, failed to acknowledge the specific and unique forms of oppressions women were facing in colonial structures and their role in liberation (hooks, 1984). The anti-colonial and anti-hegemony principles of Third World Feminism spoke of Black women as heirs to structural economic and social depredation, to Latinas with the legacy of colonialism, and Native American women with centuries of living under U.S. imperialistic conditions (Herr, 2014; Mohanty, 1984; Terborg-Penn, 1998).

Another aspect of Third World feminism which resonated with Women of Color in the United States was its commitment to family structures. The fight for agency and gender equality are invisible to feminists that work under an imperialist western philosophy, whether conscious or unconscious. Third world women found spaces of resistance within the framework of their family relationships, an integral fabric of their social system and one that they were not willing to leave behind for any form of gender liberation (hooks, 1984). In turn, they worked within their family, with the men in their lives, to create small, but incremental changes that benefited the community as a whole and weaved in gender equality throughout that work (Basu 2010; Forbis 2003; Jayawardena, 1986; Ong, 1987; Pardo 2001; Shiva 1993). In the following section I will further examine Critical Race Theory to elaborate on the way it connects feminist theories from multiple cultural perspectives.

Feminism within Critical Race Theory

Developing an inclusive feminist approach required incorporating the lived experiences of women not reflected in the second feminist wave of the 1960s and 70s. What is essential in Critical Race Theory work is the use of an intersectional lens when evaluating the oppression of People of Color. Within intersectionality, race is centered given the social identities at play in the lives of People of Color. It is within CRT that the existence of Women of Color is acknowledged through the examination of multiple lenses of oppression. As discussed, Kimberly Crenshaw (1989) introduced the concept of intersectionality through the Black feminist perspective, but many Women of Color feminists before her introduced a version of this concept (Collins and Bilge, 2016). Although intersectionality has become a popular analytical tool among social scientists, the idea that multiple identities interlock when examining experiences of oppression is a concept not new in feminist theory (Hull et al., 1982).

CRT celebrates the contributions of the many Women of Color pioneers who contributed the framing of intersectionality.

Mexican American women established the lines of intersect within the Chicana feminist agenda (Cortera, 1976). Afro-Latinidad and interracial identities, once invisible within the Latinx community, were brought to the forefront by Latina feminist (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). Derived from Latina feminists is the importance of *testimonios* (life stories) as a vital practice in research methodologies and theory building (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Anzaldúa (1987) introduced the *mestiza* consciousness and the spaces in-between that Women of Color, and in her personal case queer Latinas, must navigate to be able to "cope by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity" and in that space learning "to juggle cultures" (p. 101). Analyzing the intersectional positioning of Latinas contributed to the identity politics that brought unity to the narratives of many Latina women and is now embedded within a branch of CRT, Latina Critical Race Theory (Stefancic, 1997).

Another important contributor in the examination of colonial oppression within gender issues is María Lugones (2008). She provides context to coloniality by examining how race and gender are both concepts imposed by Western societies on communities that had notions of the terms before colonization (Lugones, 2008). In Native American cultures, for example, gender was not centered in the social order of a community. Women were leaders because of their age and knowledge; therefore, leaders were not determined by their biological components as in Western societies (Mendoza, 2014).

As noted earlier in this chapter, settler colonialism is the act of genocide of Native people for their land and resource extraction. In the United States, patriarchy and racism are bound with

settler colonialism (Robertson, 2015). Native feminist theory therefore examines the link between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy18. When settler colonialism was used in tandem with heteropatriarchal ideals, the leadership of Indigenous women was violently forced to assimilate to Euro-centric ideals of family and gendered roles (Morgensen, 2012). When theories incorporate the role of settler colonialism within feminism and racial-social analysis, they expose the reality of Indigenous and African people, in particular women, through the grounding of a social-historical context (Ostler and Shoemaker, 2019). The intersect of settler colonialism, patriarchy, and racism are often absent in theories of gender and race studies (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013). Theories incorporating all of these canons allows Women of Color to be present in the narrative of current colonial practices and work towards decolonization, in other words balancing the power between distinct social groups (Dhillon, 2020). This work is at the center of CRT through Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005)

Asian-American women were also represented in the quest to paint a broader picture of women's struggles in the United States. Topics like prostitution, war, and mail-order brides were issues that Asian American feminist writers brought to attention within the feminist agenda (Asian Women United of California, 1989). Esther Ngan-Ling Chow (1987) examined the role of Asian-American women in the feminist movement. Chow stated that although the ethnic diversity and small population among Asian American women was a barrier to their incorporation in the feminist movement, she urged white feminists to expand their understanding of feminist consciousness by looking at other forms of activism that speaks to the cultural distinctions of Asian women (Chow, 1987). Asian Critical Race Theory was developed to incorporate challenges facing the Asian community. Nativistic racism and the

18 Heteropatriarchy is the idea that heterosexual cisgender men sit within a social-political system of power over all other people across the gender spectrum, including cisgender heterosexual women (Arvin et al., 2013).

model minority myth are issues within the Asian population despite their ethnic diversity. It's through a unified framing within Asian Critical Race Theory that their diverse experiences can be outlined (Chang, 1993).

Conclusion

Critical Race Theory and its branches have allowed the lived experiences of People of Color to be examined in culturally relevant ways (Brayboy, 2005; Chang, 1993; Huber, 2010). Examining immigration, race/ethnicity and gender through a sociohistorical lens, as CRT calls, allows us to understand how each of these systems of oppression have intersected with each other over time.

The creation of systems of separation, hierarchy, and disproportional relations of power allowed for xenophobia, racism and sexism to became ingrained in the social fabric of the United States. The stories of U.S. immigration are complex and filled with racial scripts repeated throughout history (Lee, 2003; Huber, 2016). While maintaining that biological distinctions between races are false, centering race as a social construct is essential in understanding the experiences of People of Color. Science has also positioned women beneath men by claiming their intellectual and physical inferiority. Without acknowledging the systematic exclusion for economic and social independence from men, the picture of women in society is incomplete. This is the importance of establishing a social-historical foundation of race/ethnicity and gender, in particular for Women of Color who have intersected these two histories. Within each movement, Women of Color have been ignored or pushed aside due to an existence with layered oppressions too complex for one movement to understand or incorporate.

Given this legacy, African American, Mexican American, Native, and Asian American feminists carved out their own analytical and political agendas that represented not only their own multi-layered perspectives, but united the experiences of Women of Color under an intersectional framework. This unity allowed for the distinct experiences lived by them to be analyzed and theorized as valued perspectives in a social space that attempted to limit their contributions. Critical Race Theory stood as a framework that brought together the acknowledgement of the intersectionality of systems of oppression as an analytical tool within a ridged academic platform.

Presented thus far are two tenets of CRT, the normalcy of racism in society and intersectionality. Tenets rest on the stories or counter-stories of systemically excluded groups to help nourish the learning of how the social construct of race embeds itself in the inequities they face. Tenets rarely work in isolation and are often confronted in unison during moments of discrimination (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Chapter 4 will reveal the experiential knowledge of participants through the lens of CRT tenets and weave together a unifying perspective of the role of racism and intersectionality in their candidate emergence process.

This chapter contributed to laying out historical accuracies so that the present-day positioning of women of immigrant origin in this study is accurately evaluated. Having a critical understanding of the historical patterns that have contributed to how immigrants, People of Color, and women are currently treated and viewed is essential before hearing the stories of participants. In the following chapter, I will look at how women of immigrant origin emerge as candidates in times of threatening political rhetoric, another essential framing to understand the narratives of participants in this study.

3

Civic Engagement and Political Threat in Candidate Emergence

Introduction

Recent scholarship moves past examining women's political ambitions to evaluating the structural forces impeding women to run for office by asking "what is gendered about candidate emergence" (Piscopo & Kenny, 2020, p. 4). Though political ambition is still an important field of analysis, it leaves little room to examine the road to political office through an intersectional lens. Taking a wider lens on the issue, that is to say the institutional and contextual factors that hinder candidate emergence, allows us to evaluate what structural gendered, ethno-racial and anti-immigrant influences are at play.

In Chapter 2, I provided a layout of the U.S. immigration history and in particular that of Oregon where this study is situated. I also introduced the myth of a post-racial society and the threatening political environment the participants navigated as they emerged as political candidates. With a grounding in the social political space of participants in this study, in this chapter I will take a closer look at the theory of candidate emergence for women and immigrant people in the United States. Four sections will frame this chapter. *Community-based Organizations: A Gateway for Immigrant Political Engagement* will look at the history of political participation among immigrants in the United States. These insights will focus on the role of civic engagement, in particular the work within community-based organizations to catalyze a political voice among the immigrant community. *Factors Shaping Political Ambition and Candidate Emergence* will elaborate on the barriers and current state of women in the United States as political candidates. I will look at the lack of research on women of immigrant origin in the political sphere and how it leaves unanswered questions to their candidate emergence. Given the political context of this study, *Threatening Political Rhetoric and Candidate Emergence* examines studies linking and opposing the role of threat, fear, and anger in candidate emergence. Finally, *The Political Representation of Women of Immigrant*

Origin looks at the descriptive representation of immigrant origin constituents as it has substantive and particularly symbolic significance for their lives.

Community-Based Organizations: A Gateway for Immigrant Political Engagement

A healthy democracy is measured by the level of concern and engagement in the civic and democratic process community members have for its society (Cruz Nichols, 2017; Verba et.al., 1995). Looking to the varying forms of how members of a community can become engaged opens opportunities for activist, community leaders and others to view themselves as political actors. Engagement occurs when community members see their voice as a missing piece of the political conversation and act upon it. But what does it take for them to act upon that belief and engage as political actors? In Verba and company's (1995) study, they integrate the role of the "networks of recruitment" on the "motivations and capacity" of political participation (p. 3). The Civic Voluntarism Model determined that the steps to political life do not happen in a vacuum, but the initial inclinations often begin through non-political channels such as at home life, churches, and community organizations (Verba et al., 1995). Neighborhood level organizing during the 19th century was conducted by political parties seeking the European immigrant's vote. That level of organizing no longer exist among political parties in the U.S., but is the current stamp of civic and community organizations in the United States (Wong, 2006). Community-based organizations (CBO) have a long history in immigrant communities helping immigrants navigate U.S. culture, institutions, and find their footing in American politics (Chun, 2016; Sundeen et al., 2018). In addition, mosque and churches also help migrants and their children integrate into civic life and introduce them to political issues impacting their communities (Bada et. al., 2006; Bagby, 2009).

Although Verba and company's (1995) analysis did not take a deep dive into immigrant communities, their analysis of the Latinx community discovered that they rated behind African American and White-Anglos in participation and engagement in politics. They also found that women tended to be less politically informed than men but were just as engaged in political activities, which others have seen as well (Anderson & Goodyear-Grant, 2005). Fifteen years later, Lawless and Fox's (2010), study found that it is not a woman's sex that determines her lack of involvement, but it is institutional and contextual factors which provide, or not, exposure to political engagement opportunities. Women are socially limited to circles that tend not to offer as many politically leaning opportunities as compared to the circles men are socially permitted to belong to.

CBOs also provide a space for immigrants and their children to create community with those experiencing their same social conditions. This in turn expands their social circles and increases the social capital of immigrants in their new home country. Social capital has many benefits, it increases the chances of becoming politically engaged and provides opportunities for socio-economic prosperity (Bueker, 2006; Putnam, 2000). Harnessing social capital, both its structural and subjective components, allows untapped[19] communities to work together to tackle troubling social conditions (Canales & Zlolniski, 2000; Klandermans et al., 2008). Due to prior engagement with school systems and support networks, which have helped women navigate other institutions, immigrant women are more likely then immigrant and non-immigrant men to become civically engaged in their communities (Baker, 1984; Bajarano, 2014a; Cruz Nichols, 2017). It is often activism that propels Women of Color to become interested in political issues (Moore, 2005; Williams, 2004).

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19 As mentioned in Chapter 1, untapped communities refer to people who have historically been denied access to social and economic prosperity. They are communities with the potential to thrive in society when economic and political structures are equitably available. These communities include racial and ethnic populations, women, and those in low socio-economic situations.

Examining the patterns of agency while intersecting the experiences of diverse racial/ethnic and economically disadvantage women, Sandoval (2000) identified four forms of agency present in the hegemonic feminist movement, while recognizing that those acts of "consciousness-in-opposition" were rooted in the ways systemically oppressed people looked to break free from the status quo (p. 54). Sandoval in essence applied an intersectional lens to the approaches to agency taken by many diverse groups in the United States. The first form, equal-rights, was present in the civil rights era. Advocates based their arguments on the belief that every human deserves equal rights under the law. Second, the revolutionary form, was based on the conviction that the systems in place could or would not accommodate their needs, therefore they had to establish their own idealistic world of social order. The third, supremacist form, created a set of values beyond those displayed by their current leadership and their decision-making patterns. Finally, the separatist form, relied on its own set of standards to separate themselves from their current social order that they ran in opposition to (Sandoval, 2000).

When examining the role of Women of Color in liberation movements, Sandoval (2000) noticed that they did not construct just one form of agency, but instead moved in and out between the four forms mentioned above. The fifth form of agency she discovered, the differential, "depends on a form of agency that is self-consciously mobilized in order to enlist and secure influence; the differential is thus performative" (p. 58). In recognizing that only one set of practices could not foster a transition of power dynamics between the oppressor and the oppressed, U.S. feminist of color saw the need for all forms of agency as tactics for liberation. It was through U.S. Third World Feminism that social movements were seen as non-linear and complex (Sandoval, 2000). Strategies implemented thus reflected that complexity.

To help overcome social or political deficits because of their identity groups, systematically oppressed communities collectively harness their economic and knowledge-based resources to advocate for their needs. Many scholars evaluate the role of group consciousness or linked fate among historically excluded communities and find that it serves as a legitimate indicator of political engagement (Bejarano et al., 2020; Gershon et al., 2019; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Tyson, 2016; Uhlan et al., 1989). Studies also show that immigrant origin individuals who run for office benefit from the experience of group consciousness. It legitimizes their commitment to the community, allows them to connect on a more personal level with constituents, and most notably gives them the confidence of knowing the on-the-ground needs of the community (Bhojwani, 2018; Scola, 2014).

In the United States, the immigrant population is growing and is leading the shift in the demographic makeup of the country. That is why CBOs work to introduce immigrants to many forms of civic participation. One of those forms, and some might say the most essential, is voting (Putnam, 2000). In 1970, immigrants made up 4.8 percent of the population. In 2020, that number almost tripled to 13.7 percent (Budiman, 2020). States with the most electoral votes in the United States are home to the two fastest growing immigrant communities, Latinx and Asian/Pacific Islander.

Looking to women's political voting presence, another layer to the electoral power of women of immigrant origin is revealed. Women are a major electoral force, almost 10 million more women voters as compared to men (Carroll & Fox, 2018 p. 8). Those numbers highlight an opportunity to advance women in political office. Women who have immigrated to the U.S. are also a growing electoral power. In 2018, they made up more than half, 51.8 percent, of the

immigrant population and 14 percent of the female population. Immigrant women also become naturalized at higher rates than immigrant men, thus potentially leading to an increased electorate among them (American Immigration Council, 2020). Though to date most U.S. immigrant groups have been an untapped political electorate, the potential to shape future political representation is in their hands if they choose so (Bueker, 2006; Harles, 1993; Plotke, 1999; Wong, 2006).

In Oregon, several CBOs are focusing their work to tap into the one in 10 community members who are immigrants. Mostly arriving from Latin America and Asia/ Pacific Islands, 39.7 percent of immigrants in Oregon are eligible voters. In addition, one in eight Oregonians are children of immigrants whose voting eligibility numbers grow each year (American Immigration Council, 2017). These figures demonstrate a powerful electorate if they are motivated to vote. Given that immigrants are becoming more politically involved through local CBOs, the next step to garner their political interest is to present a candidate they can connect to (Bloemraad, 2006; Reny & Shah, 2018). Increasing political participation among immigrant communities takes a two-prong approach. As Verba and company (1995) put it,

"[it] is the result of political engagement *and* resources. [I]nterest, information, efficacy, and partisan intensity provide the desire, knowledge, and self-assurance that impel people to be engaged by politics. But time, money, and skills provide the wherewithal without which engagement is meaningless. It is not sufficient to know and care about politics." (Verba et.al., 1995, p. 354-55)

For communities to see a more robust candidate emergence among its members, groups need to take a strategic look at those who have the knowledge, time, and interest while also making a calculated ask. Seeing the potential in electoral power, Oregon has seen a growth in training

programs aimed at encouraging more untapped communities to participate politically. Programs such as Oregon Futures Lab[20] and East County Rising[21] focus on the development of candidates of color, including immigrants. As the immigrant population rises in Oregon, the environment is primed to see an increase in candidate emergence from immigrant communities.

Factors Shaping Political Ambition and Candidate Emergence

Studies show women have the same likelihood as men of winning a political race, but the social opportunities that lead someone to think about politics as a viable option and emerge as a candidate give men an advantage (Lawless and Fox, 2005). To unpack this disparity, I will first make a distinction between two unequivocal processes that lead to political office, political ambition and candidate emergence. Piscopo and Kenny (2020) define political ambition "as a nascent interest in running for or holding elected office" (p. 40). That interest is determined by examining the political and structural process of winning and maintaining the elected seat. Much evidence has pointed that woman are perceived just as qualified as men among the electorate (Herrnson, Lay, and Strokes, 2003; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton, 1997), so they have no real disadvantage at getting elected as compared to men. So why is it that fewer women come forward as candidates?

Fox and Lawless (2005) point to a need to understand the "evolution of political ambition," and what is gendered about that evolution (p. 29). The evolution from interest to political office not only relies on individual factors for women, but is controlled by other elements that are volatile in nature, institutional and contextual factors (Piscopo and Kenny, 2020). These factors are evaluated in a non-lineal way, but is often used as a framework to

20 https://www.oregonfutureslab.org/
21 https://www.eastcountyrising.com/

establish the supply and demand of particular candidates. What is to follow is a look at the literature that describes three distinct levels of evolution for Women of Color to political office. The first is in their political ambition or the individual factor. The final two are among the candidate emergence process which is influenced by institutional and contextual factors.

Individual Factors of Political Ambition

The literature on political ambition among women and immigrants has predominantly been quantitative in nature with large scale surveys to explain the path to office. Given that women are just as successful as men in raising money, gaining votes, and winning elections, studies taking a closer look at how ambition is formed among women provide for an additional layer to understanding women's emergence into candidacy (Darcy et al., 1994; Dolan, 2010). The Citizen Political Ambition Study assessed if gaps existed between men and women's ambition to political office (Fox & Lawless, 2005; Lawless & Fox, 2010). What it found were cultural aspects of society which maintained the gender gap in ambition. Traditional family roles, patriarchal social norms, and women's gender-based psychological barriers were all social characteristics linked to a political ambition gap. Women under forty were noted as facing the most gender-based challenges. As traditional socialization for women and men are maintained throughout generations and political parties continue to advocate for family values, the gender gap in political ambition was cited as unlikely to shift anytime soon (Fox & Lawless 2005; Lawless & Fox, 2010).

Building on Lawless and Fox's Citizen Political Ambition Study, Reny and Shah (2018) focused their attention on the motivations of New Americans which they define as immigrants and children of immigrants to the United States. In particular they examine how barriers specific to men and women of immigrant origin impact their political

aspirations. A notable aspect of Reny and Shah's (2018) study focuses on the characteristics of their participants. Participants, as compared to the Citizen Political Ambition Study, were younger, had fewer resources, and were more likely to have children as compared to grandchildren of immigrants or the native-born participants in this study, all of which influenced their lack of political ambition. This research showed that racism, xenophobia, and native language abilities were cited as major challenges. Immigrant origin participants were more likely to become politically engaged at the local level and had a greater possibility of running if they were asked or encouraged to run by others, validating other research with similar findings (Carroll & Sanbonmatsu, 2013; Fox & Lawless, 2005).

An interesting intersectional component to the study was the role of racial and immigrant identity in determining political ambition. In general, Reny and Shah (2018) found that immigrant origin participants in their survey were more likely to set political goals aside due to their financial obligations. Even when resources were not an issue, many expressed concerns that their immigrant community did not have the political or financial resources to support their candidacy. Racial, phonotype, skin color and immigrant identity were observed threats to a successful candidacy with 95 percent of respondents agreeing that discrimination was still an issue in the U.S. In particular, men of immigrant origin rated their race as a barrier to considering running for office at a higher rate than their female counterparts. Conversely, women of immigrant origin, as compared to men of immigrant origin in this study, stated that family roles, the lack of time, and education were among their biggest barriers (Reny & Shah, 2018).

Switching to gendered influences, Women of Color assess the potential of being accepted as a candidate before officially stepping forward with political interest. They look at the

potential of support on several layers. Not only do they examine whether political gatekeepers would approve their candidacy, but the voting public and donors as well. In essence, women look for women-friendly conditions before stepping forward (Palmer & Simon, 2008; Pyeatt & Yanus, 2016; Reingold et. al., 2021). These studies make evident that race/ethnic-, gendered- and immigrant-based discriminations can hinder political ambition on many levels.

An intersectional evaluation of the cumulative overload a life in politics could lend to the family dynamic is a real evaluation Women of Color must face during their political ambition process. That evaluation also includes the toll racial/ethnic, gendered, and cultural expectations put on Women of Color during their candidacy. In Brazil, women refer to the *tripla jornada,* a compiling load between their candidacy, job, and family, thus leading to a time and resource discrepancy between female and male candidates. A lack of economic stability forces candidates to balance their campaign, family, and work life and is uniquely felt by Afro-Brazilian women who must continue their financial contributions and family obligations while running for office (Wylie, 2018). That triple shift is also felt by women in the U.S. who multitask at higher rates, sleep less, and care for children and the household on average seven hours a week more than their male partners (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Patriarchal conditions coupled with cultural expectations within racial/ethnic groups all drastically define the potential campaign emergence for Women of Color, especially those from immigrant backgrounds who tend to need economic security for their families.

Taking a more qualitative approach to the study of political ambition among women is Angela Frederick's (2014) work, which honors the nuances of navigating a masculine and racialized political arena through a narrative analysis. She identified three types of narratives

present in the decision to run discourses of politically active women in Texas. The accidental narrative described an unwillingness to enter politics, but did so because they were asked. The efficacious narrative was rooted in a sense of duty to improve social conditions or the politics displayed by the seated elected official. These candidates displayed a stronger sense of agency when discussing their decision to run for office. The final was the ambivalent narrative which consisted of both owning their decision to run for office while adding conditions that decreased their commitment to their choice.

Frederick's (2014) study found that Women of Color have distinct perspectives of what is gendered in politics than compared to the white women interviewed. Both African American and Latina women were more likely to pose an efficacious narrative linking social justice movements and their culture as a push into political ambition. Many African American women mentioned that their push to politics was rooted in the "strong black women" ideals and the role that the church, in particular regarding activism, played within their culture. Latinas had a slightly higher rate of an ambivalent discourse, but the author noted that those who did employ this discourse touted their feminist organization's goal of relaying a non-threatening candidate in their recruits. Frederick also made links to the cultural norms Women of Color had to navigate, where Latinas had to be humble while Black women were free to be bold. White women reported a strong accidental narrative which focused on their lack of interest and ability to run for office.

Much like Frederick's narrative analysis, the individual factors that influence political ambition must be rooted in an ethno-racial gendered analysis. Quantitative large-scale surveys must be coupled with a qualitative analysis of how women describe their political ambition. Both cultural and institutional factors influence how race/ethnicity becomes imbedded in the political ambition stories of women and therefore they are both

vital determinants of women's representation. Since women have as much political ambition as men, but are not represented among those in the candidate pool, the following is a closer look at the institutional factors that inhibit or promote the emergence of women as candidates, in particular Women of Color and immigrants.

Institutional Factors of Candidate Emergence

Apart from the individual barriers to coming forward as a candidate, there are other systems at play which hinder women from getting on the ballot. A groundbreaking study taking an institutionalist approach to the candidate selection process in the UK Parliament system was Norris and Lovendiski's (1995) book *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race, and Class in the British Parliament*. They looked at institutional and political factors to describe the supply- and demand-side of political recruitment while integrating a gendered perspective into candidate selection. The supply-side argues that women are faced with systemic factors, gendered social norms and workforce patterns, which hinder their ability or desire to come forward as a candidate, much what was discussed in the previous section. But, the number of women willing to run for an elected position, the supply, relies on party 'gatekeepers', the demand-side, who ultimately determine who has the best chances of winning the race, thus candidates must meet their demands of what they believe to be a good candidate. They argue that the "supply-side and demand-side factors interact" (p. 108), but ultimately, they determined that the supply-side, at the time, shaped women's descriptive underrepresentation in Parliament more than the demand-side. They believed that if more woman stepped forward, the gatekeepers would select more women given the increased numbers to select from. Nearly two decades later, studies have taken a deeper examination into the demand-side factors to help further explain women's reoccurring underrepresentation.

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Since the demand-side is predominantly evaluated by men, it tends to suffer from what Bjarnegård (2013) defines as homosocial capital, a personal network that is made up of those in the same identity and interest group one belongs to. What is important about Bjarnegård's (2013) work, as it pertains to this study, is the connection of the homosocial capital with the emergence of candidates in his study of the political system in Thailand. In essence, homosocial capital is an "investment in predictability" because it helps ensure the perceived success of a candidate (p.25). This success is based on the evaluation of criteria that are familiar and has worked for past candidates, who are mostly men. Those who have been or are part of the political leadership system are the evaluators of the potential success of a candidate, the gatekeepers, and because elected leadership is predominantly affluent, middle-age, white-collar men, those evaluators tend to be men. Therefore, since men are prodominantly evaluating the probability of a potential candidate's victory, then most often men are the beneficiaries of the demand-side of candidate selection since they are evaluated positively on characteristics familiar and comfortable to the male evaluator (Bjarnegård, 2013).

For women of immigrant origin, party gatekeepers play an integral part in their probability of entering a race. Women suffer most from homosocial capital in two ways, their strongest ties tend to be with networks of women and they are often shut out of the male oriented homosocial circles that allow outsiders to enter the political sphere (Bjarnegård, 2013). They are unknown and unsupported within their own party because they are not connected to the circles of political power (Reny & Shah, 2018). For this reason, Women of Color rely on their own networks and often develop a strategy of outworking their opponents, thus expanding their presence in the community (Lee et al., 2018). Attempting to create a multi-social network with age, class, education, and racial/ethnic divergence, is a strategy that needs to be further evaluated as an

increase of candidates of color emerge even without the approval of traditional political gatekeepers (Bhojwani, 2018).

The supply-side and demand-side of candidate emergence and homosocial capital are some of the institutional factors that help explain the low numbers of women, in particular women of immigrant origin, in elected office in the United States. Due to these institutional factors, political ambition cannot ultimately determine the lack of women in political office. The influence of political gatekeepers is a stronger determinant of candidate emergence than the individual factors such as family roles, the patriarchy, psychological barriers, lack of time, and education. To continue this evaluation, I move to examining the contextual factors that can hinder candidate emergence for women.

Contextual Factors of Candidate Emergence

Applying a racial/ethnic component to women's emergence has been a missing link to discovering the layered experiences of elected officials. It is an important component to examine given that the circumstances for women to emerge as candidates is dependent on time and place. Evaluating this area can help us understand which circumstances have historically benefit Women of Color in the United States. Research shows that Latina and Asian women are favored in majority-minority districts. Latinas are less likely to win among populations with more women under the age of 25 and over 65. In contrast, Asian women are more favored in districts with a high number of women over the age of 65. The chances of a Latina winning her seat increases by three percent when they run for an open seat race. This study shows that the social and demographical context within a district are high determinants of the success for Women of Color candidates (Silva and Skulley, 2019).

Scholars taking on an intersectional analytical approach to candidate emergence for Women of Color have recognized that there are also advantages to how their identity influences their political process. Experiencing an intersect of multiple forms of oppressions can position Women of Color distinctly than white women, white men, or men of color during the candidate emergence process (Reny & Shah, 2018). Women are seen as trustworthy and have often been called to represent when a party in search of repairing shattered relationships with constituents (Funck et al., 2019). Women are also perceived as more approachable and viewed more favorably than men (Celis et al., 2014; Schnittker, 2000). Bejarano (2013) explains that it is important to "examine the influence of descriptive divergence of both gender and race/ethnicity" (p. 549). She put this theory to the test with her analysis on the weight put on race and gender in candidate support for U.S. House incumbents. Among the electorate both white women and Women of Color garnered political support regardless of racial or ethnic differences. Racial bias was reduced among white respondents with Women of Color incumbents. The same was seen among People of Color respondents. They viewed white female incumbents more favorably. This leads to the conclusion that gender can provide an advantage, especially among Women of Color.

Philpot and Walton (2007, p. 49 as cited in Bejarano, 2013) believe "gender and race interact to create a separate consciousness whereby race trumps gender but the intersection of the two trumps both." The advantages of multiple identities, which at one point were a disadvantage, has put the field of candidate emergence among Women of Color into a new path (Celis et al., 2015; Holman & Schneider, 2018; Shames, 2017; Silva & Skulley, 2019). Piscopo and Kenny (2020) appeal for a focus away from women's lack of interest, confidence, or skills in political office, such as in political ambition, and towards three aspects of candidate emergence: 1.) their personal decisions to run, 2.) official and unspoken rules leading to candidate selection and the

electoral process, and 3.) the political context in effect when women decide to run. In Diagram 1, the three steps to candidate emergence are layered with multiple degrees of analysis for Women of Color. To come forward and be accepted as a viable candidate, they must navigate through personal barriers to determine that political office is something they want. Then they must break through the homosocial networks so they can gain access to the political gatekeepers that can propel them into candidacy. Finally, along with gatekeepers, women of immigrant origin must navigate the contextual factors that could put them at an advantage or disadvantage during a race.

Though navigating multiple socially constructed identities can become an advantage in the candidate emergence process, let us not forget that Women of Color suffer oppression on a daily occasion because of their multiple identities. Not only are they likely to suffer discrimination from majority groups, but are also seen as outliers within their community groups due to their multiple identities. They are stamped with an "intersectional invisibility" which positions them as the most "marginal members within marginalized groups" (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, p. 381). Also, advantage may shift over time (Mügge, 2015). Social and political issues and opinions can lead to historically excluded groups to be viewed negatively or positively in public spaces. The ambiguous space of public opinion guides the electorate in deciding if immigrant women are trustworthy candidates or seen as a threat. These perceptions determine how women of immigrant origin can position themselves as candidates. Even when immigrants benefit from the personal time and political acumen they need to run for office, they might find that the societal and political environments that are beyond their control, will set them at a disadvantage. Although this dissertation has unfolded the strengths of intersectionality through the voices of participants, we must also hold close the daily realities of oppression women of immigrant origin face. Keeping that close will illuminate a complete picture of

their lives. Due to the intersectional experiences of oppression, the steps women of immigrant origin take to elected office has unique characteristics. Examining the factors influencing the path to office, can cast a brighter light on the experiences navigated by women of immigrant origin, but it cannot be done through quantitative studies alone (Dittmar, 2020). Storytelling is a powerful research mechanism which allows Women of Color to describe the multiple systems that work in favor or against their candidacy. Those stories can clarify on how gendered norms imbedded in culture are woven into the outside forces that predict institutional and contextual candidate emergence factors (Frederick, 2013). To strengthen the understanding in this growing field of work, this dissertation is focused on the narrative accounts of the candidate emergence process of women of immigrant origin. Narratives will illuminate the influences that go beyond an individuals' barriers and into the realm of external roadblocks that are invisible in nature. What follows is a zoom into the context that the participants in this study found themselves in as they emerged as candidates, an important contextual factor which defined their process.

Diagram 1

Factors Influencing Candidate Emergence for Women of Immigrant Origin

Source: Author's elaboration based on research from Piscopo and Kenny, 2020.
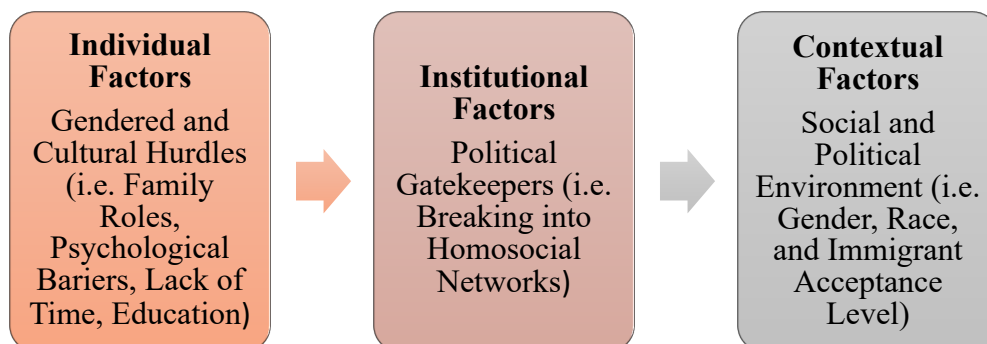
Threatening Political Rhetoric and Candidate Emergence

When coupled with the lived experience of intersectional oppression, emotions play a vital part in responding to threatening political environments. Given the differences in the barriers to running for office encountered by white women and by Women of Color, what can be inferred about the psychological dynamics that come into play for women of immigrant origin during times of political threat? Can we learn anything by examining their emotions at the time of their decision to run for office? The following section is dedicated to laying out the scholarly work which links civic experiences, threatening political environments, emotions and affect, and candidate emergence.

A critical component that should not be overlooked in the candidate emergence process is the influence of ever-changing political environments. In particular, threatening political environments can offer insights into the way negative emotions spur or detract candidacy. Looking to social psychology research, there is much information about the role of threat, and the emotions it incites, on political motivation. Strain theory, developed during the height of the right-extremist movements in the middle of the 20th century, looks at group mobilization in reaction to a collective threat. It was later dismissed by theorists claiming that there was no connection between a collective sense of urgency and social movements, but its premise that the isolated irrational individual was more likely to participate in movements like militia organizing is worth future exploration (Van Dyke & Soule, 2004). The focus of strain theory comes from participants' claims to influence social change, therefore there are many lessons we can learn from what motivates individuals on all sides of the political spectrum.

Another theory in line with strain theory is the study of fear appeals. This looks at the role of threat and the positive and negative emotions that drive action, such as the links between

"policy-oriented threats" and Latinx political participation (Cruz Nichols, 2017, p. 3-4). Theoretical research on emotions shows how political rhetoric targeting groups, their freedoms and essential services, especially those who already feel marginalized, can incite a greater interest in political engagement. Looking at further examples helps us understand how these theories are connected to the claims made by Piscopo and Kenny (2020) on the role of political context in candidate emergence. To do so, I will evaluate the political context in which it is situated, post-2016.

The language used by Donald Trump to discuss Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential campaign, was filled with sexist overtones. As Trump discussed Hillary Clinton, he used words like "crooked Hillary," "nasty woman," "lock her up," and went as far as belittling her need to take a restroom break during a debate by saying "I don't know where she went, it's disgusting" on national television (Gentile, 2017; Schaefer, 2020). His sexist and degrading comments towards women also surfaced as part of his past character. An audio uncovered Trump boasting of his wealth and power as allowing him to "grab'em [women] by the pussy" (Makela, 2016). The comment spurred other women to discuss their experiences of sexual assault from Trump with little to no impact on the public's opinion of his presidential prospects (Lind, 2016). In yet another form of attack on women, Trump aligned himself with one of the country's most prominent anti-abortionists as his Vice President running mate, Mike Pence. This proved to be the first step in the attempt to demolish reproductive rights, which continued throughout his presidency (Crockett, 2017). Centering his campaign around racist, anti-immigrant, and anti-abortion politics, positioned Trump as the "identity politics candidate for white men" (Hochschild, 2016, p. 230).

Research linking post-2016 threatening political rhetoric and candidate emergence is an emerging field of study. Lawless and Fox (2017) looked at the "Trump effect" among male and female potential candidates. When candidates were surveyed after Trump was elected president, Democrat candidates, particularly women, were more likely to express feelings like appalled, shocked, depressed, and angry than the Republican candidates that were surveyed. Women democrats were also more likely to become politically engaged after Trump was elected. In fact, the likelihood of political engagement was found to be linked to the negative emotions, in particular the feelings of being depressed and angry after the election. Though the surveyed results report a gender gap in candidate emergence, with men reporting twice as likely to having taken steps to running for office, the survey does show that Democratic women with the potential to become a political candidate reported higher interest in running for office shortly after Trump's election to the U.S. presidency (Lawless & Fox, 2017). The link to a post-2016 threatening political environment is not only anecdotal, but this report points to quantitative assertions of its connection.

Looking to studies conducted on threat and voter mobilization can help further guide the findings on candidate emergence. For example, when elder populations faced changes to their livelihood due to policy shifts, threat was a measured marker on political engagement. Faced with the loss of essential services, motivation for political action increased (Campbell 2003, 42). Anti-Mexican and xenophobic rhetoric has been referenced as a driving force to resolve multi-generational Latinx communities experiencing intra-group conflict to drive collective political mobilization (Rodela & Fernández, 2019, p. 3). Much research supports the idea that there is a role that emotions can play in spurring people towards action; especially negative emotions such as dissatisfaction with important aspects of life, which can foster political

engagement. Anger, or as Klandermans and company (2008) call "an approach oriented emotion" at targeted rhetoric, is seen as a driver of political motivation (p. 995).

There is a large body of work describing the historical patterns of white supremacy contributing to the current social culture of racial profiling against Black men in the United States (Allen & Metcalf, 2019; Aymer, 2016; Chaney & Robertson, 2013). Mexican men have experienced similar patterns of police brutality and racial profiling throughout U.S. history (Carrigan & Webb, 2003; Villanueva, 2017). In the wake of the murder of George Floyd by the hands of the police on May 25, 2020, the culmination of racial injustices was brought to a tipping point across the country and the world. In Portland, protest began days after Floyd's death and continued thru October 2020. Police brutality was at the center of the protest with a call to defund the police and redirect those funds to mental and social service historically lacking public funding (Mesh & Wittwer, 2020; Sparling, 2020). The fear of police brutality and even death by their hands has real consequences in the lives of People of Color. The results of those fear-based experiences end in suppressing the social and economic progress of People of Color, maintaining social hierarchies with White supremacy as its greatest beneficiary.

In a 2010 analysis of the midterm elections, numbers suggest that the Tea Party threat motivated African American voters to the polls (Towler, 2017). A similar analysis of the Trump and Far Right threats during the 2016 general election, corroborates that prior study and lends to a strong argument for linking threatening political rhetoric with African American voter mobilization. Towler and Parker (2018) looked at the counter-movement dynamics among African Americans after the 2016 Presidential election. Their research looks at the African American potential for voter mobilization given the threats of the rising Far Right. Their work lends to the indication that shared experiences based on race/ethnicity, immigrant experience,

and gender build community and commitment. Towler and Parker's (2018) analysis of African American collective political movement in reaction to Donald Trump's threatening rhetoric, and that of his supporters, shows how marginalized groups use anger to shift the political landscape by voting in higher numbers. This analysis reveals the importance of a "group consciousness" against threatening political environments to help spark a unified political response (Towler and Parker, 2018, pp. 4, 13).

Pérez (2015a) notes that during times of threatening political rhetoric to one's ethnic identity, individuals with the highest identity to their country of origin are more likely to participate in political activities specific to advancing their identity's rights and acceptance in society. Others point that educational, economic, and social privileges need to be in place for people to be engaged and politically motivated (Campbell, 2003; Scola, 2014). While some scholars have researched the link between high identifiers and political motivation in response to anti-immigrant rhetoric (Ramírez and Fraga, 2008), others who have examined survey results of the 2014 and 2018 precinct-level voting and representative opinions of Latinx communities, notes a lack of evidence linking threat with political motivation (Reny et al., 2018). Negative emotions can also heighten one's existing aspiration for political involvement (Lee et al., 2018). In the same light, threats can be a motivator when it is felt in parallel with messages of potential opportunities (Cruz Nichols, 2017).

Although past research shows how New Americans often hesitate to run for office due to the ambiguity of how their immigrant origins, race/ethnicity, or gender will be received by the public (Juenke, 2014; Reny & Shah, 2018), recent research has begun to see notable shifts in those perceptions in regards to candidate emergence (Dittmar, 2020; Celis & Childs, 2020). The work of Kelly Dittmar (2020) looks at the public statements of female elected leaders in

2018 to review what motivated non-incumbent women to enter public office. Her analysis looked for campaign statements citing negative emotions to see if threat is linked to their motivation to run for office. Although Dittmar discovered that white women were more likely to describe negative emotions from the political rhetoric of the Trump administration as a motivator, she finds that Women of Color were less likely to do so. She goes on to acknowledge that Women of Color have been stigmatized as "angry" and tend to repress their feelings publicly for preservation's sake. She calls on more inductive approaches, like personal interviews, to attempt to get at honest reflections in a safe environment from Women of Color (Dittmar, 2020). Introducing lived experiences through storytelling can help bridge the voices of Women of Color into candidate emergence research (Chang, 1993; Frederick, 2013).

The Political Representation of Women of Immigrant Origin

Although there is much knowledge regarding immigrant political participation (Bird, 2004; Hughes, 2011; Pescinski, 2010) or immigrants in politically elected positions (Hero & Tolbert, 1995; Dyogi Phillips, 2017), there is a lack of information focusing on women of immigrant origin and political representation. To begin to unfold their stories, first we look at the literature of descriptive representation of women and then how Women of Color and immigrant women sit within theory of representation.

Over time, political representation has been defined in a multitude of ways. A foundational work that outline political representation is Hanna Pitkin's *The Concept of Representation* (1967). Pitkin begins by stating that representation must first be outlined by drawing the lines between standing for and acting in the best interest of the people when developing public policy. She offered four concepts of representation: descriptive, substantive, formalistic, and symbolic. Although she details the need for descriptive representation by stating, "the more

accurate the copy, the more accurate the information" (1967, p. 88), her claim for symbolic representation is rooted on the premise that emotional connection, values, and beliefs drive society's acceptance of who should represent them. But other scholars have noted that the what the representative is representing, remained elusive in Pitkin's seminal piece (Kurebwa, 2015). As research has grown in evaluating the symbolic importance of political leaders, there is much said for the importance marginalized groups place on the candidate (Bejarano, 2013).

Symbolic representation shares some elements with descriptive representation, the "form" of representing, and substantive representation, "the content" of what is represented. But it is only in symbolic representation where shifts in societal beliefs and norms occur, the ability to see a woman, much so a woman of immigrant origin, in political office and be a natural gendered role in society (Lombardo & Meier, 2014). Challenging those symbols, that ingrained belief in societal norms, shifts political leadership (Lombardo & Meier, 2014). It is within the symbolic representation of women in politics that descriptive representation is augmented and the promise of equal representation of women can be fulfilled. Symbolic representation also reveals the unconscious biases faced by women of immigrant origin making substantive claims. As numbers of women and immigrants elected to office rise, it shows that not only who is representing or what they are doing for women and immigrants is important to people, but their symbolic representation is essential as well to shift the rooted cultural beliefs and values which have historically oppressed all women (Lombardo & Meier, 2014).

The political game calls for a candidate to name as many descriptive similarities with their constituents to establish connection, a sense of trust, and the likelihood of their vote, making identity politics a reality in candidate emergence (Abney and Hutcheson 1981;

Plutzer and Zipp 1996). In fact, women are more likely to be favored if their male incumbent does not share a racial or ethnic similarity with the voter (Bejarano, 2013). Descriptive representation is so important to voters because they see the substantive implications to electing someone with similar racial or gendered experiences, even if those lived experiences differ (class or education level) among the candidate and constituent. Melissa Williams (1998) stated,

> [E]ven though the experiences and perspectives of marginalized group members are themselves diverse, the social positions of group are sufficiently similar that their differences such as economic and class positions are overridden for the racial, ethnic, or gendered connections that the constituent has with the candidate (Williams, 1998, p. 6).

Therefore, the once believe "double jeopardy" (Beal, 1970) that was assigned to Women of Color candidates, is no longer seen as an obstacle, but a likely advantage especially over their white male opponents.

A 2015 survey through New American Leaders (Dyogi Phillips & Bhojwani, 2016) looked at the racial, ethnic, and gendered makeup of state legislative representation throughout the country. In 2015 the demographics of state legislators was 86 percent White, nine percent African American, four percent Latinx, and two percent Asian American. State legislators who identified as immigrant or a child of immigrants who were white was six percent, 43 percent among Latinx, and 45 percent of Asian American (Dyogi Phillips & Bhojwani, 2016). When these figures were once again examined through New American Leaders in 2020 (Sediqe et al., 2021), a slight yet notable difference was captured. The total of White legislators in 2020 dropped to 81.96 percent. There was a slight uptick within most racial and ethnic communities, with African Americans in state legislators making up to 9.93 percent, Latinx increased to 4.2 percent, and Asian Pacific Islander to 2.02 percent. Among these groups, those who identified

as immigrants or children of immigrants among Black people was 15.11 percent, 32.56 percent Asian Pacific Islander, 43.8 percent among Latinx. When the racial category white was disaggregated, Middle Eastern individuals of immigrant background were identified, 6.2 percent (Sediqe et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, data on the political presence of women of immigrant origin in locally elected offices is difficult to find. Their presence is buried in the broader categories of women, Women of Color or immigrants. What is known about the state of both men and women of immigrant origin offers much hope for their future political presence. In 2020, people of immigrant origin were 25.7 percent of the U.S. population, yet only held 3.5 percent of the seats in state legislature, 258 in total, mostly representing the Democratic party. Among men and women of immigrant origin the representation is quite equal, noting that only Asian Pacific Islander women are the lowest represented group as noted in Tables 1 - 3 (Sediqe et al., 2021).

Although Latinx and Asians are the fastest growing immigrant groups, with one in three Latinx and two in three Asians identifying as immigrants, these two groups only hold two percent of local and state elections (Lee et al., 2018; Reny & Bhojwani, 2014). Asian and Latinx legislators who identify as immigrant or a child of an immigrant make up only six percent of state seats nationally (Dyogi Phillips & Bhojwani, 2016). A 2019 report from the Center for American Women and Politics shows that women make up just 28.9 percent of state legislators throughout the country. Women of Color, including immigrant origin and non-immigrant origin, make up only 7.3 percent (CAWP, 2019).

Table 1

Race/Ethnicity, and Immigrant Identity Among State Legislators for 2015

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Sediqe et al., 2021

Race/Ethnicity	2015	Immigrant or Child of Immigrants
White	86%	6%
African American / Black	9%	(not noted)
Latinx	4%	43%
Asian American, Asian, Pacific Islander	2%	45%

Table 2

Race/Ethnicity, and Immigrant Identity Among State Legislators for 2020

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Sediqe et al., 2021

Race/Ethnicity	2020	Immigrant or Child of Immigrants
White	81.96%	6.2% (Middle Eastern)
African American / Black	9.93%	15.11%
Latinx	4.2%	43.8%
Asian American, Asian, Pacific Islander	2.02%	32.56%

Table 3

Number of Immigrant Origin Women and Men in the State Legislature for 2020

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Sediqe et al., 2021

Race/Ethnicity	No. of immigrant origin Women	No. of immigrant origin Men
White	8	8
African American / Black	22	17
Latinx	63	50
Asian American, Asian, Pacific Islander	30	54

After an Oregon Democratic man of color resigned due to allegations of workplace misconduct, Rep. Andrea Valderrama was appointment to his seat. That appointment brought a historic accomplishment for women, who for the first time held the majority of Oregon House seats. In the State Senate, women hold almost one-third of all seats (Dake, 2021). The Oregon BIPOC Caucus is comprised of both House and Senate Members who identify as Black, Indigenous, or as a Person of Color (BIPOC). As of June 2021, the BIPOC Caucus had 12 members with at least six women and men who have publicly shared their immigrant origins, four of those who are women. These 12 members are taking on legislation aimed at reducing the disparities their communities face and that many of them also live through as systemically oppressed community members in Oregon (Seiler, 2021; Stites, 2021).

The numbers speak for themselves. Although the feminist movements have made strides in positioning women for political opportunities, the systematic structures that open the door for candidate emergence has not allowed women, much less women of immigrant origin, to emerge equally as white men. Party infrastructure and the policies they champion seldom have room for women's issues to come to the forefront of their political agenda. This hinders women representatives to move women's issues forward, thus reducing their substantive claim (Celis & Childs, 2020; Dyogi Phillips & Bhojwani, 2016). Research shows institutionalizing candidate quotas for marginalized groups (Celis et al., 2014), party support policies (Bhojwani, 2018), and campaign finance reform (Wylie, 2020), are systematic approaches to increasing diversity among political candidates. The key to unlocking equal representation lies beyond the current landscape of one-on-one ask and candidate trainings. It will take policies and procedures that are fiercely defended and implemented, such as in the case of Brazil and Mexico (Wylie, 2020). An increase in candidates, the supply side, will arise through fundamental institutional changes in the candidate emergence process.

Prior research has highlighted that a lack of diverse representation is due in large part to a lack of diverse candidates (Juenke & Shah, 2016; Shah, 2014). That is why candidates that come from immigrant communities are more important than ever. Getting to a diverse candidate pool has many barriers, as it was earlier mentioned in this chapter. Nonetheless, seeing a candidate that reflects one's identities and beliefs can spur the 77 percent of U.S. immigrant electorate with naturalized citizenship into shaping political representation (Reny & Bhojwani, 2014; Budiman, 2020). With a growing number of immigrant origin voters, the demand for representation reflective of their experiences can spur the supply side of candidate emergence (Celis & Childs, 2020). Celis and Childs (2020) introduced the affected representative, who's lived experiences of navigating the conditions of the community they represent allows them to know their needs and advocate accordingly.

For the affected representative to emerge in the United States, the demand needs to come in the form of voting power from those interested in marginalized representation. When a large body of marginalized people unify their voting power, descriptive representation shifts towards candidates that reflect their experiences. Descriptive representation can also shift policies to reflect the needs of immigrant origin groups thus leading to substantiative claims. Voting power and the political emergence of women of immigrant origin are essential in shaping an elected body made up of affected representation (Celis & Childs, 2020).

Conclusion

Evaluating the multiple axes of influence in candidate emergence, experiences of multiple systems of oppressions coupled with a threatening political environment, develops a clearer picture of the role of women of immigrant origin as political candidates. Civic participation can be the initial road that leads women of immigrant origin to political office. They dip their

proverbial toes into the political waters by lending their voice to social movements run by associations aimed at having collective political influence. For women who have migrated to the United States, spaces that provide opportunities for "civic engagement within their ethnic communities help them build trust in their new community" (Pescinski, 2010, p. 3). That sense of trust is important in building belonging and social commitment in a new home country. That trust is also reciprocal with the community. Having belonged in the community and advocating for social change, immigrant women are seen as trustworthy and dedicated to the issues important to the community, they are a symbol of their daily existence (Bhojwani, 2018; Celis & Childs, 2020).

In order to understand participants' identity, it is important to center immigration experiences into the conversation of intersectionality. Much work has been done to move away from frameworks which situate white women as the norm in politics and gender research. Over time, intersectional theory has been incorporated in political science research to pose important questions about how ethno-racial and gendered discrimination sets the stage for women's political representation (Gershon et al. , 2019; Phillips, 1998; Severs et al., 2016).

Women of immigrant origin are confronted with multiple systems of oppression at home, work, and society as a whole. Nevertheless, women of immigrant origin have found their voice through civic leadership and political participation (Canales & Zlolniski, 2000; Gutiérrez, 2010; Pescinski, 2010). In an attempt to try to influence policies to reflect the needs of the communities they represent; they are also taking to political office (Rivas, 2018; Matsumoto, 2019). Despite systemic oppression faced by People of Color, scholars have researched how perceptions of race and gender can provide an advantage for Women of Color running for office during specific social and political contexts (Celis & Erzeel 2015; Bejarano, 2013). In

response to the rise of far-right extremist sentiments and policies, a wave of women ready to run for office in both state and national elections emerged in the years following the 2016 election (Bigio and Vogelstein 2020) and their numbers rose during the 2020 elections (Chiu, 2019). Unfortunately, those numbers still pale in comparison to white men in office (Sediqe, et al., 2021). Despite the structural (Dersnah, 2013) and psychological (Calogero 2017) challenges when running for office, more women are rising to the occasion than years past (CAWP, 2022). But looking at state elections, the numbers still show a lack of women who emerge as candidates. The individual, institutional, and contextual factors at play help maintain the homosocial hierarchy that has plagued political parties for generations (Bjarnegård's, 2013).

Methodological Foundation

Introduction

Chapter 1, Introduction, took this project from the role of immigrants' transnational relationships to examining candidate emergence among women of immigrant origin. This study evaluates the role of women of immigrant origin in running for office proceeding the candidacy of Donald Trump and during his administration from 2016–2019. *Chapter 2, Examining Intersectionality Through a Critical Lens Framework: A Brief U.S. Sociohistorical Account of Immigration, Race/Ethnicity and Gender*, was charged with presenting a brief view of the U.S. immigration context and how the invisibility of Women of Color in the suffrage and abolitionist movements launched a new framework for understanding intersectional oppressions. In *Chapter 3: Women of Immigrant Origin in Elected Office: Civic Engagement and Political Threat in Candidate Emergence*, I examined the literature on candidate emergence among women of immigrant origin and the significance of their representation for immigrant and women.

This chapter begins the analysis derived from 19 months of interview data. To begin that analysis, this chapter describes the research design, data, and analysis methods used to answer the following research question:

In the post-2016 era, what are the narratives of women of immigrant origin as they emerged as political candidates in the United States? Sub-questions include:

1.) What are the discourses of immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered experiences of women in the United States that marked their lives? and

2.) What are the immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered discourses behind women's motivation to run for an elected political office post-2016?

This study relies on an explorative and inductive research design while using in-depth interviews, surveys, and field notes to answer these questions.

Methodological Approach

Social research attempts to fit into one or more of seven main objectives. They consist of discovering connections, examining and adjusting existing theories, establishing likelihoods, understand meaningful social phenomena or events, looking at the varied contexts within society, telling an untold story of a group, and advancing new or existing theories (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). While examining the research questions, it became clear that this study's objectives fell into three of these social research objectives.

The first and most prominent is to tell the stories of a small but growing group of immigrant origin women in elected office in Oregon and give voice to their lived experiences of multiple forms of oppression in the United States (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). Through in-depth interview questions, the aim was to look at the world from their experiential knowledge, and their interpretation of their life history and how it shaped their candidate emergence. What they shared in the interviews would contribute to the growing research of women in elected office and the limited studies on candidate emergence among women of immigrant origin.

The second goal was to identify and "interpret significance" of the motivation to run for office post-2016 (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). The cognitive theories of Maturana and Varela (1980) teach us that the use of language, or what is said, is determined by how one connects the past experiences and traditions in one's lifetime. According to Ragin and Amoroso (2011) historical phenomena shape who people are and unearth society's current conditions. To uncover the motivation of participants, knowing their upbringing and events they consider to have impacted their lives, had to be a major component to this analysis. Looking at the context of when interviews took place, was also important, since it reflected a specific moment in history with a unique social phenomenon. The time when these interviews took place, from 2018-2020,

centered the participants in moments of heightened racial/ ethnic, gendered, and anti-immigrant tensions as well as in the midst of a national "racial reckoning" driven by viral videos of Black men murdered at the hands of police. In addition, the 2016 U.S. presidential race gave support to the well-documented cultural shift of anti-immigrant, gendered, and racial rhetoric from then-candidate Donald Trump and his followers, as shared in Chapter 2 (Crockett, 2017; Fording & Schram, 2018; Hochschild, 2016; Lind, 2016). I wanted to evaluate the meaning of that timeframe for women of immigrant origin in elected office and its influences on their motivation to run for office.

The final goal of this study was to advance theory on how the intersects of systems of oppression are linked to candidate emergence. Expanding on existing theory requires an inductive approach in research (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011, p. 48-9). In this study, my inspiration was for theories on women's candidate emergence to come into conversation with intersectional feminist perspectives while evaluating these theories based on the new evidence of this research. It is the evaluation of participant's discourses of their lived experiences that establishes and sustains connections across theories (Huber & Cueva, 2012). Mohanty (1984) wrote in her fundamental piece, *Under Western Eyes*, Western feminist discourse often overshadows the diverse experiences of women, and that "power needs to be defined and named" (p. 335). This thesis aims to look at theories on women's candidate emergence through an intersectional lens, in particular a critical race lens, to establish an understanding of the role of women of immigrant origin in politics in the United States post-2016.

Given these goals, I applied a primarily qualitative research agenda, inductive in nature, by using in-depth, semi-structured interviews; closed and open-ended racial and ethnic identity questionnaires; and fieldnotes to examine the research questions mentioned above. The process

was influenced by the constructivist grounded theory approach established by Kathy Charmaz (2006) to allow participants to self-determinate their lived experiences. This chapter will outline the participant selection, my role as the researcher, participant profiles, data production, ethical considerations, and data analysis procedure to establish the rationale for the study.

Participants in the Study

Participant Selection

The voices of immigrants in the candidate emergence process lack visibility in political science research and therefore the focus on women of immigrant origin in this study contributes to the growing work on their political presence. Participants represented countries across Latin America, Middle East, South Asia, and the United States, outweighing other countries with significant immigration into the United States such as Asia and Pacific Islands. While I looked for a variation in backgrounds, the sample remained imbalanced among those willing to participate in this study. Given that the study did not aim to reach a representative sample, the analysis is dedicated to sharing a qualitative analysis of participants and so is not meant to be characteristic of any immigrant community nor immigrants as a whole group.

Participants in this study are women elected representatives who are of immigrant origin living in the state of Oregon, United States. Three criteria were determined for sample selections: (a) the participant had to self-identify as an immigrant or child of an immigrant(s) from a third world[22] country outside of the United States; (b) the participant was elected into political office after 2016; and (c) the group of participants as a whole should represent a range of

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22 In line with the reclaiming of the words "third world" in the Third World Feminist movement, I use this term to reflect women who belong to the global south and have historically been silenced and striped of agency (Herr, 2014). Third world may be an outdated term, but it is the term that "most clearly approximates the features of the world as we [marginalized women] understand it" (Mohanty, 2002, p. 506).

racial/ethnic backgrounds, political positions, age, and migration experiences. The first list of potential participants was developed through a purposive sampling of a small number of immigrant origin women identified through articles, social media, and political data that met the preselected criteria mentioned above. Given that few lists of elected officials describe immigrant origins, I then implemented a snowball sampling, per best research practices, during the first interviews by asking participants to identify other potential participants (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree and Miller, 1992). Some emailed their network of elected People of Color who met the above criteria. This proved to be useful to increasing a diverse racial/ethnic participant pool, something I had difficulty obtaining on my own. These "gatekeepers" seemed to open the participant circle, but I was not able to determine to what extent the circle had widened given the lack of data capturing immigrant-origin elected officials (Bailey, 1996; Holloway, 1997). The participants who were part of the snowball sampling were invited through email. They in turn had to fill out a survey which determined if they met the criteria. Although this could have caused a misrepresentation of the sample selection, I believe it has produced a more comprehensive reach since the people identified during the snowball sampling were not uncovered during my purposive sampling process. Their local positions, such as school or regional boards, were not in the media or any data source I researched. Interviews were conducted in two phases, from July 2018 through August 2018 and from July 2019 through January 2020. All interviews were completed via Skype to accommodate the schedules of the participants.

My Role as the Researcher

Tu camino de conocimiento requires that you encounter your shadow side and confront what you've programmed yourself (and have been programmed by your cultures) to

avoid (des concocer), to confront traits and habits distorting how you see reality and inhibiting the full use of your facultades. (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002, pp. 540-1)

It is essential to discuss and clarify the role of the researcher in this study. "Objectivity" in research has been a highly contentious subject in the social science field. Research agendas honoring the experiences that have shaped the researcher's approach to planning, collecting, and analyzing data have replaced the need for objectivity (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2018; Harding & Norberg, 2005). Donna Haraway's (1988) speaks of feminist objectivity as the "situated knowledge" a researcher has due to their "limited location." It is the awareness of "situated knowledge," which keeps researchers accountable for how they interpret data yet cautions against "appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see their positions" (p. 583-4).

As a child of immigrants, I experienced many of the challenges described by participants. Microaggressions, balancing bilingualism and biculturalism[23], systemic racism, and advocating for equity in predominately white spaces were familiar occurrences in my life. As a Person of Color, I can recall the moment that shifted my worldview. When I was a child, my sister and I were shopping when a male police officer stopped us. He explained that a store employee, a white woman, saw us putting something in our bag. We were significantly threatened by the male officer, nervous about what could happen to us, and ashamed to have been stopped by a police officer and accused of stealing. He asked us if we knew English, which confused us. Since my sister was older, such moments were not new to her. Upon the end of the interaction, she labeled that interaction as racial discrimination, confident that we

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23 Bilingualism and biculturalism are two terms used frequently in the U.S. to discuss the two languages and two cultural worlds immigrants and their children are continually navigated to and from. It is not practiced in isolation of each other, but are two forms of speaking and being that are continually in unison. (Morales, 2018)

would not have been seen as probable thieves if we were white. This moment marked my life, how I viewed the world, and how I was situated in it. From then on, I was careful about how I acted in front of white people because I knew that their words had more power than mine. Navigating that experience taught me that I was not only viewed as brown but as a foreigner. This experience, and many that followed, allowed me to understand participants' narratives and capture the meaning of their experiences through my own intersectional lens.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) and Adrian Katherine Wing (2003) described the intersectionality of Women of Color as the intricate navigation of identity, a theme elaborated throughout Chapter 2. Latina feminist Mariana Ortega (2016) introduced this complexity as the "multiplicitous selfhood," which describes someone who must face interruptions of their being within mainstream spaces (p. 12). As a Woman of Color of immigrant parents, understanding how identities interlocks within moments of oppression gives insight into the narratives of participants of color who must navigate white dominant spaces and their position within them.

In addition to my own life experiences as the child of immigrants and a woman of color, working with non-governmental organizations to shift the political presence among marginalized communities led to the following beliefs and assumptions when approaching this research:

1. Elected Women of Color have experienced discrimination.
2. The motivation to run for office for women of immigrant origin is rooted in a commitment to social justice.

3. Due to their lived experiences, women elected officials of immigrant origin can reflect on their own experiences and draw meaning and connections from those moments to their present decisions.

With this in mind, this chapter will explore the methods and methodology selected to honor the role of my lived experience and also to allow participants to be the interpreters of their stories.

Participant Profiles

When one identity becomes more salient, the (un)intended consequence is to see identity as unidimensional, obscuring other identities and experiences, particularly those situated at the intersection of multiple marginalities (Bejarano et al., 2020, p. 3)

Knowledge is positioned within the spaces it originated from (Mohanty, 2002). Understanding those spaces begins with knowing how participants chose to identify themselves for this study. Each participant identified as an immigrant or a child of an immigrant to the United States and for this study will be classified as immigrant origin.[24] Immigrants and children of immigrants were selected because of the shared systems of oppression impacting their ability to travel, work, and have equal health outcomes as their white peers. Children of immigrants are included in the study because they suffer the same legal and social penalties as their undocumented and documented immigrant parents. Multigenerational trauma and economic uncertainty is transferred to the children of immigrants, thus giving importance to studying their shared oppression (Abrego, 2014; Enriquez, 2015; Fujiwara, 2008). Enriquez (2015) argues that children of immigrants suffer a de facto undocumented status due to their parent's "social, cultural, and economic constraints" (p. 13). With the absence of a transfer of social and

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24 Immigrant origin refers to people who were born outside of the U.S. and are now living in the U.S. and those who are native to the U.S. with one or more parent who immigrated to the U.S.

economic capital, the experiences of children of immigrants have a greater likelihood of mirroring that of their parents. Out of the 16 participants, 10 immigrated to the United States and six were children of one or two immigrant parents. The intention of this study was to examine a diversity of experiences and not compare them based on racial/ethnic identity or home country, as this is not the context of the research, but to analyze the narratives of women of immigrant origin who chose to run for office post-2016. The participating women were from Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia and the United States. Specific countries of origin are not given in order to maintain complete anonymity of participants. Looking at just one country of origin group would require a deep contextualization of that country of origin, the timeframe the participants lived in the country, and when they had departed to help understand the findings as relevant for people coming from that particular country, as per research practices when studying just one racial/ethnic group (Mohanty, 1984). Examining only one country of origin group would reduce a broader understanding of intersectionality as a concept within the United States setting, a setting with over 40 percent People of Color and over 13 percent foreign-born residents (United States Census Bureau, 2019). Not focusing on one immigrant community does have its drawbacks by eliminating the potential to draw generalizability of the study results. Since this research is based on the life histories of participants, it does not need generalizability of the findings to draw its conclusions, but it will provide a foundation for future research with that agenda in mind. Map 1 illustrates each state in which an interview was conducted and includes the percent of the total foreign-born population and the percent of children under 18 who are U.S. native-born with one or more foreign-born parents (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). This data conceptualizes the population that is centered in this study.

Map 1

2018 U.S. Immigrant and Children of Immigrant(s) Data

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Migration Policy Institute, State Immigration
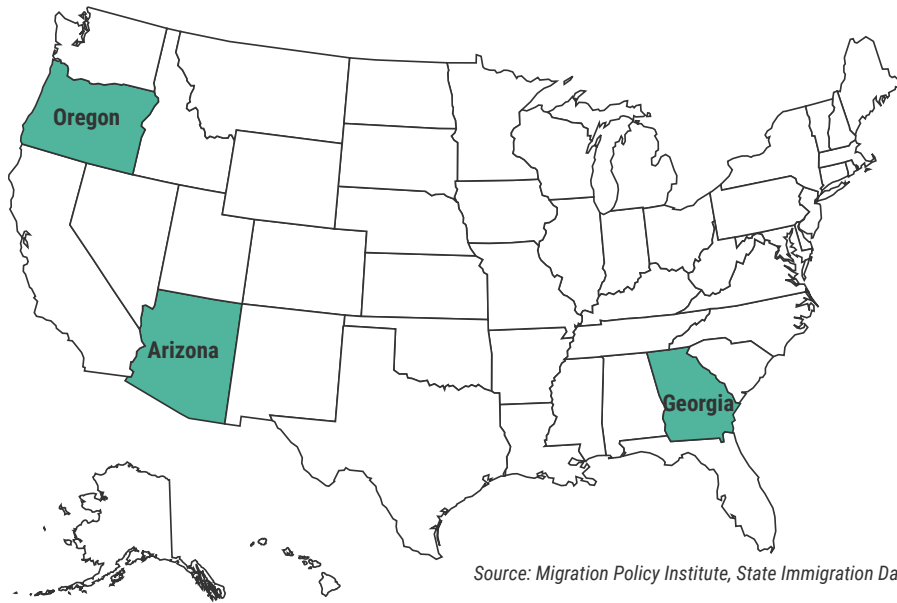
Data Profile

Source: Migration Policy Institute, State Immigration Data Profile

	Oregon	Arizona	Georgia
Foreign-born	10.4%	13.4%	10.1%
U.S. born children w/ 1 or more foreign-born parent	22.5%	26.3%	19.2%

Sixteen interviews were analyzed in this research. Participant summaries represented the diversity of experiences among immigrants and children of immigrants within the United States, such as the process of migration, economic, and undocumented or documented status upon entering the United States. Diversity of experience was also an essential contributor to understanding the role of intersectionality in this analysis. Hearing from immigrants and children of immigrants provided diverse perspectives concerning how the immigrant, racial/ethnic, and gendered experiences are situated in the stories of candidate emergence. Finding a balance among these different profiles contributed to evaluating how the social context, post-2016, influenced candidate emergence. Interviews were conducted with recent "newcomers" to politics, those who ran post-2016, to increase the likelihood that they could recall their motivation to run for office and decrease the potential for those memories to be shifted through time and other experiences.

Out of the sixteen interviews conducted for this study, ten were women of immigrant origin living in Oregon, a state which is predominantly Democratic in voting patterns. Their stories provide the central analysis of this research. The remaining six interviews were used to examine and add a layered perspective to a portion of the central findings of the 10 interviews of women of immigrant origin. Three men of immigrant origin in Oregon were interviewed solely to better understand the combined role of gender and immigrant origin identity in candidate emergence and determine how men and women of immigrant origin view their electability based on their gender. Likewise, three women of immigrant origin living outside of Oregon in states with a predominant Republican political context were interviewed to contribute to the analysis of gender as an influencer in candidate emergence. In these interviews, I wanted to look at the influence of gender in candidate emergence in distinct political context. These interviews are not meant to provide a comparative sample to the 10 women of immigrant origin in Oregon,

but to allow for a departure for future research. As divulged through their narratives, patterns and distinctions were integrated into the findings section in Chapters 5 and 6.

Given my professional work in the local government and my volunteer work on social justice issues in Oregon, I knew one Oregon participant before conducting this research. I moved in the same social and professional circles as some of the interviewed participants in Oregon, though I had not met them prior to this study. Due to this I want to address the potential of social desirability bias. Given the intent was to learn from the life stories of participants, social desirability bias was not a concern. Nevertheless, the following are a few ways social desirability was mitigated (Nederhof, 1985).

First, the participants were interviewed via skype. They were assured of full anonymity, giving them the opportunity to be transparent regarding their experiences and perspectives and know they would not be connected to their answers. Second, questions asking participants for their racial and ethnic identity were conducted via a survey (included in Appendix 1) before initiating interviews. This was a technique Kreuter and company (2009) found useful when asking socially sensitive questions. Third, open-ended questions were asked. For example, participants were asked, what is it about your upbringing that you remember the most? In response to this question, most participants recalled moments of racial discriminations they experienced or family trauma related to the systemic injustices they were facing. Relying on asking broad and non-leading questions were essential to reducing the likelihood of social desirability bias (Nederhof, 1985).

Looking at the ethical implications of interviewing participants within my social or professional circle, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), best discusses this through the following:

Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status, and positions. (p. 140)

The outsider/insider concept clarified my approach to planning and implementing this work. Looking at the literature on this topic (Asselin, 2003; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2018; Serrant-Green, 2002), in particular, that of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), the insider role allows for broader access and understanding of what is seen and heard. The insider position provided an opportunity to establish trust with participants. At the beginning of the interviews, I offered participants the chance to ask personal questions about me, hoping to create an insider bond and establish trust. Some participants asked why I was interested in the subject, some asked to know more about my family background, or if I knew Spanish and at what level. Many Spanish bilingual participants shared phrases or described situations in Spanish, knowing that I could capture the words' essence. Towards the end of one interview, Gael communicated the following, representing a greater sense of trust between us than he initially expected. "I don't know why I felt like I could be so open, I usually find myself being more guarded…you have to for self-preservation and don't know who to trust. And I've never even met you" (Gael, August 15, 2019).

The insider role has its complications; the research results come with implications for myself, my family, and my community. I must live with these results because they are part of my community (Smith, 2012). But I cannot ignore that I also carry an outsider perspective in this process. Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2018) elaborated on their role as an insider researcher and acknowledged the outsider perspective, ways in which their position is distinct from that of the

participants. Living and studying in Europe, physically removing myself, although temporarily, from the experiences of daily microaggressions, racism, and xenophobia in the United States during the Trump presidency, allowed me to reflect on the study results through a different lens. Feeling safe to process and write about the context of the research, especially regarding CRT which has been highly politicized in the U.S., was difficult at first. Still, physical distance and time allowed me to face the literature and analyze the findings.

This section exemplifies the differences between a traditional research approach and what Dolores Delgado Bernal and Octavio Villalpando (2002) term as the apartheid of knowledge. Apartheid is used to mark the racial divide in academia between Eurocentric epistemologies and other forms of knowledge which are rooted in cultural traditions (Huber, 2009). The social connection between a researcher and a subject is considered a strength in decolonial methodologies when applied appropriately, though it does not come without obstacles. Having an insider positioning proved to be challenging because of the emotional scars that a racialized and immigrant existence in the United States had etched into my identity. Still, a commitment to the hope of these findings benefiting my community pushed forward the research agenda to its completion.

Participant Recruitment

It is difficult to know the exact number of people of immigrant origin in locally elected office in Oregon. Accessing a meaningful data production and developing empirical analyses of women of immigrant origin in elected office can be challenging, given they are often lumped into the broader categories of women, Women of Color, or immigrants. Records of elected officials rarely include immigrant identity as a demographic data set. Due to this, it could have produced sources of error, missing data, or outliers and have potential effects on the data. The

work of organizations such as the NALEO Education Fund, New American Leaders, and the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islanders, news articles from national and local sources, and social media content such as Facebook and Twitter which highlighted the wave of People of Color in office, pointed to potential participants, thus implementing what is known in political science as "elite" interviewing with notable political actors (Vromen, 2010).

Fifty-nine men and women who could potentially identify as immigrant or a child of an immigrant and residing in Oregon were identified and emailed or messaged through their social media pages containing the research purpose, a request to interview, and the link to the survey. In addition, 34 women living across the United States who had identified as immigrant origin or a child of immigrants were contacted in the same manner. In total, 93 people were contacted with a request to be interviewed. The survey included a consent form agreement for participants to review and agree to through a survey response. Twenty-seven people responded; nine were not interviewed due to scheduling conflicts or because their immigrant identities were outside of the research criteria, such as being the grandchildren of immigrants. Three people who did not fill out the survey but shared their interest through email were contacted and interviewed. The survey questions were asked during the interview for those who did not complete the survey online. Data was produced until saturation was achieved, when new data stops revealing further information (Charmaz, 2006). For this study, that number was 16 interviews. Given that the aim of this research was to have a deep understanding of participant's discourse, and not to attain a representative sample, this number proved to be sufficient for the purpose of this study.

Data Production Tools

Three instruments were used for the study to bring to light the role of the intersects of systems of oppression in candidate emergence: (a) surveys filled out by participants containing demographic and political data, (b) audio recording of interviews and their transcripts, and (c) field notes. Surveys on demographic and political office data were gathered via google forms before interviews (see Appendix 1). The survey contained open-ended questions and a selection of racial and ethnic identities for participants to select. Along with the interview responses to reveal identities, the survey provided triangulation of data. Those interviewed who could not fill out the survey or provided incomplete answers were asked to answer the questions during the interview process. Survey and interview data was transferred to an excel spreadsheet.

An expert panel was recruited to review the initial interview questions, including the two co-directors of this thesis and a group of women of immigrant origin in Oregon, some of whom were in elected office. A practice interview was held with one woman of immigrant origin in Oregon's elected office who did not form part of the participant sample. The interview guide and questions can be found in Appendix 2.[25] Interviews were conducted via skype and recorded using QuickTime Player. A secondary recording device was used in case of a failure of the initial recording system. When the validity of the first recording was established, the second recording was deleted. Temi, an automatic transcript software, was used to develop a first draft of the transcripts. Drafts and audios were reviewed for errors, and a final transcript version was created. Participants received their transcripts to review and approve. All participants approved their transcript and a summary of their stories or didn't respond to the call for a review. Interview audios and transcripts were initially stored in an external drive and

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25 While the interview category 'Experience While in Office' did not produce sufficient data to evaluate the political work of participants given their recent election into office at the time of the interviews, Chapter 6 will elaborate on some key findings mentioned in this category which are more aspirational in nature than specific political work some interview questions in this category were meant to uncover.

then transferred to Nvivo qualitative analyzing software. Data in Nvivo will be deleted one year after completing the dissertation process and permanently stored in google drive. During the interviews, field notes were recorded. The survey spreadsheet and field notes were kept in an external drive, where they will permanently be stored.

Definition of the Sample

A total of 21 interviews were conducted. Three interviews were conducted with people who were elected before 2016 and one with a person who was technically the grandchild of immigrants, all three of whom fell outside of the criteria of this study. One interview was deemed unusable due to the audio quality and a lack of notes describing the research questions. One of those interviews was partially complete but was used in this research, given the questions answered as pertaining to this analysis. The 16 interviews ranged from 30 to 118 minutes, averaging 68 minutes. Interviews provided 1,060 pages of transcripts and the field notes were 43 pages, which were typed up and included in the analysis. In total, 16 interviews were analyzed for this research study with individuals who immigrated or children of immigrants to the United States and who also entered political office after the 2016 presidential elections. A list of interviews is located in Appendix 3.

Interviews were established to provide an in-depth discourse about participants' memories, feelings, and opinions before and after their motivation to run for office and provide an understanding of their discourses. Sixteen participants were established as sufficient by the principle of saturation of information. There were additional limitations which made it difficult to interview this population. Participants' time was a significant obstacle since they are highly sought after for interviews or community activities. To accommodate this limitation, I

conducted interviews via skype, giving participants more flexibility to log into the call between

their meetings.

Construction of Analytical Tools

> Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning
>
> individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem…Those who engage in this
>
> form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a
>
> focus on personal meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a
>
> situation (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 490).

The research was guided by the grounded theory analysis of Kathy Charmaz, whose

constructivist approach consists of three phases; initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical

coding. Constructionists believe that each person attributes distinct meaning to their

experiences and that purpose centers among a complex context. Researchers depend on

participants for interpretation by introducing broad and open-ended questions. Social

constructionists ask, "how is it accomplished" instead of assuming and prescribing to a defined

world. The process of establishing a research agenda, analysis, and construction of theory is

transparent to scholars and those who participate and belong to the researched community

(Charmaz, 2006, pp. 125-189).

During the first phase of coding, transcriptions were read through and coded motivated by

initial coding. Codes and memos were documented in the margins, consistent with this phase

(Charmaz, 2006 p. 50). Constant comparative methods of interview statements and incidents

were compared within each interview and compared messages and experiences among all

participants. *In vivo* coding was used to analyze the significance of words or phrases, especially

those shared in Spanish. For example, when Itzel said, "*del dicho al hecho es un estrecho*," the researcher knew the meaning of her words involved a sense of commitment and time to seeing changes in her community realized. This established "analytic distinctions" and gathered the hidden messages behind words or phrases (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006, pp. 54-55).

The second phase of analysis was inspired by focused coding in Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory, I inputted excerpts from the interviews in the qualitative analysis software NVivo 12. During this phase, general categories emerged. Charmaz (2006) explains focused coding as an opportunity to "capture, synthesize, and understand the main themes in the statement" (p. 59). The process of analysis was to then situate the interviews within the survey results and determine if variances or connections of identity and candidate emergence were present in the narrative themes (Syed & Azmitia, 2008). Interview transcripts were then analyzed for mentions of identity-based themes of immigrant-, race/ethnicity and gender-focused experiences. Narrative content sub-themes that were coded were: the realization of the identity, awareness of privilege, marginality/ lack of belonging, and feeling accepted. Both positive and negative sub-themes were markers of identity formation (Syed and Azmitia, 2008). Then I provided concise excerpts from interviews to illustrate the commonalities and difference that were anchored in the factors of candidate emergence, individual, institutional and contextual, as presented in Chapter 3. Narrative general categories and their sub-categories of identities and candidate emergence can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

General Categories and Sub-Categories of Identities and Candidate Emergence
Source: Author's elaboration based on information produced during the field work.

GENERAL CATEGORIES	IDENTITY SUB-CATEGORIES	FACTORS in CANDIDATE EMERGENCE present in discourses
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN DETAILS	• Reasons for leaving: economic & social • Two worlds • Political involvement • Organizational involvement	• Individual Factors • Institutional Factors
EXPERIENCE AFTER MIGRATING TO THE U.S.	• Staying connected • Culture shock (U.S. or Oregon) • Shift in family dynamics • Adversity/ resilience • Poverty • Protection from violence • Undocumented experience • Family, mentor, community support	• Individual Factors • Institutional Factors • Contextual Factors
LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCES	• Race-based oppression • Gendered discrimination • Immigrant-based violence and oppression	• Institutional Factors
MOTIVATION TO RUN FOR OFFICE	• Lack of representation of marginalized community • Someone asked • Witnessing inequities • Political Climate • Deciding it was time to do something • Political aspirations: A calling to serve • Knowledge to lead	• Institutional Factors • Contextual Factors
CAMPAIGNING	• Experiences while door knocking • Impact to family • Racial attacks • Training • Partners and allies	• Individual Factors • Institutional Factors • Contextual Factors

Participants were given a selection of identifiers to choose from, which included the following in this order: American, Immigrant, Refugee, Indigenous, Child of Immigrants, Other (open-ended). The participants were also given an open-ended question, which asked them to write down all of the racial and ethnic heritages they identified with. As discussed in Chapter 1, race/ethnicity are used interchangeably in participant's discourse, and so represented as race or ethnicity in this dissertation. Open-ended questions reduce the possibility of bias responses and provided a deeper insight into the thinking of self-identity among participants (Iyengar, 1996; Repass, 1971). Results of the 16 participants are shown in Table 5. Table 6-9 indicates the age range of participants, political party, campaign year, year term began, country of origin, parent's country of origin, year they migrated to the U.S., and the date(s) of their interview. Note that gender, political position and the specific counties of origin are not indicated in an attempt to maintain participants' anonymity. Table 9 demonstrates the breakdown of political positions.

Table 5

Self-Designated Racial/ Ethnic and Immigrant Membership of the Sixteen Participants

Source: Author's elaboration based on information produced during the field work.
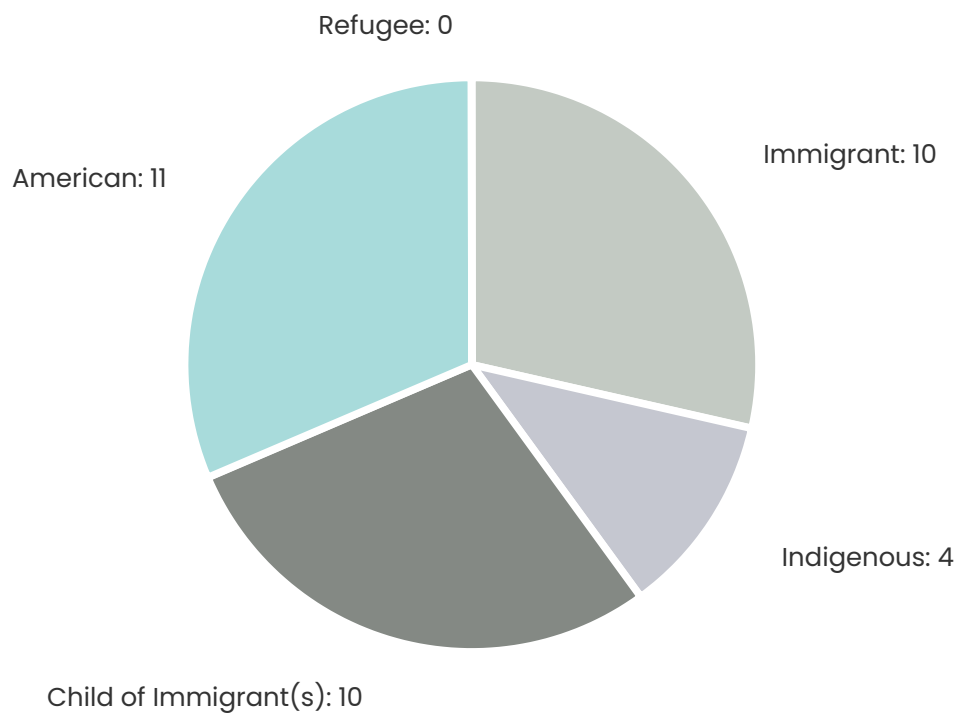
Selected by participants from pre-written choices

Latina/ Latinx / Hispanic	12
Mexicano / Mexican-American / Chicana/o	6
Native (Quechua) descendant	1
Indigenous	1
Middle-Eastern	3
Arab	1
South Asian	1

Open-ended responses of racial and ethnic heritages

Table 6

Participant Demographic and Candidate Emergence Data: Women of immigrant origin living

in Oregon. Source: Author's elaboration based on information produced during the field work.

Age range	Political Party	Campaign Year	Year term began	Re-election?	If not, why?	Country of Origin (Immigrants to the U.S.)	Parent's County of Origin (children of immigrants)	Year migrated to the U.S.	Interview Date
20-39	No affiliation	2016	2016	No	Focus on my family	Latin America		1989	July 22, 2018
20-39	Democratic Party	2016	2017	Yes		Latina America		1990	August 14, 2018
40-59	Independent	2018	2019	Yes		Latin America		1982	August 17, 2019; October 14, 2019; January 26, 2020
20-39	Democratic Party	2017	2017	Yes			United States & Latin America	1979	August 11, 2019
40-59	Democratic Party	2016	2017	Yes		Latin America		1980's	July 25, 2018
40-59	Democratic Party	2019	2019	Yes		Latin America		1979	August 22, 2019
40-59	Democratic Party	2019	2019	No	Give others opportunity		Latin America	1977	August 25, 2019
20-39	Democratic Party	2016	2017	No	Capacity		Latin America	1980s	August 1 & 10, 2019
20-39	Democratic Party	2019	2019	Yes		Middle East		2011	October 28, 2019
40-59	Democratic Party	2018	2019	Not sure		South Asia		1967	November 4, 2019

Table 7

Participant Demographic and Candidate Emergence Data: Men of immigrant origin living in Oregon. Source: Author's elaboration based on information produced during the field work.

Age range	Political Party	Campaign Year	Year term began	Re-election?	If not, why?	Country of Origin (Immigrants to the U.S.)	Parent's Country of Origin (children of immigrants)	Year migrated to the U.S.	Interview Date
20-39	Democratic Party	2017	2019	Yes			Latin America	1990's	August 15, 2019
40-59	Democratic Party	2017	2017	Yes		Middle East		1990	September 23, 2019
20-39	Democratic Party	2019	2019	Yes			United States & Latin America	1990	August 25, 2019

Table 8

Participant Demographic and Candidate Emergence Data: Women of immigrant origin living across the United States. Source: Author's elaboration based on information produced during the field work.

Age range	Political Party	Campaign Year	Year term began	Re-election?	If not, why?	Country of Origin (Immigrants to the U.S.)	Parent's Country of Origin (children of immigrants)	Year migrated to the U.S.	Interview Date
20-39	Democratic Party	2016	2017	not provided			United States & Middle East	1970's	July 27, 2018
40-59	Democratic Party	2016	2017	Yes		Latin America		1978	July 18, 2018
not provided	Democratic Party	2015	2016	Yes		Latin America		1989	August 20, 2018

Table 9

Political Positions Among the Sixteen Participants.

Source: Author's elaboration based on information produced during the field work.

Elected Office	No. in Office
State Representative	4
Regional Board	2
County Board	1
City Council	2
College Board	2
School Board	5

Each elected position has varying qualifications. For example, to run for school and college boards, you must be a registered voter, have lived in the district for one year, must file a declaration of candidacy to run for office in a country clerk's office with 25 signatures or 10 percent of registered voters or pay a $10 filing fee. These are volunteer positions, so do not provide a salary, but might offer a small stipend for their work. Stipends vary by district. Participants were employed through other employment to provide for their livelihood. These roles are seen as a volunteer elected position.[26] For city, county and regional political positions, candidates are nominated by their political party, must be at least 18 years old, have lived in the district for at least one year, file a petition for running for the elected seat with 500 signature or two percent of registered voters or pay $50, the signatures go through a verification process and once validated, the election is approved to proceed. City position salaries vary by city. In this case, both participants did not receive a salary for their elected role, they both had

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26 http://www.osba.org/~/media/Files/Resources/Board%20Operations/SchoolBoardCandidateGuide2015.pdf

other forms of employment. The county and regional board position offered full-time salaries.[27] To run for a state representative seat, you must be at least 21 years old, be a citizen and have lived in the district for at least one year, be nominated by a major party (if not nominated by a major party other rules apply), pay $25 to file the petition to run for office or provide 500 signatures or two percent of the average amount of voters in the district. The signatures go through a verification process and the election is approved to proceed. The State of Oregon offers a yearly salary of $21,612 per year with per diems. Representatives who do not come from generational wealth, must find other forms of employment outside of their duties. The average wage in Oregon is $55,349.[28]

Researcher-Participant Relationship

The final phase of analysis, inspired by theoretical coding, unveiled the interrelation between categories. Implemented in this process was a self-evaluation of the data results' credibility based on my understanding and position inside the social world under evaluation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). During this phase, the following criteria for establishing an empirical study and developing theory from data results inspired the final coding process (Charmaz, 2006, p. 183):

1. Credibility

   - Has your research achieved intimate familiarity with the setting or topic?

   - Are the data sufficient to merit your claims? Consider the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data.

   - Have you made systemic comparisons between observations and between categories?

   - Do the categories cover a wide range of empirical observation?

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27 https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/county-city-district-candidates.pdf
28 https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/statecandidates.pdf

- Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis?

- Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment-and agree with your claims?

2. Originality

- Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insights?

- Does your analysis provide a new conceptual rendering of the data?

- What is the social and theoretical significance of this work?

- How does your grounded theory challenge, extend, or refine current ideas, concepts, and practices?

3. Resonance

- Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience?

- Have you revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for-granted meanings?

- Have you drawn links between larger collectivities or institutions and individual lives, when the data so indicate?

- Does your grounded theory make sense to your participants or people who share their circumstances? Does your analysis offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds?

4. Usefulness

- Does your analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their every- day worlds?

- Do your analytic categories suggest any generic processes?

- If so, have you examined these generic processes for tacit implications?

- Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas?

- How does your work contribute to knowledge? How does it contribute to making a better world?

Conclusion

This chapter described how my "situated knowledge" led me to Smith's self-determination approach towards developing the research agenda and how that process led to applying an analysis approach inspired by Charmaz's constructionist grounded theory. In developing a research agenda, I looked to my lived experiences and the lens I use to operate to determine the best design for approaching the study. The method used is in line with what Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) calls the "emancipatory paradigm of 'post-positivism'" for qualitative research design, which is "a mix of existing methodological approaches and indigenous practices" (pp. 144, 169). The purpose of the study is to explore how each elected leader described their life experiences and how those experiences shaped their candidate emergence rather than assuming gender or race/ethnicity as prominent influencers.

My inductive method, inspired by the constructivist grounded theory, held participants as the source of knowledge and contributors to their data results, thus respecting people's voice, healing, and education to be a vital aspect of this research. (Smith, 2012, p. 12). Corbin and Strauss state, "experience… can't be divorced from the larger events in a social, political, cultural, racial, gender-related, informational, and technological framework" (2008, p. 42). In this case, the context of the post-2016 threatening political climate surrounding participants' experiences is an essential aspect of this analysis.

In what follows, I will elaborate on the findings from the final coding process. Through this analysis, Critical Race Theory made sense of and connected the stories of participants. Their

stories shared during the interviews were used to answer the research questions thus revealing the unique perspectives women of immigrant origin contribute to their candidate emergence process.

Chapter 5
Institutional Factors of
Candidate Emergence:

5

Framing Lived Experiences Through Critical Race Theory

We are the African and the trader. We are the Indian and the Settler. We are oppressor and oppressed...we are the mestizos of North America. We are black, yes, but we are 'white,' too, and we are red. To attempt to function as only one, when you are really two or three, leads, I believe, to psychic illness: 'white' people have shown us the madness of that. —Alice Walker

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the empirical findings of the discourses of women of immigrant origin in the United States who were motivated to run for an elected office post-2016. In analyzing the data, field notes, interviews and demographic surveys, several overarching themes developed while assessing the life histories of participants. Those themes led me to look at relevant theory to explain why women of immigrant origin are motivated to run for office during a Trump presidency.

This chapter will first examine two crucial tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT), the normalcy of racism and intersectionality, the most prominent themes deriving from participant's narrative. This will be presented in the section, *Normalizing Racism: The Subtleness of Contemporary Discrimination* and *When Systems of Oppression Meet.* I will introduce the common themes that arose from participant's experiential knowledge through their stories and counter-stories of threatening identity-based social and political rhetoric. I will look to CRT to untangle why the Trump era's political rhetoric provided a tipping point for participant's motivation to run for office, even when their immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered identities have historically been barriers in candidate emergence in the United States.

As described in Chapter 2, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a well-established theoretical framework that challenges white supremacy and structural inequality within systems. Through its tenets, CRT helps lay out an analytical framing of the lives of People of Color that centers their lived experiences as knowledge (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). For this research, I will focus on two tenets which were produced from participant's interviews, thus essential to this analysis: the normalcy of racism and intersectionality, as represented in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2

Tenets of Critical Race Theory.

Source: Author's elaboration based on NoLAed: Education for Liberation.
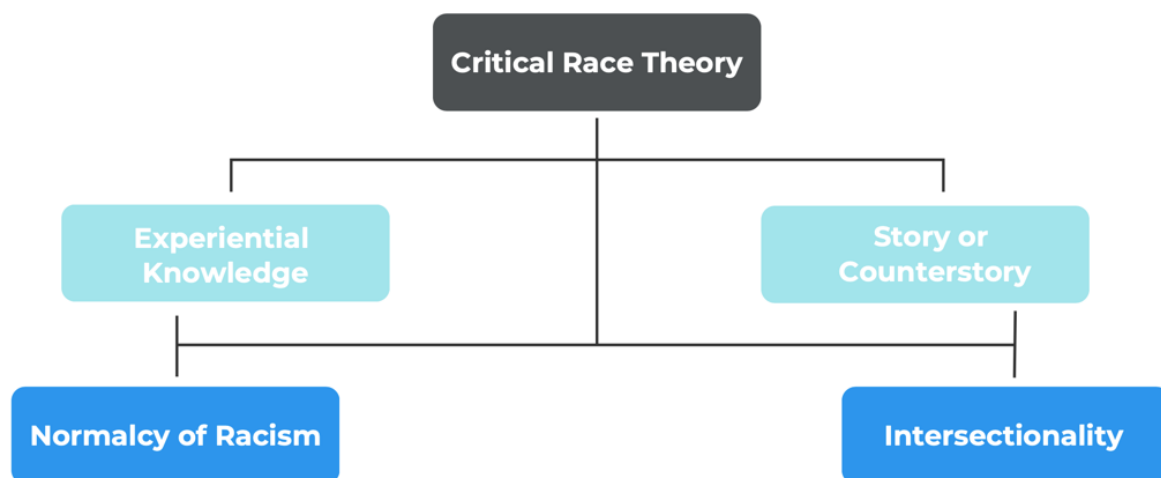
Normalizing Racism: The Subtleness of Contemporary Discrimination

For far too long, racism has been absent in contemporary discourses of western social science fields (Hesse, 2004). When intersectionality was introduced by Crenshaw (1989) as an analytical tool, Critical Race Theory anchored its tenets in the conviction that life as experienced by People of Color was multilayered and hinged on social elements beyond their control. CRT ascribes to the belief that racism is surrounded in everyday life experiences, that

colorblindness is an illusion benefiting White America and pushing People of Color[29] further out to the edges of society. Without acknowledging that racism exists, not even the legal process has the possibility of healing the wounds racism inflicts (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). As a social construct, racism is ever-present, and as Derrick Bell (1992) puts it, "[m]odern discrimination is, moreover, not practiced indiscriminately" (p. 19). Thus, to ascribe to CRT in research, the acknowledgment of the existence of racism, is not only necessary but fundamental.

Racism should not be the only word to describe the experiences of women of immigrant origin. The vast forms of expressions many people use to discriminate against a Person of Color is common in their everyday lives. Though unconscious, they are ways of showing someone why they are not welcomed into an inner circle. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) explain,

> Imagine the…predicament— a society that has only one word (say, "racism") for a phenomenon that is much more complex than that, for example, biological racism; intentional racism; unconscious racism; microaggressions; nativism; institutional racism; racism tinged with homophobia or sexism; racism that takes the form of indifference, coldness, or implicit associations; and white privilege, reserving favors, smiles, kindness, the best stories, one's most charming side, and invitations to real intimacy for one's own kind or class (p. 34).

Defining the layers of discrimination provides the lens needed to examine the stories of participants. This lens magnifies the two dimensions of racism that strongly emerged in the narratives of the people interviewed in this study, racial microaggressions and institutional

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29 People of Color was frequently used by participants as a way to describe their group belonging. It is capitalized in this work to demonstrate the importance of the experiences of historically excluded groups and to push against the establishment of whiteness as the norm.

racism. Giving significance to this analysis are the examples shared from participants with accounts of these two dimensions of racism, which will be presented throughout this chapter.

Before continuing, I wanted to provide a special note to the reader regarding direct quotes of participants. Though this dissertation is dedicated to analyzing and sharing the discourses shared by participants, some details were removed to protect anonymity of participants. In particular, specific examples of microaggressions were either removed or participants asked for their removal to avoid negative repercussions. Lastly, although I asked for specific examples of discrimination based on identity, many participants avoiding sharing details for the same fear of negative consequences to their personal and profession lives. As a Person of Color, I understood this dilemma and respected their decisions to avoid retraumatizing participants who had suffered identity-based violence.

Racial Microaggressions in Their Everyday Forms

The study and analysis of micro level contributions towards the positioning of women of immigrant origin confirms the prevalence of racism in the United States. Chester Pierce first introduced the term microaggressions to explain and justify the hidden threats People of Color experience and why they are subversive in nature. Microaggressions, in part, have substituted overt acts which once characterized racism (Pierce et al., 1978). Although microaggressions are disguised within the colloquial ways people speak, other forms such as not seeing a Person of Color in the room, also has the potential to cause as much psychological harm as overt acts of racism (Sue, 2010). As Derald Wing Sue (2010) writes,

> It is not the White supremacists, Ku Klux Klan members, or Skinheads…who pose the
>
> greatest threat to People of Color, but instead well-intentioned people, who are strongly
>
> motivated by egalitarian values, believe in their own morality, and experience

themselves as fair-minded and decent people who would never consciously discriminate. (p. xv)

To give meaning to this tenet, the experiential knowledge and stories of participants will reveal their microaggressions throughout their lives, the subtle and daily reminders to them about their position in the world.[30] We begin with Elena.[31]

Elena. As the first U.S.-born child of an immigrant family from Latin America, Elena lived as a child in an intergenerational household with her maternal grandparents in the United States. Elena's mother and maternal grandparents were born and raised in Latin America. Although her grandfather came from poverty, he and his wife experienced upward economic mobility in his home country, which allowed them to send their eldest daughter, Elena's mother, to the United States to study. After Elena's mother gave birth to Elena and her sister, her grandparents moved to the United States to help raise their grandchildren and to escape the political turmoil their country was facing. Elena's grandparents experienced yet another shift in economic status upon moving to the United States, a downward mobility which impacted the family for many years. Her grandfather worked in manual labor and her mother and grandmother as service providers. Through her grandparent's and mother's experiences, Elena noticed the lack of opportunities and biases they faced due to their economic, racial, and immigrant identities. When asked what was it about her upbringing that she remembers the most, she recalls spending time with her grandfather afterschool at his job sites.

> He put a lot of camaraderie with his fellow laborers and he was well respected by them.
>
> But I saw the difference. I remember really observing how he was treated among his

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30 Given the few women of immigrant origin in elected office in Oregon, their identities can be easily traced by referencing their country of origin or details of their stories. Therefore, some stories are provided without specific details of microaggressions to protect the anonymity of participants.

31 As previously mentioned, all names of participants in this study have been changed to protect the identities of research participants

peers and the coworkers versus how his clients would treat him or people that have "good jobs," which [was] not always very respectful. (Elena, August 1 & 10, 2019)

At an early age, Elena knew that there was a difference between how coworkers and friends saw her grandfather versus how people in a better economic position saw him. Observing these events builds the knowledge to know what to expect in future and similar situations. It is what Anzaldúa (2002) refers to as *conocimiento* (reflective consciousness), the knowledge that guides how we reflect and react to microaggressions and other race-based traumas. She discusses how *conocimientos* "challenge the conventional ways" of being and seeing the world, a world that seldom benefits People of Color (p. 542). Elena teaches us through her story that witnessing microaggressions gives a new lens on the world, one that helps see future microaggressions with a sharper vision. In the following life story, the participant gives an example of how past microaggressions helped to shape reactions to what happens to people around them.

Veronica. Born and raised in the U.S. by immigrant parents and grandparents, Veronica reflects on the challenging conditions her family lived in as a child. She grew up in a loving home with neighbors that supported one another. After years in their community, her family moved to Oregon when she was a teenager to escape gang violence in their neighborhood. This was a challenging shift for Veronica, and she now found that she was often the only Latina in her advanced placement classes, Going through that experience shaped her perspective about public schools. Upon returning to Oregon, Veronica worked in a school district that was growing in diversity due to gentrification from a nearby city. She noticed that not much had changed regarding students of color's achievements and educational outcomes.

I finished high school twenty years ago and when my students are still sharing the [same] microaggressions that I experience[d], that the school doesn't belong to them and they feel out of place, that really bothers me. (Veronica, August 25, 2018)

Being ignored by teachers, attending a school that is predominantly white, and having teachers with vastly different life experiences, were all experiences that Veronica navigated as a high school student. To her frustration, those experiences were continuing to be present in the lives of students in the district she worked. A 2019 report on educational achievement in Oregon shows that Hispanic students suffer one of the largest achievement gaps in math and reading during formative primary school years (NAEP Oregon, 2019). Veronica decided to run for the school board to advocate for those students and transformation policy to address their needs. In 2019 she ran and won a seat on the school board. Veronica expressed how her multiple achievements could not eliminate the microaggressions in her life.

I can tell you that I have experienced racism and microaggressions as a school board member, so that isn't new. I think that maybe it's like part of living, right? So, at least for me it's more about if I get hung up on every little microaggression or racism that I experience on a daily basis, *voy a estar de malas* all the time. I'm going to be depressed all the time, I don't want that. So, I've learned to pick my battles. I've learned to let some things slide, for my sake. Not for anyone else's, but for my sake, for my sanity, for my wellbeing, and I've learned to seek out my support system. (Veronica, August 25, 2018)

For people of immigrant origin, the not-so-subtle ways they are treated by others is an indication of how their value is perceived. That perception has short- and long-term impacts in the way they move through the world. In order to run for office, women of immigrant origin must acknowledge that racism and xenophobia will occur throughout their time as a candidate

and in office. This is a psychological hurdle their white counterparts do not have to overcome. Other participants shared experiences of needing to find new approaches to campaigning such as relying on white allies to door knock with the volunteers who were Latinx. Having to work twice as hard and develop culturally appropriate campaign strategies didn't stop them. Participants ran for office despite barriers because they could not stand aside and watch the status quo continue in their communities, a finding in line with recent candidate emergence research during the Trump era (Dittmar, 2020; Lawless & Fox, 2017).

Meera. Born in South Asia, Meera grew up in multiple geographical locations. At a young age, she travelled to the U.S. to begin college. After her move to Oregon, Meera was involved with community organizations and saw how People of Color, immigrants, and refugees did not benefit from the economic booms her community experienced, often displaced to the city's outskirts. With the Trump administration's national politics in the back of her mind, she decided it was time to see what she could do to change the current political landscape. While campaigning for office, Meera experienced discrimination by the voting public.

> [R]unning as an immigrant and a Woman of Color presented some challenges just in terms of face-to-face reactions from people. So, I did a lot of door knocking and had some microaggression types of experiences at the door. (Meera, November 4, 2019)

Though Meera's experience while campaigning included having to encounter microaggressions due to her multiple identities, a contextual factor that came into play during her candidate emergence, she won her election and began serving her community in 2019. In Meera's narrative, she named three identity-based oppressions that intersected as a candidate running for office. She named her immigrant origins, which she openly shared as a candidate, and her gender and race/ethnicity, as acknowledged within her identity label of a "Woman of

Color." For Meera, those three forms of identities intersected when constituents decided to express racism through microaggressions.

Marginalized people are faced with daily confrontations of microaggressions, and must decide if they will confront it or not. Sue (2010) discusses four consequences of microaggressions that take shape in the lives of People of Color. The first is the feeling of powerlessness to stop racism. Even when confronting it, it becomes apparent that it is a beast too big to tame by just one act of racial justice. As Veronica had shared, acts of racial/ethnic microaggressions are so reoccurring that selecting which ones to confront was an act of survival in a world that questioned your position in it. The second is a sense of invisibility or lacking value within a group. Participants in Sue's research recall moments when their very literal presence wasn't seen in a room. In the Michelle Obama podcast, the Former First Lady discusses this very real act of microaggression. She recalls a moment of walking her dog as the First Lady and how white individuals would stop and pet her dog but never looked her in the eye, thus not realizing who she was (Obama, 2020).

This is very telling of the common experience that Women of Color face and that ran through many of the narratives of participants. Invisibility is a common form of microaggression. It fails to acknowledge a person as a contributor to their community (Davis, 1981; Sue, 2010). Migrant women also experience these invisibilities. As a tactic to maintain economic systems across the globe, containing women on the fringes of society has benefited the economic security of white middle and upper classes economically and perpetuated the status quo of social and class hierarchies (Hardt & Nagri, 2005; Álvarez, 2008). It produces a "denied citizenry" where the focus on migrant women is not to create futures within a community, but to care for those whose knowledge is seen as the only viable perspective in constructing a

community's future (Álvarez, 2008, p. 202, Lara and Álvarez, 2009; Madriaga Parra, 2020).

When a person feels invisible, it reduces their self-worth and their ability to move into a space of belonging, and in particular spaces where their knowledge is used for community building. This is also in line with what Lugones (2008) calls *gender colonialization* where colonization practices are concealed through everyday occurrences in the lives of racialized women.[32]

The final two consequence are a feeling of forced compliance with white standards resulting in a loss of integrity, and pressure to represent one's group as a 'model' Person of Color (Sue, 2010). The latter is exemplified in the story of Azar.

Azar. After being born in the Middle East, Azar's family lived in many countries due to her father's career. "I was just this little kid that's in this new country and culture …and I know [my parents] would worry all the time. Parents, immigrant parents especially, always think about [how they] don't want [us] to lose [our] culture" (Azar, October 28, 2019). After attending college in the U.S. for her master's degree, Azar settled in Oregon and began working with local community organizations. She shared how it felt to navigate the pressures of being a "model" immigrant woman.

> There's always this feeling of, especially as a Woman of Color, having to always be on top of it, having to work twice as hard, having to make sure you're always ready, prepared, all of these things because one little setback and a lot of times our society then writes off all of our community. You know, like if one woman does something wrong, oh, well there you go. All women are too emotional and not

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32 Though this dissertation is not focused on colonial theories, it is important to recognize that colonial practices are deeply imbedded in the way exclusion is exercised within post-colonial and neo-colonial countries. To improve social research, Irizarry Cruz (2019) calls on feminist centered studies to operate within a decolonial lens to provide clarity to the links between colonialism and the current conditions women face.

equipped with doing this or if an immigrant does something wrong like, well there you go, immigrants, we can't do that. While white men can fail and fail and we don't see it as a problem with like men in general. So, there is always that feeling of having a certain guard up, you want to make sure that you're taken seriously, you want to make sure you're not tokenized, you want to make sure you are prepared for things that are coming your way so that you are not, um, I don't know, you're not seen as someone that should not be in this space. (Azar, October 28, 2019)

Examining participant's narratives and Sue's research, it exemplifies the "damned if you do and damned if you don't" predicament for women of immigrant origin. If they confront microaggressions, they must accept the repercussions of those actions such as a loss of group belonging. If they don't confront them, they are burdened with a sense of guilt for what they should have done. Although consequences are out of the hands of those suffering daily microaggressions, knowing how prevalent they occur is a testament to the deep and systematic racism in society. Microaggressions are invisible to white America because systems seldom acknowledge or condemn those actions. Knowing the level to which racism is imbedded in the institutions that all of society depends on, is a necessary step in dismantling it and for that reason the stories of participants are vital.

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism is any policy, practice, procedure, or structure in business, industry, government, courts, churches, municipalities, schools, and so forth, by which decisions and actions are made that unfairly subordinate persons of color while allowing other groups to profit from the outcomes. (Sue, 2010, p. 7)

Institutional racism[33] builds a hierarchy among populations with the aim of maintaining particular groups superior to others. White superiority is seen in everyday interactions between white people and People of Color. In the ensuing paragraphs stories of institutionalized racism and white supremacy will unite the participant's stories and will reveal a shared history of oppression across race/ethnicity and immigrant experience.

Belen. As a biracial[34] child, Belen formed strong bonds with her father's Latin American family based in Oregon, where her father eventually settled and Belen was born. Belen moved away for college and graduated with a bachelor's degree, then returned home to Oregon. In her late 20s, after experiencing a traumatic experience within the family, she moved to work closer to the community she grew up in. She worked with elected officials through her new position and noticed the lack of diversity among them. She felt they were not representative of her and her community's lived experiences. Belen was asked by elected leaders to run for an empty legislative seat, but she didn't feel it was the right time. After attending a candidate training, someone approached her to run for a local regional board. She ran for the position in 2017 and looked to her family for support, but quickly realized it would be more complicated than she had originally anticipated.

> I had this dream, me, my dad and uncle were going to knock [on] doors together. And my dad and uncle just laughed at me hysterically. They [said], we're going to go knock on little old white lady's doors? What the hell's wrong with you? And I [realized], oh yeah, of course, they don't feel safe in those environments. They don't want to be targeted. They don't want the police being called on them. That was a quick learning

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33 Systemic and institutional racism are interchangeable terms that get at the policies which maintain the existing troubling conditions for marginalized societies. (Delgado and Stefancic, 2013).

34 Biracial refers to a person that has parents from two distinct racial/ethnic identities and identifies with both cultures.

lesson for me, how my family was going to help and what they were comfortable doing.

(Belen, August 11, 2019)

Personal experiences and history have taught Men of Color to look at seemingly normal situations as potentially harmful ones. In the summer of 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S., videos emerged on social media of white women, coined as #Karens, calling the police on Black and Brown people. In New York City's Central Park, a birdwatcher asked a woman to follow park rules and leash her dog so the wildlife wouldn't be disturbed. The woman became defensive and called the police stating in a desperate tone that a Black man was threatening her life (Bernstein et al., 2020). In another instance, a white woman demanded that her African American neighbors show her a permit for the building of a patio on their front lawn or she would call the police (Hayat, 2020). This speaks to the long history, as shared in Chapter 2, of false accusations made to police about Black and Brown men, in particular accusations of harming white women (Allen & Metcalf, 2019).

Belen's male relative's acknowledgment of the likelihood of being called on the police by "little old white lad[ies]" speaks to the prevalence of white women harnessing their social power against them. The experiences of Men of Color are at times more distinct than Women of Color given their gendered social construct. Women are asked to bridge divides between political party leadership (Funck et al, 2019). Constituents look to women as more approachable than men (Celis et al., 2014; Schnittker, 2000). The intersect of identities for Women of Color can provide a slight gain in their run for office in the right circumstances, such as political context, align. Despite past research which has marked a "double disadvantage" for Women of Color in running for office because of the multiple forms of discrimination they can

face as candidates, such as a woman and a Person of Color (Junn & Brown, 2008), new studies have taken a closer look at when intersects of socially constructed forms of identities have favored Women of Color candidates (Bejarano 2013; Celis & Erzeel, 2017; Dittmar, 2020; Reny & Shah 2018). This is an emerging field of study which has largely implemented quantitative analysis in this area. These testimonies offer a small glimpse into what new bodies of work are learning about the advantages of Women of Color candidates. Advantages that were once hard for participants to conceive of as children.

Lucia. When systems of oppression interlock they manifest into poor and dangerous living conditions for People of Color. Born in Latin America, Lucia's mother and sister moved to the U.S. to escape the civil war in their home country after Lucia's father was murdered. Lucia's family experienced poverty throughout her childhood. She shares her experience living in her neighborhood in California and what that meant for their security.

> [I]f you [were] under the poverty level that's where you lived because you can't afford the nice area. [The] neighborhoods were rough [and we] saw many kids get shot and killed in front of us. (Lucia, August 17, 2019 / October 14, 2019 / January 26, 2020)

Knowing the only alternative for their living condition was in an unsafe environment, Lucia's mother put her daughters in an afterschool program. There, Lucia was able to focus on excelling in school and volunteering as a teenager. She worked her way up in that volunteer position, eventually holding a paid position and was offered the opportunity to obtain her bachelor's degree. The position eventually took her to Oregon, a state in which she noticed a lack of diversity in the professional setting.

> [Portland] claims to say they accept and want to hire People of Color, but then they don't. They claim diversified workforce, but [they] are only in administrative positions.

You do see [professionals of color] in Los Angeles. (Lucia, August 17, 2019 / October 14, 2019 / January 26, 2020).

Lucia clearly saw the results of institutional barriers for professionals of color. They are moved to the margins of the workforce and have fewer opportunities for advancement. Much like workforce equity, housing equity is an issue disproportionately impacting communities of color in Oregon (Lehner, 2018). After experiencing housing segregation and gentrification for People of Color in Portland, many believe that not enough resources are being allocated to the affordable housing crisis in Oregon (Curry-Stevens et al., 2010). After volunteering in her new community, Lucia saw an opening on the city council. The position was an opportunity to work on affordable housing, an issue she understood from her lived experience, and she saw how it disproportionately impacted communities of color in her city. She ran, won the election, and began her term as the first Latina city councilor in 2019.

Sofia. As a young child, Sofia immigrated to the United States with her family from Latin America. Not knowing the language or other students, her first days of school in the U.S. were difficult. Upon moving to Oregon, Sofia's family experienced homelessness and economic hardship, impacting how she viewed her academic goals. Mentorship from a few key people gave Sofia the tools to finish high school. Sofia married, had a son, and she quickly found herself advocating for her son's needs to avoid the discriminatory experiences she faced as a child in school. Much like Veronica and Elena, Sofia's experiences provided a profound learning experience about how to detect and deal with microaggressions. While working as a school advocate, Sofia was met with the opportunity to run as an elected school board member, a position she used to advocate for other families like her own. After receiving her bachelor's degree, volunteering for city committees, and above all observing the inequities impacting

communities of color through city policies, Sofia decided to run for the city council. Given that the deadline had passed to file for the seat, she decided to launch a write-in campaign. Armed with years of experience and the social capital from volunteering and working for community organizations, Sofia implemented a social media campaign because she knew that historic tactics of campaigning were not going to reach her community. She reached out to her network, asking them to not only vote in the election, but to write her name on the ballot as a write-in candidate, a strategy that is seldom a success. She put into practice what other migrants have done before her, relied on their networks and developed tactics that were both bold and culturally relevant (Lee et al., 2018). After her campaign, Sofia won the city council seat in 2016. Though this was a great victory for her and her community as she was the first Latina to be elected to City Council, she knew that the white community would have made sure she wasn't voted in if she had run a traditional campaign.

> I think that if I had run a campaign, I wouldn't have been elected. There's enough white people who are conservative in this area who will stand in the way of any candidate that can take, you know, power from them basically. (Sofia, July 22, 2018)

Although Sofia knew she wouldn't have any allies on the city council, she decided it was time for someone to fight for the needs of the marginalized in her community. A few years into the position, Sofia resigned due to an intimidating environment from her colleagues in office. She had to make the hard decision to leave the position she had hoped would create change for her community.

> Initially I thought I'd go in and I'd be able to advocate, stand my ground, and be able to do so without it being a big cost to me, health wise, and with my family. Um, it's been a huge challenge and, uh, we are actually going to move out of the area so that I can get a break and just remove myself for a while because this work has been emotionally

draining. It's gotten really bad to the point that I did have to resign because if I don't, then my health and my family's health was going to be affected. (Sofia, July 22, 2019)

Research shows how prevalent it is for People of Color to have to defend themselves among people and institutions opposing their knowledge and lived experiences (Huber & Cueva, 2012; Solórzano & Huber, 2020; Sue, 2010). When examining the experiences of African American students, Solórzano and company (2000) reveal the extent of how People of Color must carry the burden of protecting themselves from attacks on their identity and character in higher education. The continual act of defending oneself comes at a cost. For African American students in Solórzano and company's (2000) work, it reduced their ability to be mentally and emotionally present in class, thus impacting their grades and attendance (Solórzano et al., 2000). Those type of consequences happen outside of academia as well. As Sofia's story demonstrates, it happens in some of the highest offices in local government and it was expressed by one other participant who also resigned and many others who are still in office. Studies have shown that intimidation and violence towards women candidates and office holders is of global concern (Krook & Norris, 2014; Salguero Carrillo, 2009; SAP International, 2010).

When Systems of Oppression Meet

Much work has been done to move away from frameworks which situate white women as the norm in political science, gender, and migration research (Celis et al., 2015; Crenshaw et al., 2019; Gershon et al., 2019; Hobson, 2016; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Pescinski, 2010). These research pieces, along with many others, have highlighted the concept of intersectionality in their perspective fields. Intersectionality under the CRT framework sees race as connected to and contingent upon other social classification categories. In the theoretical branches of CRT

exist the framework to look beyond gender and race to include other aspects of People of Color's social classification. Latina Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) gives us a broader exploration of intersectional theory to include the role of immigration status, language and its phenotypes, and race/ethnicity, which have sustained Latinx's repression in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Lindsay & Huber, 2010). Huber's conceptual framework of the "racist nativism" exposes the process by which whites are inadvertently seen as the only native Americans to the United States, thus ignoring the contributions of Native Americans, and other People of Color, to the growth and prosperity of their communities (Huber, 2016). Central to this analysis is the positioning of immigration experiences and that of being raised by immigrant parents. Nativism played a significant role in how society perceives participants, thus impacting their lived experiences.

Intersectionality

We previously learned Elena's story about the microaggressions she observed while with her grandfather at his job sites. After Elena obtained her B.A. and worked in the east coast, Elena joined her grandparents in their new home in Oregon to raise her growing family. While working professionally in Oregon, she was encouraged to seek a school board position in her district. She decided to run knowing that her education and community involvement had prepared her to lead. This is in line with research pointing to education and social capital as important determinants for candidate emergence (Bhojwani, 2018; Campbell, 2003). Elena also wanted her children to see women as multifaceted people who were professionals, and leaders, especially after the rhetoric during and after the 2016 presidential election. After months of implementing an extensive outreach plan and receiving endorsements from community organizations to former Governors, Elena was

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elected in 2017. Refelcting on her role in the school board, Elena shared how clearly her intersecting social markers were incorporated in her elected position.

> I think Women of Color, women of immigrant origin are super well positioned to have an inside/outside strategy because we're not just going into these systems and battling the traditional kind of gender wars that white feminists have been leading, we're also fighting the white supremacy issue. So, we walk in both worlds. I am never in a space where I'm just a woman or just an immigrant descendant. I'm always both. So, I'm always having to challenge all dynamics that threatened my safety, and I'm never going to fully be safe and my community won't be safe until we uproot racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and sexist and patriarchal sentiment. (Elena, August 1 & 10, 2018)

As Elena said, women of immigrant origin hold in balance multiple perspectives and through that intersectional lens lies the ability to take on multiple mechanisms which have historically attempted to bind them. These are the spaces of the in-between, the multiplicity of identities (Anzaldúa, 1987; Ortega, 2016). Immigrants are often placed in-between the world they once knew and the world they live in. In order to understand how participants situate themselves within their multiple forms of identities, it is important to center immigration experiences into the conversation, an experience often overlooked in intersectional research. Most evident on the topic of migration was a shift in identity and belonging upon moving to the U.S. and in particular to Oregon.

Itzel. Born in Latin America, Itzel was raised in a transborder environment, migrating to and from the U.S. and Latin America during the school year. An increase in violence in her town and domestic violence at home brought Itzel's mother to the decision to permanently move the family to the United States in the 1990s. After migrating to the United States, there

was a period of "constant instability" both in her mother's employment and in the family's living situation, marking it as a significant chapter in Itzel's childhood. However, with migration came a closer connection to family members through shared experiences and resources, such as housing. Family members living in Oregon provided a path for Itzel and her family to move to Oregon in 1997. Itzel recalls her first realization that they would be going to a community with a predominately white population in Oregon, "I would say that was just a huge culture shock for myself. I never really felt like I was a minority until I got here" (Itzel, August 14, 2018). This sentiment echoed throughout many participants' discourse.

Veronica, presented earlier in this chapter, also described how her move to Oregon was a contributor to her impostor syndrome, not believing she should be in advanced placement classes because she was the only brown person. "[T]he move to Oregon was very traumatic for me. Everyone in my class [in California] was Black or Latino. I had teachers who looked like me. [C]oming here to Oregon, it wasn't like that." (Veronica, August 25, 2018). Itzel and Veronica had belonged to communities in which they saw themselves represented in many aspects of society and in power structures within schools. Moving away from that was their first encounter of navigating outside of what was normal for them. A new normal was defined in Oregon, one where white students were the high achievers. Scholars identify the process of having to situate yourself within or outside the concept of white as normal, as identity politics (Bernstein, 2005; Bickford, 1997).

Contrary to this subordinate identity phrasing, other scholars see identity politics as an outdated perspective which lacks the acknowledgment of multiple aspects of identity formation and belonging. Intersectional politics, or as Crenshaw called political intersectionality, is a concept that moves away from separatist identity-based social

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movements to one that provides space for the dimensions of gender, race, and other identities to interact. Even in campaign strategy, intersectional politics serves to develop outreach tools aimed at looking beyond single group categories, such as women, Latinx, Asian, or African American voters, to tapping into the complex viewpoints of multiple forms of identity provides (Bhojwani, 2018; Bickford, 1997; Crenshaw, 1989; Verloo, 2013). Later in this section, I will look at how intersectional politics helped women of immigrant origin build innovative campaign strategies.

Navigating within one's community can be as complicated as navigating the nuances of being a Woman of Color in mainstream society. Sofia reflected her observation as a Woman of Color by stating, "I am Latina but I have white passing privilege. [W]ith that brings [a] set of privileges [such as] being able to speak in spaces and [being] more direct and not have consequences" (Sofia, July 22, 2018). Being able to acknowledge privileges is an important aspect of participant's quest for social justice. Situating oneself within a larger societal framework, full of complex navigation of belonging and oppression, is a strategy that women of immigrant origin implement daily. It is a complex web of knowing how and when to enter a social space, without getting trapped in other's expectations of how to be in the world.

How Gender Intersects with Other Systems of Oppression: Advantages and Disadvantages in Candidate Emergence

Until now I've presented the case for Critical Race Theory (CRT) by sharing the experiential knowledge of participants. Two tenets of CRT have been highlighted thus far, the normalcy of racism in everyday life and intersectionality. A question posed to participants during their interviews was if they identified any advantages or disadvantages running for office as a woman. This question was aimed to look at gender influence through the candidacy emergence experience of participants. The below responses are some of the 170 examples that tied together

the perspectives of these women and worth noting and exploring further within the context of intersectionality.

A few women did not see their gender as an obstacle to running for office. Veronica mentioned, "I don't know how much my gender has played a role." (Veronica, August 25, 2019). Lucia also recalled her candidacy experience as an "inclusive atmosphere." (Lucia, August 17, 2019). When both the gendered and racial influence on candidate emergence is examined, an advantage is seen for Women of Color (Bejarano, 2013; Celis and Erzeel, 2015). Although some women did not share a specific positive or negative gendered moment while campaigning, being a caregiver for small children certainly shifted the candidacy experience for Itzel. She remembered how people would ask who was caring for her kids while she campaigned and noted that male candidates were not being asked the same question. Lawless and Fox (2010) explain that women candidates are more likely to have to account for not being with their children as compared to men candidates. But the scrutiny continues even when elected. They offer examples of congresswomen with young children that have had to publicly defend their family obligations while in office. This was also true for Elena who shared her experience of having to explain her time restraints to fellow board members due to nursing her infant child. These stories fall in line with research exposing the decline of women's emergence in politics and its connection to family obligations, especially when young children are part of the family dynamic (Lawless & Fox, 2010; Maillé, 2015; Phillips, 1998).

Meera reflected on her advantages and disadvantages as a candidate through an intersectional lens, noting the lack of network due to the access her socially constructed markers of identification provided.

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I think the disadvantages are for some of the obvious ones. So [being] all of those three things [immigrant, woman, and South Asian], plus not being connected to the political power structure in [city omitted] meant that I was unknown. So, I think all of those things go hand in hand… at the same time as all of that…there were many people who were upset by the results of the [Trump] election [and had] been very, very vocal and opposed to the president's immigration policies. And so, I think there was at the same time a real receptivity to having immigrants run for office and for hearing immigrant voices in that portion of the population. So, in that way it was also an advantage. (Meera, November 4, 2019)

Meera ran against other Women of Color for the Democratic ballot spot, so she was conscious about communicating her personal and professional experiences to become the Democratic frontrunner. The experiences she shared with the voting public was her immigration origins, her role as a woman in her professional industry and as a Person of Color living in a predominantly white state. All of these experiences informed the way she approached her campaign and the policy plans shared as a candidate. Meera knew she was a political outsider, but she used it to her advantage. She communicated how her lived experiences would inform her practice as an elected leader. She relied on a select group of friends to help her navigate her campaign, but as she mentioned, the timing of running for office and the rhetoric coming from Trump was one reason she was seen as a strong political candidate.

Although some studies find that women lack the networks to have equal entry into politics as men, others look at the existing community networks of Women of Color as beneficial (Baker, 1984; Bajarano, 2014; Cruz Nichols, 2017). Those networks are particularly beneficial during times of threatening political environments when collective political mobilization is needed to

increase the electorate for Women of Color candidates (Towler, 2017). During the Trump era, not only did Women of Color report a higher motivation to run for office, but voter turnout of first-time voters of color increased (Lawless and Fox, 2017; Ramírez and Fraga, 2008). Although the opportunity for candidate emergence increased during the Trump era, the gendered discrimination or tensions in office did not change for participants as elected leaders.

To begin, I will introduce *Elisa's* story and then share her experience while in office. Born in Latin America to parents who worked as farmers in their native country Elisa's family struggled financially. They decided to migrate to the U.S. to work as migrant farm workers. Elisa spent much of her youth working beside her parents in the fields picking produce in Oregon, where they settled after their migration. Elisa was encouraged by her high school teachers to pursue higher education. She went on to obtain a bachelor's and a master's degree. After much time working in the education sector and having been appointed to a city council position, Elisa was asked by elected leaders to run for an empty state legislative seat. Elisa contemplated running for the position but wasn't convinced. What motivated her to run for the seat was after realizing that the legislative body lacked the representation reflective of her diverse demographic community. Elisa was elected in 2016. When asked about barriers and advantages to being a woman candidate she reflected on her experience in the legislature.

> It's just awesome to have a legislative body that has amazing women in general leading and I think that helps other women get motivated to run for office. The experience, I think as a legislator at the capital, it's kind of a little bit of a different story because there's still a lot of old school boys [club] and so you feel it. I think that's normal in all the states and all the experiences for women. (Elisa, July 25, 2018)

At the time of Elisa's interview in 2018, Oregon benefited from its top leadership being majority women, with Governor Kate Brown, who was born in Spain and gained citizenship through parental rights, Secretary of State Bev Clarno, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, Senate President pro Tempore Laurie Monnes Anderson, and Speaker of the House Tina Kotek. Oregon ranked 4th in the U.S. with the highest percentage of women in state legislature, with 42.2 percent of women represented (Lee, 2003). Kira Sanbonmatsu (2018) notes that in more liberal states, such as Oregon, women tend to be elected into public office at higher rates. Oregon is considered a Democratic leaning state, with some of the most liberal social and environmental policies in the country. Although this is a great victory for women in Oregon, it is evident that even in an environment where women feel welcome, negative gendered dynamics are still present while in office.

Men of immigrant origin in Oregon brought to this analysis their distinct experiences in the candidate emergence process. These stories will better demonstrate and contextualize the combined role of gender and immigrant identity in candidate emergence. The specific question asked to participants was, could you identify any advantages or disadvantages to running for office as a man. Their responses exposed perceived challenges Women of Color candidates encountered as well as the unique political climate that provided for a shift in social acceptance for Women of Color as candidates.

Gael was born and raised in Oregon by parents who migrated to the United States from Latin America. His parent's paths crossed in Oregon after working in labor industry jobs. At a young age, Gael witnessed his father suffer police brutality. The family was shaken having witnessed the injustice of racial profiling by an institution that swore to protect them. After winning a court case against the police, Gael's parents settled into a family home and worked tirelessly

to maintain a stable environment for the family. Although it took ten years, Gael's mother was able to obtain her bachelor's degree. After receiving his bachelor's degree, Gael returned to his community to work in the non-profit sector. After a few years working in community development, he was encouraged to run for an open seat at the regional council in his state. When asked if his gender played a part in running for office, he responded to this question with the following:

> Definitely not. Especially because there's a huge movement in [my] area of electing women and [Women of Color]. And I specifically get to see just the added layers of skepticism or discrimination that they get about their leadership capability and things like that. So, I still have my male privilege and I'm a much whiter [person of color]…there's just different layers of privilege that I have. (Gael, August 15, 2019)

Although Gael acknowledges how the political climate had begun to accept Women of Color in political office, he also recognized that as a Man of Color, in particular one with "lighter" skin color, he still holds privileges that a woman is not granted. It is interesting to note that although many women of immigrant origin did not fully acknowledge how gender in particular was a barrier, the men interviewed did recognize women's gendered obstacles. To further elaborate, let's look at Ali's perspective on this question, following a brief introduction to his life story.

Ali. At the age of 10, Ali moved to Oregon from the Middle East with his family so his father could attend the university. When his father finished his program, Ali decided to stay in Oregon to complete high school. With his home country in turmoil, Ali's family would eventually return to join him. Ali was highly involved in his community and as an immigrant, he felt frustrated at the volatile situation his community was facing due to the policies of the Trump

administration. Feeling that advocating and speaking out was not enough, he found an opportunity to enact local change when he was approached to run for an empty seat on a college board. He felt it was an opportunity to show that immigrants were part of elected bodies and to counter the anti-immigrant narrative from past board members. Ali has been serving on the board since 2017. During his interview, Ali shared his perspective regarding the advantages and disadvantages to running for office as a man.

> Well, at the time [of] that election cycle [2017], it felt like gender didn't matter because everyone was just frustrated with what [was] happening across the country and everyone who wanted to run was running. Mainly people who felt disenfranchised [and] negatively impacted by the election of the current [Trump] administration. Since the election of Donald Trump and all different policies, I feel like more women are now running because of direct impact to the policies that are impacting women negatively. I could see a disadvantage to the maybe white male running for office right now. And so, it's almost like assume that, let somebody else have a chance to run. I mean disadvantage to being a man running right now, probably if there was a qualified female running, I would want her to win the seat, not me, because I feel like the representation [is] even less for women in our society. (Ali, September 23, 2019)

True to Ali's statement, there is a notable shift in representation since 2016. The Women Donor Network looked at the 100 most populous cities in the United States, including Portland, Oregon, and found that in 2020 women and People of Color were more likely to hold city elected office than they were in 2016. Data shows white men nationwide have decreased in city elected office by 13 percent. Women of Color have increase by 46 percent and men of color rose by one percent. Portland in particular saw a 20 percent increase in elected city office holders for white women and Women of Color since 2016, noting that the increase in seen only

among African American women (Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2020). Although city government in Portland lacks a reflective representation for people of immigrant origin, this study is testament to the momentum within other local offices, city, and state representation outside of Oregon's urban areas. The final male of immigrant origin interviewed in this study will reveal a distinct dynamic that is telling of a changing social climate during the Trump administration.

Pablo's mother was born in the U.S. and travelled around the US as a migrant farmworker. She settled in Oregon in the 1970s, where Pablo was eventually born. His father migrated to the U.S. in the early 1990s from Latin America to provide supplemental income to his family. Pablo's father worked as a day laborer for most of his life, and his mother was involved in church activities in her community. Pablo's school teachers expected little of him, but there was a pivotal point when one of his elementary teachers challenged him academically. In college, Pablo was introduced to the framing of structural inequities he saw as a youth, and became interested in his leadership potential. Seeing the disparities his community faced, Pablo felt inspired to become involved by young People of Color running for public office locally and nationally. He decided to run for office so his lived experiences could be represented in elected office. When he filed to run for his position, he was met with the possibility of running against the incumbent, a white woman who served for 14 years in that position. Pablo discusses what happened next.

> I wasn't sure I was going to win. I knew I was going to try my hardest and so I met with my incumbent. I remember initially when I met her for the first time, she shook my hand and she said, oh, you're running against me and I told her, yes, I'm gonna run against you. Three weeks after that initial meeting there were rumors that she wasn't going to run. (Pablo, August 25, 2019).

Pablo ran unopposed and was elected to serve on his local college board in 2019. What is interesting in his story is the dynamic between him and the incumbent who was a white woman serving on the board for 14 years. In his narrative, Pablo recalls how his incumbent "magically" decided not to run for reelection after their meeting. Data reveals that since 2016, white women have decreased in elected city office by six percent (Reflective Democracy Campaign, 2020). Further examination of dynamics as that of Pablo's will help reveal the underlining reasons white women drop out or lose their race against Men of Color and if a shift in the social conditions of People of Color plays a part in that dynamic.

The narratives of participants lend to the argument that more is to discover about the experiences of women of immigrant origin during their path to political office, specifically in a liberal state like Oregon. Does the state in which one runs for local office determine distinct advantages or disadvantages for Democratic women with immigrant, racial/ethnic, and gendered experiences? Do Democratic women of immigrant origin running for office in more conservative states experience the same dynamics? In what proceeds, I will incorporate the voices of the women of immigrant origin living outside of Oregon in the states listed in Table 1, Arizona and Georgia. These states were won by Trump during the 2016 election and have historically been a Republic stronghold. Examining a distinct legal, social, and political context towards immigrants can further inform how intersectionality impacts political representation.

Iris. Born and raised in the United States by parents from the Middle East and the United States, Iris experienced a loving upbringing. After the events of 9/11 her family received physical and verbal threats, as well as restrictions on their ability to fly out of the country due to the Patriot Act. It made Iris realize how the United States was willing to sacrifice the civil rights of specific

communities for the sense of safety of white America. As a former lobbyist and a union organizer for labor rights, Iris learned how to advocate for marginalized communities. She decided to run for a legislative seat in her state in 2016. There were many trainings that Iris participated in to teach her how to run for office, but along the way she noticed a lack of support from Democratic party training schools.

> I ran against another woman, a white woman who was also an Emerge alumni and I definitely felt like she was getting more institutional support than I was. I was already mentally prepared to not get help from organizations that skew more Caucasian, um, whether that's intentional or just implicit bias, but you know, it is what it is. (Iris, July 27, 2018)

Iris focused her campaign on reaching marginalized communities to register to vote, receiving a historic victory due to a large first-time voter turnout.

Clara. Clara can remember in detail the day she and her family moved to the United States from Latin America as a small child. They traveled around the U.S., staying with family before they eventually settled in their community. Surrounded by families like hers, immigrant agricultural workers, it was the first time she noticed her family's poverty and struggles. Both her parents worked many hours to provide for the family. She remembers her father discussing and criticizing policies impacting their community and her mother helping immigrant families in need. After volunteering in her community and for campaigns, Clara attended a campaign training, which pushed her to consider running for office. She decided to inform herself about running for the state legislature. She took some time to decide but ultimately ran alongside other People of Color, pooling their social capital to campaign for their legislative seats. She developed an in-depth grass-roots campaign, which ultimately brought out a record number of first-time voters of color. She won her seat in 2017.

That was the challenge actually, uh, establishment democratic candidate and the Democratic Party. And it's still a challenge, failing to acknowledge and recognize the strength of Women of Color in particular and failing to elevate those stories. (Clara, July 18, 2018)

Clara puts into focus two of the socially constructed markers of identity that limited her acceptance among party leadership as a racial/ethnic woman. Likewise, Iris describes a racial/ethnic component to the lack of party support People of Color running for office in the U.S. must overcome the institutional factors of party gatekeepers. Emerge is a widely known training program with alumni in some of the highest political offices in the country. The networks prevalent among the Women of Color interviewed for this study were within community-based work and informal social justice networks. They feel marginalized among the homosocial circles that dominate the political entrance points (Bjarnegård, 2013). They enter a race not only as a political unknown (Reny & Shah, 2018), but are often not taken seriously because their base is among the most unpredictable voting populations in history (Bhojwani, 2018). For this reason, Women of Color implement strategies of increasing the voting population within their community and expanding their presence within their district (Lee et al., 2018).

Isa. After years of traveling to and from the U.S. to Mexico, Isa's father decided to settle permanently in the United States. Isa, and her mother joined her father as a child, leaving behind her home country. Forming part of the first waves of Latino immigrants into her state, Isa often would help her family and her community by interpreting. When they travelled outside of their predominantly immigrant community, Isa and her family were met with racialized remarks. She recalls at an early age how those moments made her feel different and

unwelcomed. After attending college, obtaining a law degree, and began practicing law, Isa continued to be heavily involved in her community. As a long-time volunteer, Isa was invited to help with a campaign. After that work, she was contacted by a community leader to consider running for an empty legislative seat in her state. She met with the outgoing representative and decided to run, hoping to counter the racial bias she witnessed from that person and several in the legislature. She ran for that seat and won in 2017, serving as the first Latina in the legislature. Isa discusses what it felt like to be label "the first."

> [A]t that time when I was campaigning, I would have been the first Hispanic female to be elected to the General Assembly. We have had three other Latino males elected in 2000, 2003, 2004. [N]o one else had been elected since then of Latino background, so that kind of became what I call [the] tagline, being the first Latina, which quite frankly [I'm] a bit more comfortable with [it] nowadays than I was initially. (Isa, August 20, 2018)

Although Iris, Clara, and Isa live in states that are politically polar opposites of Oregon, Republican leaning in both local and national elections, they all shared experiences similar to the women in Oregon. Their racial/ethnic and immigrant experiences were described and framed within the larger structural inequities they faced. Clara and Iris spoke about the lack of institutional support from the Democratic party due to the multiple forms they identified as candidates and Isa spoke about her discomfort of having to use her identity as a campaign tagline.

Although participants believe that the gendered barriers that once held women back from political ambition are no longer the obstacles that they once were, other factors that shape women of immigrant origin's decisions to run for office are in line with what Lawless and Fox

calls, the "two-stage candidacy emergence process: considering a candidacy and deciding to enter a [political] race" (Lee, 2003). Navigating the same obstacles white women faced to run for office—time and money—candidates of color (including immigrants and their children) are confronted with additional barriers, such as being unknown and unsupported within their own party (da Vinha & Dutton, 2018). For this reason, Women of Color rely on their own networks and often develop a strategy of outworking their opponents, thus expanding their presence in the community (Lee, 2003).

During my conversation with all three women, they discussed the importance of reaching out to non-registered voters[35] in their minority communities, a strategy that was also largely used among Oregon women participants as well. A notable difference in the stories of Iris, Clara, and Isa was their accounts of having to justify their marginalized and unregistered voter outreach with campaign strategist and Democratic party members. Historically, non-registered voters are seen as a low priority outreach strategy given that they are less likely to vote during election day (Wong, 2006). Even in past studies, candidates have acknowledged the lack of voter turnout within their communities (Reny & Shah, 2018). These women were implementing a strategy rooted in their knowledge of their communities, which would soon prove to be essential to the Democratic party in both states.

During the 2020 presidential election between President Trump and former Vice-President Joe Biden, both Arizona and Georgia flipped from majority Republican voting states to Democratic. This unprecedented shift in voting was largely due to the increase in registered voters of color. Activist and political candidates among many minority communities organized

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35 In the United States, each state has the authority to develop its own voting and election rules and also determines how qualified (i.e., citizens, those without criminal histories) people can vote and where. Oregon is one of the few states with mail in ballot options, ballots are sent to voters' homes and can be mailed or taken to a drop off center. See, https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote.

to increase voter registration among People of Color and provide resources to get them to vote (Ellis & Chavez, 2021). Did the visionary strategies of the women of immigrant origin running for elected office post-2016 contributed to a transformation in the American electorate? Is there a connection between an increase of candidates of color and an increase of voters of color turnout? These are very interesting questions which will need further study and analysis, but past research, such as by the organization New American Leaders, suggests that when candidates and elected officials in government reflect the diversity of the population, racial minorities feel a stronger sense of connection and confidence in the government (Frye, 2020). History points to African American women as conduits for major political battles (hooks, 2015; Ellis & Chavez, 2021), and now we are witnessing those same waves to hit immigrant communities across the U.S.

Conclusion

This is one of two chapters dedicated to sharing the stories of participants. Their lived experiences were weaved together to share the common experiences faced as People of Color in the United States. Critical Race Theory helped to frame and explain how race had influenced the lives of participants. Through this framing, it is evident that a common thread uniting participants is experiencing moments of microaggressions and institutionalized racism. Women of immigrant origin face daily occurrences of microaggressions and must decide if and how to confront them. Choosing to ignore microaggressions is not a sign of being unconcerned with the acts, but rather a survival mechanism for women of immigrant origin (Sue, 2010).

Institutional racism was a continual presence for participants as well. As the country faced protests after the death of George Floyd and many other men and women of color in 2020, the signs of a lack of institutions that protected the lives of People of Color was ever present. Even

before those telling moments, participants experienced institutional racism when looking for educational, housing, and job opportunities. Finally, the intersects of the social constructs imposed on women of immigrant origin were revealed as they expressed moments of imposter syndrome due to moving to a predominantly white communities in Oregon.

Intersections of gender and racial/ethnic identities were expressed as women of immigrant origin were denied support as candidates from their political parties. Facing barriers to entry into political circles, women of immigrant origin implemented strategies of increasing the voter turnout in their racial/ethnic communities and expanding their visibility as candidates. These tactics proved to be successful for not only their race, but for the 2020 Presidential race between Biden and Trump. Finding ways to work around political gatekeepers is a tactic that many participants had to navigate.

In the following chapter, the stories of participants will continue to be the focus of the findings of this study. Through the narratives of what motivations participant to run for office during a post-2016 era, we will see a clear path driven by the lived experiences and a call to social justice.

Motivations to Run for Office

6

"A different person in leadership with a different set of assumptions

can actually shift the system." —Cyndi Suarez

Introduction

Chapter 5 presented the first findings of this study by examining the lived experiences of

participants through a Critical Race Theory framework. In this chapter, I will focus on the

participant's motivations to run for office. Divided into three sections, the first, From Critical

Race Moments to Critical Consciousness**,** studies the evolution from racialized moments to a

self-evaluation within systems of inequities. In *A Higher Calling: When the Cost of Not*

Running Outweighs all Obstacles, I look at the moments when participants felt that their

election was more than for themselves, but a larger calling to contribute to improving their

community's conditions. Finally, *Prepared to Run* elaborates on the final contributor to

the candidate emergence process of participants. Past political and/or community

involvement, family support, education, and first-hand knowledge of the inequities the voters

of color faced, positioned participants as essential candidates in their election cycle. To

begin, in this chapter participants will share pivotal moments that marked their lives.

From Critical Race Moments to Critical Consciousness

Participants interviewed discussed a moment or a collection of moments that ultimately lead

them to the decision to run for office. These moments were discriminatory in nature: witnessing

or experiencing first-hand a racist or xenophobic encounter. Rodela & Fernández (2019) call

these Critical Race Moments (CRM) and define them as "specific moment[s] in time,

experienced by People of Color or white allies, which distills a clearer picture of institutional

racism" (p. 4). Although moments can differ in length and in subject matter, the result is a shift

in worldview. I argue that coupled with their experiences in the community, education, and

support networks, CRMs ignite action as well; as individuals are spurred by the "deep emotions, such as anger, sadness, and even guilt" that these moments produce (Rodela & Fernández, 2019, p. 4). Itzel's story paints a picture of her CRM which brought her awareness of issues impacting her community and how she could help.

> My kids were young; I wasn't really planning on doing anything political at all. Never, ever. And then the [2016] Presidential election came, the one that shook us all. [My son] came home one day from school and he was very upset, and he told me…that in recess they were talking about if Donald Trump wins that I'm going to be sent back to Mexico because I'm Mexican. And my son told me, mom, I'm so worried, kids are talking about this…. I started to think, this isn't right. There should be something that I can do to at least help our kids in our community have a sense of safety. [I]f something were to happen, there's a network in place that will tell them what to do. I needed to figure out how to do that. So that kicked me more into high gear. I sought more information [about political office]. (Itzel, August 14, 2018)

At the time, Trump began a process of separating children from their parents when they migrated without documents into the United States. That policy opened a system of what was known as child detention centers (Parsons Dick, 2020). Due to the removal of children from their adult family members as they crossed the Mexico/ U.S. border, thousands of migrant children were lost with no trace of where the U.S. Customs and Border Protection had placed them (Flagg & Calderón, 2020). In addition, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) targeted people they believed to be undocumented, many of them arrested at work during raids. Stories of children returning home from school not knowing that their parents had been detained sent fear across many immigrant communities.

In Itzel's example, the fear that her son faced of losing his mother, which was due to threatening political rhetoric of then-candidate Donald Trump, began a process of reflection on the state of children in her community. This is also what Cruz Nichols (2017) labeled as fear appeals, the influence threat has on emotions and the ability for those emotions to drive action. In Itzel's story there are two actors that are feeling deep emotions, Itzel and her son. Itzel did not express the level of worry or fear from candidate Trump's rhetoric, but her emotions were spurred by that of her son's fears of potentially losing his mom. Although she wasn't under threat of deportation, she knew many families that would be and this was an unsettling thought for Itzel. She felt an obligation to seek out more information about how children could be supported if raids and deportations occurred in her community. Witnessing how systemic problems were not being addressed or resolved by the local office's elected leaders brought Itzel to educate herself on catalyzing change. She ran for her local school board in 2017 and won.

Itzel was moved by the fear that was transferred to her by her son's worries, but taking action on those fears requires other things to be in place. In this case, Itzel lived with the privilege of being documented and knowing where to go for answers based on her professional role and her longstanding community presence. Itzel was well positioned to get informed without the fear undocumented people faced. She did not need to be in the shadows nor maintain anonymity. This is in line with what Campbell (2003) and Scola (2014) have determined as the foundation to political engagement. Sloan and company (2018) describe moments like Itzel's as Critical Consciousness, the ability to think critically, to evaluate the world around you and see your place in it (p. 8). Diagram 3 shows how CRM and Critical Consciousness are linked to the CRT framework showed in Diagram 2.

Diagram 3

Linking Critical Race Moments and Critical Consciousness.

Source: Author's elaboration based on NoLAed: Education for Liberation.
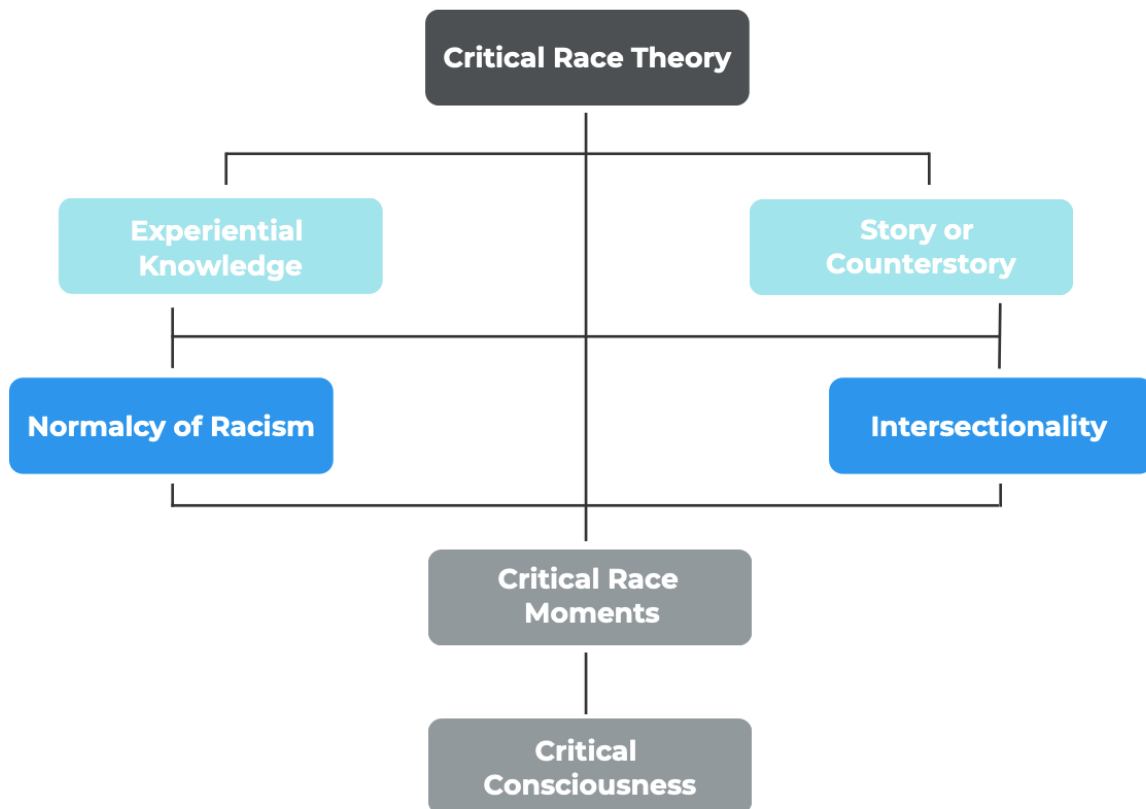
Although the use of language was not analyzed in this study, such as the role of negative emotions in candidate emergence in Dittmar's (2020) work, Critical Race Moments were described by participants as negative moments that impacted their lives. Participants did not mention emotions like anger or frustration, which Dittmar (2020) noted among mostly the white women's discourses she studied. Women of immigrant origin framed their Critical Race Moment as a matter of fact, how things were. For example, when Lucia speaks about her Critical Race Moment she stated, "yeah, [we were] extremely poor, it's just the way of life in that area…we saw many kids get shot and killed in front of us" (August 17, 2019 / October 14,

2019 / January 26, 2020). Dittmar (2020) noted that the Women of Color in her analysis of candidate statements tended not to use negative emotions to describe their interest into politics. She made a conclusion that in-person interviews with Women of Color could allow for a trusting environment to share emotions more openly. Although these interviews were privately held, there were with some limitations. Given the limited number of interviews, a wider understanding of the framing of candidate Women of Color cannot be concluded. But, it is worth mentioning that participants did not offer negative feelings such as anger or frustration within their Critical Race Moments. In contrast, they leaned on the learning lessons those moments offered. Moments that allowed them clarity of how the world worked for them and their communities, a Critical Consciousness. A psychological analysis of Critical Race Moments could help elaborate if negative emotions played a part in their Critical Consciousness and ultimately in their path to political office, but it did not form part of this study. This is an area that should be further elaborated.

What moves people to action, social change, and liberation is the ability to think critically about the systems that have oppressed communities and in particular one's self (Lee et al., 2018). The ability to take new awakenings and put them into practice without perpetuating white supremacy was a theme very central to these interviews.

> [W]hen Donald Trump won the presidential election, something in my mind kind of clicked where I said, you know, I'm raising two children in this country.…I really felt this need to look locally and figure out how I could do my part to make the system work better…to make sure that I'm staving off any and all negative federal trickle down into my community and specifically into the school district that my child was going to be registered in that subsequent year.…I felt that I had to do everything in my power to resist… I needed to be part of showing [my son] that when bad people or people who

make bad choices get into positions of negative influence, that that's the spark for us to respond with better examples of leadership and better moral value sets." (Elena, August 1 & 10, 2018)

Elena's sense of responsibility to her children and community deepened after the presidential election of a person with value sets in complete contradiction to her own. Knowing that this election could embolden anti-immigrant supporters, Elena felt that her voice was important in helping to protect the historically excluded community members her elected position would represent. She was displaying agency, but more so over a "consciousness-in-opposition" (Sandoval, 2000) to the strategies of Donald Trump by deciding to create social change through political office. She subsequently became the only person of color in her elected position. Another participant that had a similar story to Elena was Laura. To begin, I will introduce a summary of her life story.

Laura. As rural farmers in Latin America, Laura's parents looked to the United States for the opportunity to improve their family's living conditions. Laura was born in Latin America and was a baby when her family immigrated. Her family continued their work in agriculture in Oregon, where they eventually settled. After becoming a mother, Laura received her education and began working with underserved populations. This experience exposed the needs of her diverse community. Driven by the Trump administration's tactics towards immigrant communities, Laura was motivated to think about how she could focus her energy and make a significant impact in her local community. Having children in the local public school system brought her to look how the school board was functioning.

Our school district is over 50 percent students that identify as something other than white. So, we are a minority majority school district, but yet our school board does not reflect that diversity. And so, that's where I wanted to start and I actually went to the

school district as a child. So, I know that a lot of my experience growing up are the same as students that we have in our schools right now. And I felt that perspective was desperately needed on this board. (Laura, August 22, 2019)

Noticing the school board wasn't reflective of the majority-minority student population, Laura knew the board needed her perspective as a former student. In 2019, Laura was elected to her local school board.

It is difficult to see women in political roles because emotions drive beliefs about women's roles in society (Mohamed, 2017). Challenging those symbols, that ingrained belief in societal norms, shifts the supremacy of who should be in political leadership (Lombardo & Meier, 2014). For participants, taking on that challenge meant that it was not just about their own political aspirations—in fact many mentioned that politics never crossed their mind until after the 2016 elections—but it was a sense of community that drove participants to see politics as necessary step to help improve the conditions historically excluded people were facing. This links back to prior research which has seen high rates of commitments to social justice among Women of Color candidates (Frederick, 2014). In part, their decisions were in direct reaction to the political context they were living in. Also, public service has been evaluated as a positive contributor to political interest. Those with ties to community organizations or social issues are more likely to become interested in running for office (Chun, 2016; Dittmar, 2020; Putnam, 2000). In line with those findings, the women of immigrant origin all had prior experiences with formal or informal community groups or with advocating for social issues in their communities.

The path to political office for Women of Color may contain elements that have not been fully investigated. As previously discussed, community-based organizations are a gateway into a

new community for immigrants and their children. Given that prior involvement with advocacy within Women of Color political leaders has been noted in previous studies, further investigation of this potential connection is worth perusing. Insights into how community centered work creates elements for political inclinations, can further inform the area of candidate emergence for women. Future research can lean on the preliminary findings of this study to further investigate the potential for community-based organizations to influence political motivation among immigrant origin women and other Women of Color.

A Higher Calling: When the Cost of Not Running Outweighs all Obstacles

Before beginning with these findings, it is important to note the results from this and the following section, *Shaping Policy and Shifting Political Representation*, derived from questions under the interview protocol category "experiences while in office" (see Appendix 2). At the time of the interviews, participants were newcomers to their political position and had not had enough time to accomplish their political agendas. The following encompasses themes that derived from those questions.

> [I]t wasn't so much thinking that I was going to run for office, it was more like how do I support community members. (Sofia, August 2018)

Interlocking identity-based discriminations from political gatekeepers, campaign fundraising, and voters have been at the forefront of past barriers faced by Women of Color with political aspirations (Greer, 2016; Holman & Schneider, 2018; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Shames, 2017; Silva & Skulley, 2019). Although Women of Color are persuaded against running for office at higher rates than white women, their belief in a higher calling ignites their political aspirations above all odds (Carroll & Sanbonmatsu, 2013; Dittmar, 2020; Wylie, 2020). In fact, compared to white women, Women of Color hold office at a higher rate when considered within

the percentage of their racial/ethnic groups, but they still do not reflect in numbers the percentage of the population they belong to. This equates to a reduced gender gap for Women of Color in office as compared to white women, showing how the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity impacts elected representation (Scola, 2014).

Participants commitment to their communities was another noteworthy part of their decision to run for office. Although their definition of community was never explicitly discussed, they offered examples in which their definition of community was aligned to aspects of their identities. As the case of Belen,

> There's just a bigger calling. It's not about [me]. [T]here's symbolism…I'm the first *Latina* on my board and I'm the *youngest* elected to my board and it's not just about me and the change that I want to see, it's about creating change across the community. It's a desire and an obligation to be part of something bigger. [emphasis my own] (Belen, August 11, 2019)

Women running for office tend to hold a strong sense of obligation to a larger good and their community (Schneider et al., 2016; Shames, 2017). This was apparent in Itzel's and Elena's narrative which were shared previously. In fact, research is beginning to link the combined impact of prior civic engagement and the feelings of urgency to current political environments with candidate emergence (Dittmar, 2020), thus driving their agency to make the decision to run for office (Herr, 2014). That sense is often supported by an electorate with linked fate coupled with a political environment that threats their identities (Bejarano et al., 2020). In the discourse of participants, linked fate also emerged as their motivation to run. They saw their future connected to others who shared their immigrant, gendered and racial/ethnic experiences.

I decided to run because some of us were doing really well and many of us were really not doing well. And the folks who were not thriving were People of Color and immigrants and refugees. (Meera, November, 4, 2019)

Candidates with a sense of linked fate have a stronger sense of political engagement and agency (Garcia, 2018; Herr, 2014). As candidates they connect with the voting public by displaying a shared understanding of their experiences and needs (Bejarano et al., 2020; Gershon et al., 2019; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Tyson, 2016; Uhlan et al., 1989). Past studies show that emotions, such as the ones produced by CRMs, deepen one's already existing desire to become engaged (Lee et al., 2018). But recent scholarly work that examines threatening environments coupled with other factors of candidate emergence concludes that a higher sense of calling cannot be overlooked as a sole contributor to running for office (Dittmar, 2020; Schneider, 2016; Shames, 2017; Wylie, 2020). Some women also attribute their religious service as a contributor to their decision to run for office. Women of Color who are practicing members of a church are more likely to have political ambition than religious white women (Frederick, 2014; Moore, 2005). The following section moves to examine what drives that higher sense of calling for participants. It provides a deeper examination into this emerging field of study.

Shaping Policy and Shifting Political Representation

For women of immigrant origin, Critical Consciousness shaped their motivation to seek an elected position, but the goal moved beyond winning to making the right impact. Research has shown that women, Republican and Democrat, tend to vote for policies that benefit women, families, and racial/ethnic minorities (Bhojwani, 2018; Carroll & Fox, 2018; Sanbonmatsu, 2018). For participants, that impact included two common goals. The first was to influence

policy for the benefit of historically excluded communities. Participants were very aware of how their identity helps shape policy.

> I think that my perspective, bringing the lens that's different from everybody else has really helped [pass] certain bills that were critical to the state. My experience helped create a narrative for our legislators to better understand why it was important to pass those bills. In respect to our Healthcare for All [Oregon bill], I grew up as a migrant farm worker and didn't grow up with insurance [or] with access to affordable healthcare [and] I could talk about that experience. And it's been pivotal [in] helping others understand why it's important to pass [that] bill. (Elisa, July 25, 2018)

Participants also felt that knowing another language helped them see the political process with a distinct set of eyes. Lucia states, "I'm constantly asking questions. Is this going to be disseminated in Spanish? How can I help to communicate this to the Spanish speaking community? I always think of my mom…[who] might need translation" (Lucia, January 26, 2019). Incorporating their native language in their elected role was important for participants. Many of them made sure documents were translated in their mother language as well as the languages of other minority communities in their district. They saw their dual language ability as an asset to connection with their constituents rather than a source of potential backlash from opposing political parties.

With dismal numbers of immigrants and People of Color as a whole in local office, participants were the first in their racial, ethnic, or immigrant communities to be elected to political office. The second common goal that ran through the interviews was the desire to encourage other immigrants, women, and People of Color to run for office. Out of the participants interviewed, 12 out of 16 participants either personally experienced undocumented status

or had close relatives who were undocumented. All of them received citizenship through President Reagan's 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. Living through the trajectory of uncertainty, poverty, constant mobility, and then, finally, immigration reform, profoundly shaped their understanding of the immigrant experience and their needs, thus feeling a deep sense of connection to the immigrant community.

> I think immigrant communities or refugee communities, particularly from Asia because that's where I'm from…I hope they view me as a resource. I talk about coming here [at a young age], sharing the sense of what it feels like to be in a completely alien environment and figuring out how to navigate from that. (Meera, November, 4, 2019)

Laura had a similar viewpoint as Meera. She welcomed the opportunity to talk to constituents of color and connect through shared experiences.

> I feel like I'm more approachable as a school board member, being a Latina woman to many in our community as opposed to say, one of our white male board members, because people feel like they can talk to me, they can connect with me because they identify with me. (Laura, August 22, 2019)

Participants in this research expressed a deep commitment to increasing political engagement among women and within their own communities.

> I remember when I saw the first Latina elected official and how impactful that was [for] me to know that I can do this and somebody has done it. So, I do give my time to be visible for a purpose that other people can see that it's possible because maybe somebody is going to see me and know that. (Itzel, August 14, 2018)

Women tend to mentor and motivate other women to become politically involved and run for office. Mentorship has important implications to shifting political representation and possibly

policies that are inclusive of a larger community base (Carroll and Fox, 2018). Not only can women of immigrant origin make substantiative claims in line with their identity group's needs, but just being in office increases the likelihood of other women and ethnic minorities winning their political races as well (Silva & Skulley, 2019).

> For me it's a big deal being the first Latinx person on the [omitted for anonymity]. I'm hoping that if I'm [i]n that seat, other community members of color and immigrant families, immigrant parents will see themselves in that position. My goal is to make it look accessible and let them know that they do have [a] voice and that they can represent our community. (Veronica, August 25, 2019)

These narratives are in line with a survey study conducted in 2018 with women voters. Seventy-six percent of Asian American and Pacific Islander women and 70 percent of Latina women who voted in 2018 shared that they trained and equipped family and friends to become politically engaged by voting in the election (Lee et al., 2018). The link between Women of Color's candidate emergence, the increase of electorates of color, and establishing a greater presence of women of immigrant origin in elected office, is cyclical and dependent of one another resulting in a representative democracy.

Prepared to Run

Although Critical Race Moments could be seen as a major contributor to running for office, it is necessary to note that preparation, in its many forms, provided an additional force for women of immigrant origin interviewed for this study to run for office. The three forms of preparation that were apparent in analysis were prior history of civic engagement, education, and knowing community needs based on their work with marginalized populations.

An example of prior family history of civic engagement comes from Itzel, as you might recall was born in Latin America and came to the U.S. at an early age.

> [I]n [country omitted], my dad was very much involved politically in a lot of things because of his position. I've seen that role in both my grandpa and my dad and being community leaders in our own country even though I didn't understand it then because I was just a kid, but I knew that something was different. (Itzel, August 14, 2018)

Elisa also described her grandfather's involvement as a *pueblo jefe*, representing the community to political officials. The community voted him in that role and held him in high regard among government officials. Knowing her family's legacy for public service Elisa stated, "I'm really proud that I actually am not the first politician in the family, but that it was my grandfather who did this work to serve our community" (Elisa, July 25, 2018). Her family's history of community involvement helped to fuel her desire to become civically engaged in her new home country.

Community-based organizations play a pivotal role in helping immigrants and their families feel welcome and connected with the social issues they faced. Civic participation can open the doors for immigrants and their families to create social connections with others and expand their knowledge of the new political structure they live in. CBOs also garner a collective voice among immigrates around social injustices. The experience of advocating for social issues benefits candidates that later campaign for political office. It legitimizes their commitment to the community, allows them to connect on a more personal level with constituents, and, most notably, gives them the confidence of knowing the on-the-ground needs of the community (Bhojwani 2018; Scola 2014).

Another notable aspect of the interviews is the role of mothers and grandmothers in community service roles. Azar described how her mother influenced her desire to "engage in the community." She stated, "my mom from the moment I remember has been doing basically unpaid work to better her community and people around her… it's always about what can I do to help others, to be in community, to move our community up" (Azar, October 28, 2019). This was a theme that presented itself through many participants' discourse of their lived experiences and creating a sense of duty. As a child, Azar observed her mother caring and advocating for the underserved members in their community. The ideals her parents instilled in her drove her sense of commitment to serve her community.

Education was another contributor to participant's motivation. All of the participants had a college education. Education provided access to networks beyond their family and friends and exposed them to political structures thus leading to others viewing them as potential elected leaders. Another factor which contributes to political motivation is the training received to run for office. Notably, most participants received training with organizations whose aim was to support People of Color running for office. Oregon Futures Lab[36] and East County Rising[37] are two organizations that embraced racial and immigrant identity as a campaign advantage to running for office. Iris participated in a national training called New American Leaders[38] which encouraged participants to embrace their immigrant identity in their campaign strategy and talking points.

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36 https://www.oregonfutureslab.org/
37 https://www.eastcountyrising.com/
38 https://newamericanleaders.org/

Much research on political participation and ambition focuses on what Bloemraad and Schönwälder (2013) call structural resources, which include educational qualifications, income, and occupational status. For emerging candidates who are women of immigrant origin, it not only takes the structural resources that traditional candidates need to be successful, but their knowledge of community needs deriving from their lived experiences. The latter is what sets them apart from other candidates (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Verba et al., 1995).

Being raised in historically excluded communities and working with community-based organization allowed participants to know community needs and what needed to change. As Ramón Grosfoguel points out, a person who is socially considered as belonging to oppressed groups, does not imply that they think or act from an oppressed mindset, but those experiences can be used as knowledge to serve their goals (Lamus Canavate, 2007). When asked if there were any advantages or disadvantages to running for office, given her family's migration experience, Belen stated,

> I have an understanding for the immigrant experience in this country because I've seen how it's impacted my family to not feel welcome or to feel welcome, to feel excluded and discriminated against or for someone to ensure that they do feel included. So in that sense, I think that my life experience, the people that have shaped me, the background of my family is absolutely an asset to my leadership. (Belen, August 11, 2019)

The lived experiences of women of immigrant origin not only contributed to having the confidence to run for office, but it also shaped the way they approached their political work.

Conclusion

The women of immigrant origin interviewed in this study voiced several contributors at play leading to their decision to run for office. The multiple systems of oppression they navigated were part of a fundamental process of information gathering of the inequities People of Color

face in the United States. Particular moments in time centering around their racial/ethnic, gendered, and immigrant identities, Critical Race Moments, provided specific moments in time of oppression. Those moments were threaded together to analyze systems of oppression that needed to be remedied thus creating a Critical Consciousness of the inequities faced by People of Color. Nothing made that more evident than the social and political context of a Trump era presidency. The increase in ethno-racial, gendered, and xenophobic political rhetoric painted political office as not only a viable option, but a necessary one. Participants were also motivated to run because they knew they had the political and community acumen, education, and the lived experiences of knowing the needs of their constituents to run, win, and succeed in their positions, thus driving their agency. Given their critical consciousness, participants knew that in order to shape policies, substantiative representation was needed to reflect the voices of marginalized communities, and that feat could only be done through their physical presence in office, their descriptive representation. Another goal that drove the decision to run for office was participating in creating a pipeline for other women and marginalized people to run for office. They knew that their symbolic representation was the key to increasing representation in public office.

A shift in political representation can also be characterized as similar to a social uprising or revolution. When individuals who were once ambivalent towards politics realize their collective strength, "attributes of threat and opportunity lead to the kinds of innovative collective action" that pushes for representative claims (McAdam et al., 2004, p. 102). In this case, women of immigrant origin witnessed and personally experienced attacks on their identities and their communities. The price was too high to stand aside and wait for someone else to fight their battles. The confidence in their ability to demand change through public service was ignited by the Critical Race Moments that had been intended to silence their voices.

Although the numbers of these individuals in office are just beginning to grow, their influence on policy will have a lasting impact on a local level for some of the most marginalized communities in the United States.

Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

This dissertation explored the representation of women of immigrant origin during their candidate emergence in the United States post-2016. It argues for moving past large-scale quantitative analysis studies on political motivation to a critical race analysis of the narratives of women of immigrant origin as they emerge as candidates. As such, this dissertation contributes in an interdisciplinary manner to both theorizing on candidate emergence in the United States and empirical work on paths to political office for women of immigrant origin and the multiple forms of oppression they face along the way. As a theoretical contribution, it proposes a classification, inspired by Critical Race Theory, of evaluating lived experiences through the socially constructed markers of identification faced by women of immigrant origin. As an empirical contribution, it identified and explained the motivation for women of immigrant origin to run for office in a post-2016 political environment which was driven by their Critical Consciousness.

This work takes inspiration from studies that have taken on an interdisciplinary lens to examine paths to political office between men and women (Bos & Schneider, 2016). It goes a step further by looking at three distinct fields to explain the candidate emergence process of women of immigrant origin. Feminist studies, in particular Black Feminist studies, illuminated the nuances of the lived experiences of Women of Color (Collins, 2000), psychology helped bring together the process of decision making under threatening environments (Calogero, 2017), and finally, political science established the historical steps in candidate emergence (Silva & Skulley, 2019). Holding these three disciplines in unity provided an opportunity to reflect the voices of participants as defined by them and their depictions of themselves.

The research question and sub-questions that guided this study were: In the post-2016 era, what are the narratives of women of immigrant origin as they emerged as political candidates in the United States? Sub-questions include: 1.) What are the discourses of immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered experiences of women in the United States that marked their lives? and 2.) What are the immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered discourses behind women's motivation to run for an elected political office post-2016? The analysis derived from 19 months of interviews with 10 women of immigrant origin from the state of Oregon in the United States. In addition, three men of immigrant origin from Oregon and three women of immigrant origin living outside of Oregon, in Republican held states, were interviewed to set the stage for future comprehensive examinations of the differences among gender and a distinct political party context. I applied a primarily qualitative research agenda, inductive in nature, by using in-depth semi-structured interviews, closed and open-ended racial and ethnic identity questionnaires, and fieldnotes to examine the research questions mentioned above. The process was influenced by the constructivist grounded theory approach established by Kathy Charmaz (2006) to allow participants to self-determinate their lived experiences.

This conclusion further reflects on the implications of these findings beyond the narratives that were shared in this study. First, in *Findings and Reflections*, I will take a look back at the findings of this study. Second, I will evaluate on the use of Critical Race Theory as a method of evaluating narratives in *Critical Race Theory and Its Methodological Implications*. Third, *A Critical Race Perspective on Candidate Emergence* will examine the benefits and limits of this process for women. Finally, I will suggest *Possible Approaches for Future Research* as I look at to what extent my proposed analysis for conceptualizing candidate emergence for women who navigate multiple socially constructed markers of identification, can be applied to other cases.

Findings and Reflections

The data in this study uncovered several critical findings. First, participants reveal a strong sense of the multiple systems of oppression they had to navigate in their lives. Although gender identity was acknowledged, participants shared an increased number of racial/ethnic and xenophobic experiences which suggest that their awareness of those systems of oppression have a stronger presence in their daily lives. The two forms of racism most shared in the interviews were experiencing microaggressions and institutional racism. Women of immigrant origin recalled moments in their upbringing, while running for office, and while in office, full of microaggressions. Those moments were meant to show them how others view their presence. Daily, participants had to make decisions to either confront microaggressions or ignore them in order to maintain their mental health.

Institutional racism was also a recurring confrontation in the lives of participants as they navigated educational, housing and job opportunities. Institutional racism became even more evident as the country grappled with the killing of George Floyd and many other Men and Women of Color in 2020. The lack of police intervention and judicial accountability for the murderers of George Floyd and others ignited participants' sense of social justice. As candidates, another form of institutional racism was lack of support from their political parties. Facing barriers to entry into political circles forced women of immigrant origin to implement strategies of increasing the voter turnout in their racial/ethnic communities and expanding their visibility as candidates.

The second critical finding from the interviews pertains to the motivations of participants to run for office in a post-2016 environment. Experiences of discrimination, Critical Race Moments, deriving from their socially constructed markers of identification developed a

Critical Consciousness of the inequities faced by marginalized communities, thus continuing to drive their search for social change. A repeated driver of the Critical Consciousness during their candidate emergence was the post-2016 context. When repeated political attacks on immigrant communities, such as an increase in the detention of migrant children and the Muslim Ban, became a staple of the Trump Administration, participants searched for ways that they could protect their families and neighbors. Political office was not a desired path for many of the participants, but given the threatening political rhetoric, they saw elected leadership as a way to shift the status quo.

Third, women of immigrant origin saw public office as the opportunity to achieve two distinct goals: influence policy and expand representation to become better reflective of marginalized communities. For women of immigrant origin, shifting the representative makeup of elected bodies through their elected process was viewed as a necessary strategy to begin changing the perception of who belongs in elected leadership. They knew that their symbolic representation was the key to increasing representation in public office. Lastly, participants had a clear understanding that their life experiences, education, and community work had prepared them to run successfully for office.

Looking to the narratives from participant interviews, we find that although the odds were against them due to the social markers of identification they carried, the conditions of the historically underserved populations they belonged to was too critical not to go forward as candidates. Therefore, the cost of not running was too high. Reflecting on the political climate and their ability to lead, they decided that it was the right time to run for political office. The findings challenge the notion of a "double disadvantage" while running for office (Junn and Brown, 2008), while lending support to the new wave of research which has argued otherwise

(Bejarano 2013; Celis et al., 2014; Celis & Erzeel, 2017; Dittmar, 2020; Reny & Shah 2018). The cost was too high for participants, their communities, and their families to simply watch and do nothing. In response to that feeling, women of immigrant origin, above all odds, ran for office. It was the sense of a higher calling that drove their candidate emergence.

Critical Race Theory and Its Methodological Significance

Critical Race Theory aims to get to the root of inequalities by evaluating racism in systems and institutions (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1989; Solórzano & Huber, 2020). Racism is centered in its analytical approach because it is an issue that is always present for People of Color in the United States. Without acknowledging its existence, racism cannot be eliminated (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). It is within CRT that the existence of Women of Color is unified through the examination of multiple lenses of oppression. This is why essential in CRT is the use of an intersectional lens, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), when evaluating the oppression of People of Color.

Branches of CRT, such as Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) Latina Critical Race Theory (Huber, 2010), and Asian Critical Race Theory (Chang, 1993) all center tools like *testimonios* or storytelling from those impacted by immigration-centered political rhetoric and policies. Each assesses the role of "nativistic racism" in the lives of People of Color by evaluating how belonging and contributions to society are questioned irrespective of citizenship status (Chang, 1993; Huber, 2009; Huber & Cueva, 2012; Solorzano & Huber, 2020; Wing, 2003). Narrative analysis is an essential part of many of the cultural preservation practices of communities of color. Relying on CRT to help inform methodological approaches is in line with forms of information sharing that is common in many communities of color.

CRT has expanded to other fields, such as education, but more social scientists are acknowledging the potential to further expose structural racism and inequality in their social research (Carbado & Roithmayr, 2014; Westerveen, 2020). But, moving away from a neutral or objective research approach and towards evaluating one's situated knowledge might be the most challenging piece of applying CRT within the field of political science. Acknowledging positionality as a researcher under the CRT framework will require an examination how one's privileges creates approaches to gathering and producing knowledge (Haraway, 1988).

By applying interdisciplinary techniques grounded in Critical Race Theory, an intersectional approach and a narrative analysis, I make contributions to the emerging field of candidate emergence among women, Women of Color, and in particular to this study, women of immigrant origin. This is one of the first qualitative studies aimed at evaluating the narrative interviews of women of immigrant origin through an interdisciplinary lens, who have decided to run for office during a highly politicized climate which targeted their immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered identity. While others have applied quantitative (Lawless & Fox, 2017) and second source analysis of public narratives (Dittmar, 2020), this is one of the first evaluations of first-hand interviews with women post-2016. Much like Frederick's (2014) narrative analysis of women's decision to run for office, the individual factors that influence political ambition must be rooted in an immigrant, racial/ethnic and gendered analysis. Vital to this approach has been to look to CRT as an analytical framework to evaluate the multiple socially constructed markers of identity of women of immigrant origin. Through this work I make the call for more political scientist to look to Critical Race Theory as a viable analytical tool to help reshape how the world views people with multiple forms of oppression.

A Critical Race Perspective on Candidate Emergence

The paths to political office for women of immigrant origin are rooted in the limited access they had to be heard and to lead during the suffrage and anti-abolitionist movements. Barred from attending women's suffrage associations, African American women used the platforms available to them, such as churches and schools, to move the issues of both feminist and anti-racist issues forward, practices that are still used to this day (Bada et. al., 2006; Bagby, 2009; Frederick, 2014; Moore, 2005; Verba et al., 1995). Churches are not the only channels to civic engagement, community-based organizations play a vital role in integrating immigrant communities to their new home country (Bada et. al., 2006; Chun, 2016; Verba et al., 1995; Sundeen et al., 2017; Wong, 2006). As the growth of immigrant communities continues to grow, community-based organizations are creating the entry points for women of immigrant origin to become interested in political office. Turning a critical race lens on to this issue is vital. Examining the cultural roles churches and community-based organizations play within immigrant communities will help further explain how candidates emerging among these communities is developed.

Factors shaping candidate emergence can also benefit from a critical race perspective. When examining the intersect of social markers in each factor, individual, institutional, and contextual, there are clearly elements unique to women of immigrant origin. In particular, deriving from participant's narratives is the role of gatekeepers in acquiring party support. Women of immigrant origin are stamped with an "intersectional invisibility" which positions them as the most "marginal members within marginalized groups" (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, p. 381) and therefore are seen as less likely to win their political seat. Since political gatekeepers are the entry point for many women of immigrant origin, examining forms of

breaking through homosocial networks (Bjarnegård's, 2013) will establish new opportunities for women of immigrant origin to create their paths to political office.

Additionally, threatening political rhetoric, when coupled with the lived experiences of multiple form of oppression, is a field of study that benefits greatly from a critical race analysis. Although participants did not reveal that emotions such as anger drove their motivation, there is room to continue the discussion of whether negative emotions are drivers for women of immigrant origin to run for office. In particular, a focus on whether nuanced and culturally distinct forms of expressing "negative emotions" are practiced among women of immigrant origin. This is an area that was missing in this study. Dittmar (2020) called on a qualitative narrative approach to examining the role of negative emotions when deciding to run for office post Trump. Although she expressed that words such as "anger" at Trump's rhetoric were not evaluated in the narratives of Women of Color candidates as compared to white women, she believed that through conducting personal interviews and establishing trust between the researcher and the participant, researchers could provide adequate space for Women of Color to share more openly. Although this was not reflected in the narratives of participants, I believe there needs to be a stronger evaluation of the stigmas that are associated with sharing negative emotions, as Dittmar discussed. Conceptualizing and measuring the constructs that are present in the lives of women of immigrant origin will provide a complete picture of how candidate emergence is formed, a feat only an interdisciplinary perspective can lend (Bos & Schneider, 2016).

That leads to my final thought. An interdisciplinary approach is at the heart of Critical Race Theory. With its roots in the legal field, education scholars have used CRT to grow their knowledge of the disparities facing systemically excluded students. It is only reasonable to begin to look to other fields to help bridge the complexities of socially constructed markers of

identification influencing candidate emergence for women of immigrant origin. A cross-disciplinary approach—for example, leaning on feminist of color studies to look for qualitative approaches to data production, using psychology to help understand the patterns of decision making, and pulling from political science examine the angles of candidate emergence—will enable scholars to reflect with a broader lens, social advocates to work on increasing representation, and aspiring politicians of immigrant origin to navigate the challenges of running for office.

Possible Approaches for Future Research

Much is left to discover about women of immigrant origin in elected positions in the United States and there are a few steps political scientists can take to begin to shed light on this historically overlooked group. To begin, the disaggregation of data to include immigrant identity is essential. As mentioned, women of immigrant origin are included in broader categories such as Women of Color, with men as part of a larger immigrant count, or are lumped in with women as a whole. Thus, theories of representation ignore women who must navigate the "spaces between the different worlds she inhabits" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 42). When data has not been disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, and immigrant experience, what is left out are the voices of these women, their ability to define theory and praxis in academia, denying them of their agency.

Though the recommendation of adding immigrant identity to data of elected leaders is needed, it does not come without complications, some of which I want speak to here. First, immigrant identity is complex by nature due to the different countries of origin immigrants come from and the conditions that lead them to migrate. Immigrants come to the United States with distinct economic status that will influence the circles they are exposed to and eventually belong within

the U.S. Second, there are immigrants that are considered People of Color while others are seen, and might even consider themselves, as white. Due to social and class conditions, some phonotypes might be seen as an advantage, while others might be seen as part of a disadvantaged class. Immigrant identity cannot be isolated into one experience, so when evaluating immigrant experiences, researchers must consider all the social, economic, and cultural elements that contribute to their experience. This is something that this study lacked and calls for future research to consider these conditions in the evaluation of immigrant origin elected leadership studies.

> Political scientists, as compared to scholars of other disciplines, have paid far less attention to the ways in which race and gender operate in tandem to produce and maintain the unequal distribution of power and privilege in the American political system (Evelyn Simien, 2007, p. 264).

For political science and migration studies, there is much to learn from the clear guidelines establish by the education field on how to incorporate CRT in theory and praxis. What follows are some thoughts as to the direction the literature might take in untangling future research on the candidate emergence process of women of immigrant origin in the United States. Borrowing from Solórzano and Huber (2020) five guidelines, the following are themes political science and migration researchers should consider incorporating:

1. Centering the research focus on race, racism, and the intersections of multiple forms of oppression;
2. Questioning dominant philosophies imbedded in political science and migration studies theory and practice;

3. Recognizing the significance of experiential knowledge and utilizing this knowledge in research;

4. Utilizing interdisciplinary perspectives; and

5. Committing to a social justice practice and dismantling all forms of oppression. (Solórzano and Huber, 2020, p. 76-7)

With these guidelines, establishing a Political Science Critical Race Theory of practice can call for a critical lens on race/ethnicity to be evaluated in political science research. Although some research has examined intersectional oppressions in the candidate emergence process, it is important that the immigrant experience is also analyzed, which Critical Race Theory can provide a framework for that work.

Building on prior research which has mostly taken a quantitative analysis through large scale surveys, this study focuses on a qualitative narrative-based analysis to help fill in the gaps of understanding how immigration, race/ethnicity and gender are at play for women of immigrant origin as they emerge as candidates. Although the number of participants in this study is low, it is a starting point to establishing a broader understanding of the experiences of women of immigrant origin in political office. Future research can lean on this work by creating a narrative-based analysis for women who have traditionally been silenced due to their multiple social markers.

When research is solely focused on the oppressions that are faced and the systems which produce disadvantages, what is missed is the examination of how historically excluded communities work within those systems to hold their own agency. Nevertheless, those exclusions do produce a social hierarchy that must be acknowledged and with that comes the opportunities to dismantle them. A 'deficit' research prospective must be held in hand with an

acknowledgement of agency. Lacking is a deeper theoretic approach to candidate emergence for women of immigrant origin, to begin to understand how becoming a symbol of political representation, instead of a symbol of subordination, has different meanings given the multiple "culturally designated gendered roles" women of immigrant origin hold in balance (Hernández-Truyol, 2003, p. 57).

Sandoval (2000) identified the "oppositional consciousness" form of agency, and she urged that the differential mode, which moves in and out of multiple tactics of agency, "depends on the practitioner's ability to read the current situation of power and self-consciously choosing and adopting the ideological stand best suited to push against its configurations, a survival skill well known to oppressed peoples" (p. 59). Women of immigrant origin do not navigate the same worlds, nor as Sandoval (2000) stated would they find the same solutions to their problems. But when the differential mode is used as a tactic of resistance, as a way to maneuver through multiple forms of opposition when the time calls for it, then those differences are what become the foundation for liberation.

A way to capture that oppositional consciousness is through policy tactics. With time, participants will have surely taken steps towards achieving the political agendas that they have mentioned in this study, in particular those discussed in Chapter 6. Given that this study was not able to capture substantial political work since at the time of the interviews participants were newcomers to their role, it will be important for future researchers to examine the impact of participants' policy making and social influence. Linking their work to the agency they exhibited when emerging as candidates and how they used their voice and power to create policy and social change, will be particularly interesting to evaluate in the future.

While many studies have provided in-depth analysis of the experiences of particular racial/ethnic groups in political leadership, studies documenting the candidate emergence processes that incorporate an intersectional analytical lens should be encouraged. This study provides a starting point to look at the narratives of women with racial/ethnic identities and other interwoven social markers, but it is limited in its analysis. Culture and context are two dimensions integral to how women process their ability to emerge as candidates, and it cannot be left out. Future studies should examine how a racialized view of gender can unite or set apart the experiences of women facing an intersect of multiple oppressions, in particular women of immigrant origin.

Conclusion

The 2016 elections sparked a wave of women and immigrants in the United States that have sought social change through political aspirations. Women of immigrant origin interviewed in this research described events in their lives which rooted their identity in their racial/ethnic and immigrant communities and paved the way to believe that their gender identity was a strength not a weakness in a post-2016 environment. Those identities motivated them to look to themselves to shift the rhetoric targeting their identity groups. Evaluating the world around them and seeing where they sit in it, caused participants to reflect on how positioning themselves in an elected public office would allow them to change policies impacting their communities. How systems of oppression intersect for women of immigrant origin can be seen in public spaces, such as in political roles, and in private ones as well, and those rich experiences have fed and nourished their understanding of the world. Although the intersection of multiple forms of social markers has been seen as a "double disadvantage" in some research (Hancock, 2007; Reny & Shah, 2018), immigrant women are also agents of their own liberation with a rich history of challenging patriarchy and social injustices in their own

communities (Mohamed, 2017). Holding this perspective in balance with mainstream theories will develop theoretical research reflective of the lived experiences of all women, and will unveil the knowledge of the political emancipation led and defined by the voices of women of immigrant origin.

Capítulo 7

Conclusiones

Introducción

Esta investigación exploró, la representación de las mujeres de origen inmigrante durante el surgimiento como candidatas en los Estados Unidos después de 2016. Se han realizado estudios con análisis cuantitativo a gran escala, en relación a la motivación política y, en este estudio se argumenta sobre un análisis crítico racial de las narrativas de las mujeres de origen inmigrante que han emergido como candidatas. Esta investigación contribuye de manera interdisciplinaria, tanto a la teorización sobre el surgimiento de candidatas en los Estados Unidos, como al trabajo de producción empírica sobre las vías de acceso a los cargos políticos de mujeres de origen inmigrante y, de las múltiples formas de opresión a las que se enfrentan en el camino. Como una contribución teórica, propone una reflexión sobre la teoría crítica de la raza, en relación a la evaluación de las experiencias vividas que están manifestadas a través de los marcadores de identificación socialmente construidos, que enfrentan las mujeres de origen inmigrante. En la contribución empírica, identifica y explica la motivación de las mujeres de origen inmigrante para presentarse a las elecciones posterior al año 2016 y, que es impulsada por su conciencia crítica.

Este trabajo se inspira en los estudios que han adoptado un lente interdisciplinario para examinar las trayectorias hacia los cargos políticos entre hombres y mujeres (Bos y Schneider, 2016). Examina tres campos distintos para explicar el proceso de surgimiento de las candidaturas de mujeres de origen inmigrante. En particular los estudios feministas, los estudios feministas negros que iluminaron los matices de las experiencias vividas por las mujeres de color (Collins, 2000), desde la Psicología que ayudó a reunir el proceso de toma de decisiones bajo entornos amenazantes (Calogero, 2017) y, finalmente, las Ciencias Políticas que estableció los pasos históricos en la emergencia de candidatas (Silva & Skulley, 2019).

Mantener estas tres disciplinas unidas, brinda la oportunidad de reflejar las voces de las participantes tal y como las definen y, las representaciones de sí mismas.

La pregunta y subpreguntas de investigación que guiaron este estudio posterior al año 2016 fueron: ¿Cuáles son las narrativas de las mujeres de origen inmigrante que surgieron como candidatas políticas en los Estados Unidos? Las subpreguntas incluyen: 1.) ¿Cuáles son los discursos que marcaron las vidas de las mujeres en relación a las experiencias inmigrante, raciales/étnicas y de género en Estados Unidos? y 2.) ¿Cuáles son los discursos que motivan a las mujeres a presentarse a un cargo político, según las experiencias inmigrante, racial/étnica y de género después del año 2016? De acuerdo a las entrevistas realizadas a 10 mujeres de origen inmigrante del estado de Oregón en Estados Unidos a lo largo de 19 meses, permitió realizar los analizar pertinentes. Además se entrevistó a tres hombres de origen inmigrante de Oregón y, a tres mujeres de origen inmigrante que vivían en estados con tendencia republicana fuera de Oregón, esto con el fin de examinar a futuro las diferencias entre géneros y distintos partidos políticos. El enfoque de la investigación es cualitativo, de naturaleza inductiva, utilizando entrevistas semiestructuradas en profundidad, cuestionarios cerrados y abiertos relacionados a la identidad racial y, notas de campo para analizar las preguntas de investigación anteriormente mencionadas. El proceso de investigación estuvo referenciado por el enfoque constructivista de la teoría fundamentada, establecido por Kathy Charmaz (2006) para permitir que las y los participantes auto determinen sus experiencias vividas.

La conclusión sobre las implicaciones de estos hallazgos, va más allá de las narraciones que se compartieron en este estudio. En primer lugar, se revisará sobre esto en el apartado de las conclusiones y reflexiones de este estudio. En segundo lugar, el uso de la teoría crítica de la raza como método de evaluación de las narrativas en teoría crítica de la raza y sus implicaciones

metodológicas. En tercer lugar, se examinarán los beneficios y los límites desde una perspectiva crítica racial, sobre la aparición de candidaturas de mujeres en este proceso. Por último, sugeriré posibles enfoques para una futura investigación, ya que observé hasta que punto el análisis que propongo, sobre conceptualizar la emergencia de candidaturas de las mujeres, que navegan por múltiples marcadores construidos sobre la identificación social son posibles de aplicar a otros casos.

Resultados y Rreflexiones

Los datos de este estudio revelaron varios hallazgos críticos. En primer lugar, los y las participantes revelaron sobre los múltiples sistemas de opresión que tuvieron que navegar en sus vidas. Aunque la identidad de género fue reconocida, en mayor número las y los participantes compartieron que tuvieron experiencias raciales/étnicas y xenófobas, siendo concientes de estos sistemas de opresión con una mayor presencia en sus vidas cotidiana. Las dos formas de racismo más compartidas de acuerdo a las entrevistas, fueron la experimentación de microagresiones y el racismo institucional. Las mujeres de origen inmigrante, recordaron momentos de su educación, ya que mientras se presentaban a las elecciones y estaban en el cargo estuvieron conviviendo con microagresiones. Esos momentos mostraron, cómo las demás personas veían la presencia de ellas en ese espacio. Las participantes diariamente tenían que tomar decisiones para enfrentarse a las microagresiones o ignorarlas por su salud mental.

El racismo institucional fue también una confrontación recurrente en las vidas de las y los participantes, cuando navegaban en las oportunidades educativas, de vivienda y de trabajo. El racismo institucional se hizo aún más evidente cuando el país se enfrentó al asesinato de George Floyd y, de muchos otros hombres y mujeres de color que fueron asesinados en el año 2020. La falta de intervención policial y de responsabilidad judicial de los asesinos de George Floyd

y otros casos, encendió el sentimiento de justicia social de las y los participantes del estudio. Como candidatas y candidatos, también experimentaron otra forma de racismo institucional que fue la falta de apoyo de sus partidos políticos. Las barreras de acceso a los círculos políticos, obligaron a las mujeres de origen inmigrante a poner en práctica estrategias para aumentar la participación electoral en sus comunidades raciales/étnicas y ampliar su visibilidad como candidatas.

La segunda conclusión fundamental de las entrevistas, se refiere a las motivaciones de las participantes para presentarse a las elecciones en un periodo posterior a 2016. Las experiencias de discriminación, Momentos Críticos de Racialización (*Critical Race Moments*), derivados de sus marcadores de identificación socialmente construidos sobre la raza, hicieron que desarrollaran una conciencia crítica de las desigualdades a las que se enfrentaban las comunidades marginadas, hecho que ha impulsado la búsqueda del cambio social. Un hecho que impulsó la conciencia crítica para surgir como candidatas y candidatos, fue el contexto posterior al año 2016. Cuando sucedieron los repetidos ataques políticos a las comunidades de inmigrantes, como el aumento de la detención de niñas y niños migrantes y la prohibición musulmana, se convirtieron en un elemento básico de la Administración Trump, las participantes del estudio buscaron formas para proteger a sus familias y vecinos. El cargo político no era una vía deseada para muchas de las entrevistadas, pero dada la retórica política amenazante, vieron el liderazgo como una forma de cambiar el statu quo.

En tercer lugar, las mujeres de origen inmigrante vieron en los cargos públicos la oportunidad de alcanzar dos objetivos distintos: influir en la política y ampliar la representación para reflejar mejor a las comunidades marginadas. Para las mujeres de origen inmigrante, cambiar la composición representativa de los órganos electos a través de su proceso de elección, era

considerado una estrategia necesaria para empezar a cambiar la percepción de quién debe formar parte del liderazgo electo. Sabían que su representación simbólica, era la clave para aumentar la representación en los cargos públicos. Por último, las y los participantes tenían claro que sus experiencias vitales, su educación y su trabajo en la comunidad, habían servido para presentarse con éxito a las elecciones.

Si observamos los relatos de las entrevistas de las y los participantes, descubrimos que aunque las probabilidades estaban en su contra, debido a los marcadores de identificación social que cargaban, había que mirar las condiciones de las poblaciones históricamente desatendidas a las que pertenecían, siendo demasiado críticas como para no presentarse como candidatas y candidatos. Por lo tanto, el costo de no presentarse era demasiado alto. Al reflexionar sobre el clima político y su capacidad de liderazgo, decidieron que era el momento adecuado para presentarse a un cargo político. Los resultados desafían la noción de una "doble desventaja" al presentarse a un cargo (Junn y Brown, 2008), al tiempo que prestan apoyo a la nueva ola de investigación que ha argumentado lo contrario (Bejarano 2013; Celis et al., 2014; Celis y Erzeel, 2017; Dittmar, 2020; Reny y Shah 2018). El costo era demasiado alto para las y los participantes, sus comunidades y sus familias como para limitarse a observar y no hacer nada. En respuesta a ese sentimiento, las mujeres de origen inmigrante, por encima de todo se presentaron a las elecciones. Fue el sentido de una vocación superior que las impulsó para que surgieran como candidatas.

La teoría crítica de la raza (Critical Race Theory) y sus implicaciones metodológicas

La teoría crítica de la raza pretende llegar a la raíz de las desigualdades evaluando el racismo en los sistemas e instituciones (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1989; Solórzano and Huber, 2020). El racismo se centra en su enfoque analítico porque es un tema que siempre está presente para la

gente de color en los Estados Unidos. Sin reconocer su existencia, no se puede eliminar el racismo (Delgado y Stefancic, 2017). Es dentro de la teoría crítica de la raza, donde se examinan los múltiples lentes de opresión en la existencia de las mujeres de color. Por eso es esencial que en la teoría crítica de la raza, el uso de una lente interseccional que es un término acuñado por Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), evalué la opresión de las personas de color.

Las ramas de la "teoría crítica de la raza", como la "teoría crítica de la raza tribal" (Brayboy, 2005), la "teoría crítica de la raza latina" (Huber, 2010) y la "teoría crítica de la raza asiática" (Chang, 1993), se centran en los testimonios o los relatos de los afectados por la retórica y las políticas centradas en la inmigración. Cada uno de ellos, evalúa el papel del "racismo nativista" en las vidas de las personas de color, evaluando cómo se cuestionan la pertenencia y las contribuciones a la sociedad independientemente del estatus de ciudadanía (Chang, 1993; Huber, 2009; Huber y Cueva, 2012; Solorzano y Huber, 2020; Stephanic, 1997; Wing, 2003). El análisis narrativo es una parte esencial de muchas de las prácticas de preservación cultural de las comunidades de color. Apoyarse en la teoría crítica de la raza, permite ayudar a informar sobre los enfoques metodológicos que están en consonancia con las formas de compartir información, siendo comunes en muchas comunidades de color. La teoría crítica de la raza se ha expandido a otros campos, como el de la educación, pero cada vez más científicos sociales reconocen su potencial para exponer aún más el racismo estructural y la desigualdad en sus investigaciones sociales (Carbado y Roithmayr, 2014; Westerveen, 2020). Sin embargo, alejarse de un enfoque de investigación neutro u objetivo y, acercarse a la evaluación del propio conocimiento situado, podría ser la pieza más desafiante de la aplicación de la teoría crítica de la raza dentro del campo de la Ciencia Política. Reconocer la posicionalidad como investigador bajo el marco de la teoría crítica de la raza, requerirá un examen de cómo los propios privilegios crean enfoques para recoger y producir conocimiento (Haraway, 1988).

Mediante la aplicación de las técnicas interdisciplinarias, basadas en la teoría crítica de la raza, un enfoque interseccional y un análisis narrativo, realizo contribuciones al campo emergente de la "emergencia de candidatas" de mujeres; mujeres de color y, en particular a este estudio, mujeres de origen inmigrante.

Este es uno de los primeros estudios cualitativos, destinados a evaluar las entrevistas narrativas de mujeres de origen inmigrante que han decidido presentarse a las elecciones durante un clima altamente politizado que apunta a su identidad inmigrante, racial/étnica y de género, bajo un lente interdisciplinario. Mientras que otros autores han aplicado el análisis cuanitativo (Lawless y Fox, 2017) y de segunda fuente de las narrativas públicas (Dittmar, 2020), esta es una de las primeras evaluaciones de entrevistas realizadas con mujeres posterior al año 2016. Al igual que el análisis narrativo realizado por Frederick (2014), sobre la decisión de presentarse las mujeres a las elecciones, los factores individuales que influyen en la ambición política deben basarse en un análisis sobre la inmigración, la raza y el género. Para este enfoque ha sido vital recurrir a la teoría crítica de la raza como marco analítico para evaluar los múltiples marcadores de identidad social que, son construidos sobre las mujeres de origen inmigrante. A través de este trabajo, realizo un llamado para que politólogas y politólogos se fijen en la teoría crítica de la raza como una herramienta analítica viable para ayudar a analizar las múltiples formas de opresión que padecen las personas.

Una perspectiva crítica racial sobre la emergencia de candidata y candidato

El acceso a los cargos políticos de las mujeres de origen inmigrante, tienen su origen en el limitado paso que tuvieron para ser escuchadas, liderar los movimientos sufragistas y antiabolicionistas. Las mujeres afroamericanas al no poder asistir a las asociaciones de sufragio

femenino, utilizaron las plataformas que tenían a su disposición como fueron las iglesias y las escuelas para avanzar en las cuestiones feministas y antirracistas, prácticas que se siguen utilizando hasta hoy (Bada et. al., 2006; Bagby, 2009; Frederick, 2014; Moore, 2005; Verba et al., 1995). Las iglesias no han sido los únicos canales para el compromiso cívico, sino también, las organizaciones comunitarias que desempeñan un papel vital en la integración de las comunidades de inmigrantes en el país de origen (Bada et. al., 2006; Chun, 2016; Verba et al., 1995; Wang, 2017; Wong, 2006).

A medida que las comunidades de inmigrantes siguen aumentando, la organización comunitaria está creando los puntos de entrada para que las mujeres de origen inmigrante se interesen por los cargos políticos. Por lo tanto, es fundamental aplicar una perspectiva crítica racial a esta cuestión. Examinar el papel cultural que desempeñan las iglesias y las organizaciones comunitarias, dentro de las comunidades de inmigrantes, ayudará a explicar de mejor forma, cómo surgen y se desarrollan las y los candidatos en estas comunidades.

Los factores que determinan la aparición de candidatos, también pueden beneficiarse desde una perspectiva crítica racial. Al examinar la intersección de los marcadores sociales en cada factor; individual, institucional y contextual, es evidente que hay elementos exclusivos de las mujeres de origen inmigrante. En particular, en los relatos de las participantes, se desprende el papel de los guardianes en la adquisición del apoyo del partido político. Las mujeres de origen inmigrante tienen la impronta de una "invisibilidad interseccional" que las sitúa como "miembros más marginales dentro de los grupos marginados" (Purdie-Vaughns y Eibach, 2008, p. 381) y, por lo tanto, se considera que tienen menos posibilidades de conseguir un escaño político. Dado que los guardianes de la política son el punto de entrada para muchas mujeres de origen inmigrante, el examen de las formas de romper las redes homosociales

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(Bjarnegård's, 2013), establecerá nuevas oportunidades para que las mujeres de origen inmigrante creen sus caminos hacia los cargos políticos.

Además, la retórica política amenazante, cuando se une a las experiencias vividas sobre las múltiples formas de opresión, invita a un campo de estudio que se beneficia enormemente con el análisis crítico racial. Aunque las participantes no revelaron que la ira como emoción, había impulsado su motivación para postular a cargos, habría que continuar el debate sobre si las emociones negativas, son algunos motores que impulsan para que las mujeres de origen inmigrante se presenten a las elecciones. En particular, se trata de determinar si las mujeres de origen inmigrante practican formas matizadas y culturalmente distintas de expresar las "emociones negativas". Esta es un área que falta de indagar en este estudio. Dittmar (2020) recurrió a un enfoque narrativo cualitativo para examinar el papel de las emociones negativas a la hora de decidir presentarse a las elecciones después de Trump. Aunque expresó que palabras como "ira" ante la retórica de Trump, no fueron evaluadas en las narrativas de las candidatas de color en comparación con las mujeres blancas, creía que a través de la realización de entrevistas personales y el establecimiento de la confianza entre el investigador y el participante, los investigadores podrían proporcionar un espacio adecuado para que las mujeres de color compartieran más abiertamente. Aunque esto no se reflejó en mis narraciones, creo que debe haber una evaluación más fuerte de los estigmas que se asocian con el hecho de compartir emociones negativas, tal como lo discutió Dittmar. Conceptualizar y medir los constructos que están presentes en la vida de las mujeres de origen inmigrante, proporcionará una imagen completa de cómo se forma el surgimiento de candidatos, una hazaña que sólo puede prestar una perspectiva interdisciplinaria (Bos & Schneider, 2016).

Esto me lleva a mi última reflexión. Un enfoque interdisciplinario es la base de la teoría crítica de la raza. Con sus raíces en el ámbito jurídico, los estudiosos de la educación han utilizado la teoría crítica de la raza para aumentar su conocimiento sobre las disparidades a las que se enfrentan los estudiantes que son sistemáticamente excluidos. Es razonable empezar a mirar a otros campos para ayudar a comprender las complejidades de los marcadores de identificación construidos socialmente que aparecen en las candidaturas de las mujeres de origen inmigrante. Por ejemplo un enfoque interdisciplinar, es apoyarse en la búsqueda de enfoques cualitativos para la producción de datos como la antropología, utilizar la psicología para ayudar a entender los patrones de toma de decisiones y, la Ciencia Política para examinar los ángulos de la emergencia de candidatas y candidatos que permitirá a los académicos y académicas, reflexionar con un lente más amplio y, trabajar sobre el aumento de la representación de los defensores sociales y, también afrontar los retos de los aspirantes de origen inmigrante cuando se presenten a las elecciones de cargos políticos.

Posibles Aproximaciones Para Futuras Investigaciones

Queda mucho por investigar sobre las mujeres de origen inmigrante que ocupan cargos electos en Estados Unidos y, hay algunos pasos que las y los politólogos pueden dar para empezar a darle luz a este grupo históricamente ignorados. Para empezar, desglosaré los datos para mostrar la identidad de los inmigrantes. Como se ha mencionado anteriormente, las mujeres de origen inmigrante son incluídas en categorías más amplias, como por ejemplo, como mujeres de color, como inmigrante, que incluye a los hombres, o entre una categoría mas amplia como mujer. De esta forma, las teorías de la representación han ignorado a las mujeres que navegan por "espacios entre los diferentes mundos que habitan" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 42). Cuando los datos no se desglosan por género, raza/etnia y experiencia inmigrante, lo que se deja de lado

son las voces de estas mujeres y se niega su agencia, y, la capacidad para definir la teoría y la praxis en el mundo académico.

La recomendación de añadir los datos y la identidad de las y los dirigentes inmigrantes electos es necesaria, no está exenta de complicaciones de las cuales quiero comentar. En primer lugar, la identidad de las y los inmigrantes es compleja por naturaleza, debido a que proceden de diferentes países de origen y, a las condiciones que les llevan a emigrar. Los inmigrantes llegan a Estados Unidos con un estatus económico distinto, que influye en los círculos que están expuestos y, a los que eventualmente pertenecen dentro de Estados Unidos. En segundo lugar, hay inmigrantes que son considerados como "gente de color", mientras que otros, son vistos e incluso podrían considerarse a sí mismos como blancas y blancos. Debido a las condiciones sociales y de clase es que algunos fenotipos pueden ser vistos como una ventaja, mientras que otros, de acuerdo a estas condiciones, pueden ser vistos como parte de una clase desfavorecida. La identidad de los inmigrantes no puede aislarse en una sola experiencia, por lo que al evaluar las experiencias de las y los inmigrantes, las y los investigadores deben considerar todos los elementos sociales, económicos y culturales que contribuyen a su experiencia. Este estudio carece sobre los antecedentes antes mencionados y, sugiere que en futuras investigaciones se tenga en cuenta estas condiciones, al momento de indagar sobre las condiciones de evalución en los estudios de liderazgo de los inmigrantes.

Los politólogos en comparación con los estudiosos de otras disciplinas, han prestado mucha menos atención a las formas en que la raza y el género, operan en conjunto para

producir y mantener la distribución desigual del poder y los privilegios en el sistema político estadounidense (Evelyn Simien, 2007, p. 264)[39].

Para las Ciencia Política y los estudios sobre las migraciones, es necesario aprender sobre las claras directrices establecidas por el campo de la educación, sobre cómo incorporar la teoría crítica racial en la teoría y la praxis. A continuación se exponen algunas reflexiones sobre la dirección que podría tomar la literatura para desentrañar futuras investigaciones, sobre el proceso de emegencia de candidaturas de mujeres de origen inmigrante en Estados Unidos. Tomando prestadas las cinco directrices de Solórzano y Huber (2020) y, los temas que deberían incorporar los investigadores en Ciencias Políticas y migración son los siguientes:

1. Centrar el enfoque de la investigación en la raza, el racismo y las intersecciones de múltiples formas de opresión,

2. Cuestionar las filosofías dominantes imbricadas en la teoría y la práctica de la Ciencia Política y los estudios migratorios,

3. Reconocer la importancia del conocimiento experiencial y utilizar este conocimiento en la investigación,

4. Utilizar perspectivas interdisciplinarias y,

5. Comprometerse con una práctica de justicia social y desmantelar todas las formas de opresión. (Solórzano y Huber, 2020, p. 76-7)

Con estas directrices, establecer una "teoría crítica de la raza" en la práctica de Ciencia Política, puede exigir un lente crítico sobre la raza/etnicidad y ser evaluada en la investigación desde la Ciencia Política. Aunque algunas investigaciones han examinado las opresiones

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[39] La versión original en inglés: "Political scientists, as compared to scholars of other disciplines, have paid far less attention to the ways in which race and gender operate in tandem to produce and maintain the unequal distribution of power and privilege in the American political system". La traducción la he realizado yo.

interseccionales en el proceso de emergencia de candidatas y candidatos, también es importante que se analice la experiencia de las y los inmigrantes donde la "teoría crítica de la raza" puede proporcionar un marco de trabajo.

En base a investigaciones anteriores que han adoptado en su mayoría análisis cuantitativos con encuestas a gran escala, este estudio se centra en un análisis cualitativo, basado en la narrativa para llenar las lagunas sobre la comprensión de cómo la inmigración, la raza/etnia y el género se ponen en juego cuando las mujeres de origen inmigrante surgen como candidatas. Aunque el número de participantes en este estudio es bajo, es un punto de partida para establecer una comprensión más amplia sobre las experiencias de las mujeres de origen inmigrante en cargos políticos. Por ello que futuras investigaciones pueden apoyarse en este trabajo, creando un análisis que está basado en la narrativa de las mujeres que han sido silenciadas debido a sus múltiples marcadores sociales.

Cuando la investigación se centra únicamente en las opresiones a las cuales se enfrentan y a los sistemas que producen desventajas, se pierde el análisis de cómo las comunidades históricamente excluidas, trabajan dentro de esos sistemas para mantener su propia agencia. Sin embargo, esas exclusiones producen una jerarquía social que hay que reconocerlas porque surgen oportunidades para desmantelarlas. Una perspectiva de investigación "deficitaria", debe ir acompañada de un reconocimiento de la agencia. Falta una aproximación teórica más profunda sobre "la emergencia de candidaturas de las mujeres de origen inmigrante" porque hay que empezar a entender cómo convertirse en un símbolo de representación política, en lugar de un símbolo de subordinación, por tanto, tiene diferentes significados, dados los múltiples "roles de género designados culturalmente" en las mujeres de origen inmigrante donde mantienen en equilibrio (Hernández-Truyol, 2003, p. 57).

Sandoval (2000) identificó una forma de agencia de "conciencia de oposición" e, instó a que el modo diferencial, que entra y sale de las múltiples tácticas de agencia "depende de la capacidad del practicante para leer la situación actual del poder y elegir y, adoptar conscientemente la postura ideológica más adecuada para presionar contra sus configuraciones, una habilidad de supervivencia bien conocida por los pueblos oprimidos" (p. 59)[40]. Las mujeres de origen inmigrante no navegan por los mismos mundos, como afirma Sandoval (2000), ni encuentran las mismas soluciones a sus problemas. Pero cuando el modo diferencial se utiliza como táctica de resistencia, como forma de maniobrar a través de múltiples formas de oposición y, cuando el momento lo requiere, entonces esas diferencias son las que se convierten en el fundamento de la liberación.

Una forma de captar esa conciencia opositora es a través de las tácticas políticas. Con el tiempo, las y los participantes posiblemente habrán dado pasos hacia la consecuencia de las agendas políticas que han sido mencionadas en este estudio y, que en particular han sido analizadas en el capítulo 6. Dado que este estudio no pudo captar una labor de la política sustancial, ya que en el momento de las entrevistas, las y los participantes eran novatos en su función, es importante que las y los futuros investigadores, examinen con el tiempo el impacto en la elaboración de políticas y la influencia social de las y los participantes. Será especialmente interesante, evaluar en el futuro la relación entre su trabajo y la capacidad de acción que mostraron al presentarse como candidatas, como también, el modo en que utilizaron su voz y su poder para generar cambios políticos y sociales.

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[40] La versión original en inglés: "depends on the practitioner's ability to read the current situation of power and self-consciously choosing and adopting the ideological stand best suited to push against its configurations, a survival skill well known to oppressed peoples". La traducción la he realizado yo.

Aunque muchos estudios han proporcionado un análisis en profundidad, sobre las experiencias de determinados grupos raciales/étnicos en el liderazgo político, aún debe fomentarse sobre estudios que documenten los procesos de emergencia de candidatas y candidatos con una incorporación de un lente analítico interseccional. Este estudio, proporciona un punto de partida para observar las narrativas de las mujeres con identidades raciales/étnicas y, otras entrelazadas, pero es limitado en su análisis. La cultura y el contexto, son dos dimensiones que forman parte en que las mujeres procesan su capacidad de surgir como candidatas y estos aspectos no pueden dejarse de lado. Los futuros estudios deben examinar, cómo una visión racializada del género puede unir o separar las experiencias de las mujeres que se enfrentan a múltiples opresiones desde una mirada interseccional y, en particular, las mujeres de origen inmigrante.

Conclusión

En las elecciones del año 2016, se desencadenaron una ola de mujeres e inmigrantes que buscaban un cambio social a través de las aspiraciones políticas en Estados Unidos. Las mujeres de origen inmigrante entrevistadas en esta investigación, describieron acontecimientos de sus vidas, donde la identidad de sus comunidades estaba arraigada a aspectos raciales/étnicas e inmigrantes e, hicieron el camino para creer que su identidad de género era una fortaleza y no una debilidad en un entorno político posterior al año 2016. Esas identidades, motivaron a mirarse para cambiar la retórica que estaba dirigida a sus grupos de identidad. Evaluar el mundo que les rodean y ver cuál es su lugar en el, permitió que las y los participantes, reflexionaran sobre cómo posicionarse en un cargo público de elección que permitiría cambiar las políticas que afectaban a sus comunidades. El modo en que los sistemas de opresión se entrecruzan en las mujeres de origen inmigrante, se pueden ver en los espacios públicos y privados, como en los roles políticos y esas experiencias han alimentado y nutrido su comprensión del mundo. Aunque la intersección de múltiples formas de identidades, se ha visto

como una "doble desventaja" en algunas investigaciones (Hancock, 2007; Reny & Shah, 2018), las mujeres inmigrantes también son agentes de su propia liberación con una rica historia de desafío al patriarcado y, a las injusticias sociales en sus propias comunidades (Mohamed, 2017). Mantener esta perspectiva en equilibrio con las teorías dominantes, permitirá desarrollar una investigación teórica que refleje las experiencias vividas por todas las mujeres y, desvelará el conocimiento de la emancipación política que está dirigida y definida por las voces de las mujeres de origen inmigrante.

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Appendix 1: Survey

Research Study: Women of Immigrant Origin in Political Office

Thank you for taking the time to take this short survey and to be interviewed during the summer or fall of 2019. This survey forms part of the doctoral research conducted by Jessica Rodriguez-Montegna within the joint doctoral program of Migration Studies at the University of Granada in Spain and Political Science at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium. All the information shared will be for academic purposes and used to develop a deeper analysis of the lives of People of immigrant origin in political office.

The survey will take approximately 5 minutes and will collect general demographic data and a few other details regarding your background and political role. Your responses will be kept confidential and real names will NOT be used in any reports or publications. Again, thank you.

* Required

1. Email *

   _____

2. First and Last Name *

   _____

3. Age range (optional)

   Check all that apply.

   ☐ 20-29
   ☐ 30-39
   ☐ 40-49
   ☐ 50-59
   ☐ 60-69
   ☐ 70-79
   ☐ 80 or better

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4. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received. *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] No schooling completed
- [ ] Nursery school to 8th grade
- [ ] Some high school, no diploma
- [ ] High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
- [ ] Some college credit, no degree
- [ ] Trade/technical/vocational training
- [ ] Associate degree
- [ ] Bachelor's degree
- [ ] Master's degree
- [ ] Professional degree
- [ ] Doctorate degree

Other: [ ] _____

5. Which of these best describes you? *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Employed for wages
- [ ] Self-employed
- [ ] Out of work and looking for work
- [ ] A homemaker
- [ ] A student
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Retired
- [ ] Unable to work

Other: [ ] _____

6. What is your marital status? *

Check all that apply.

☐ Single, never married
☐ Married or domestic partnership
☐ Widowed
☐ Divorced
☐ Separated
Other: ☐ _____

7. Please write below the term that best describes your gender (optional)

_____

Political Office

8. Current Political Office *

_____

9. State and District Representing *

_____

10. Are you employed by the office you hold?

Check all that apply.

☐ Yes, it is my only source of employment.
☐ No
☐ Partially. I am also employed through another job position.
Other: ☐ _____

11.   Political Party Affiliation *

Mark only one oval.

    ⬭ Democratic Party

    ⬭ Republican Party

    ⬭ Other: _____

12.   Year you launched your campaign for your most recent office *

    _____

13.   Year your term began for your most recent office *

    _____

14.   Year your term will / has end(ed) for your most recent office *

    _____

15.   Do you plan to run for re-election? *

Mark only one oval.

    ⬭ Yes   *Skip to question 17*

    ⬭ No   *Skip to question 16*

Do you plan to run for re-election?

16. If not, why? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Term limit

◯ Retirement

◯ I plan to run for a different office

◯ Other: _____

Family background

17. Where were you born? *

_____

18. Where were your parents born? *

_____

19. Year you or your family migrated to the U.S. *

_____

20. Choose all identifiers that represent you. *

Check all that apply.

☐ American

☐ Immigrant

☐ Refugee

☐ Indigenous

☐ Child of immigrant(s)

☐ 1st generation

☐ 2nd generation

Other: ☐ _____

21.   Please write down all the racial and ethnic heritages you identify with. *

_____

_____

_____

_____

Contact Information

22.   Best phone number to reach you. *

_____

Consent Agreement

23.   I give my consent for my survey and interview information gathered by Jessica Rodriguez-Montegna be used for research purposes. I agree for interviews to be recorded. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential and my real name will not be used in reports or publications, unless otherwise indicated. I understand that I have the right to stop interviews at any time. *

Check all that apply.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix 2: Interview Protocol and Questions

I'm interviewing _____ today on _____ at ____.

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed. I will be conducting interviews with each participant to capture several aspects of the lives of each woman. The interviews will cover five themes: family history, upbringing/ life changing experiences, deciding to run, the campaign experience, and experience while in office. As a reminder, you have agreed to the following consent agreement:

   I give my consent for the information shared in this survey and all interviews conducted by Jessica Rodriguez-Montegna with me to be used for research purposes. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential & my real name will not be used in reports or publications. I understand that I have the right to stop interviews at any time and have final approval of the conclusions that will be made of my interviews.

Do you still consent to these interviews under these agreements?

Would you like to be identified when appropriate?

Do you agree to being recorded during this interview?

Thank you, now let's begin.

Family History
Question
- Where is your family from?

- How was your / your family's neighborhood like in the country of origin?

- How did you or your family get to this country?

- What did you / your parents do before you / they migrated?

- What did you / they do when you / they arrived in the US?

- What do you / they do presently?
- Does your family have any experience in formal or non-formal organizations in your country of origin?
- Do you or your family have any experience in political life in your country of origin?
- Since being in this country do you or your family ever return back to your country of origin?

- Do you stay connected with family or friends from your/ your family's country of origin?
  - How?

Upbringing/ life changing experiences
Question
- What is it about your upbringing that you remember the most?

- How was your family relationship before migration?

- How is your family relationship like?
- What were/are the major changes?
- Do you remember an event that marked your childhood or youth in some way?

Question
- Why did you decide to run for office?

- Could you identify any advantages or disadvantages to running for office bearing in mind your migration experience?
- Do you identify any advantages or disadvantages to running for offices as a women.
- Did you identify any advantages or disadvantages to running for office as a (reference cultural identity)?
- How did you announce it to your close friends or family?

Follow up:
  - What was their reaction?
  - How did their reaction make you feel?
- Did you receive any training or mentoring in preparation?

Follow up:
  - If so, what?
  - What information or training do you wish you had received?
- Did you always assume that you would someday run for office?

Question
- How did you distinguish yourself?

- What are some ways that you connected with your constituents?

OR
- When reaching out to your constituents, did your background influence your approach?
  - In what specific ways?
- As a (reference cultural identity) how do you feel it impacted the way you connected with constituents?
- What issues did you focus on during your campaign?
  - Why?

- Did you connect with any organizations to help you reach out to your constituents?

Follow up:
  - What was it about that organizations that made you partner with them in that way?
  - How influential was that organization in helping you reach your constituents?
    - Why do you think they had that much influence?
  - How critical was that organization in your overall outreach plan?
- Did you connect with family, friends, organizations in your country of origin for support or guidance?

Question

- For you, what does it mean to be a politician?

- For you, what does it mean to be a woman of immigrant origin in a political office?

- What are some of the policies that you have championed and are most proud of?
    - Why?

- Can you think of a specific situation when your background influenced your decision making?

- How has your background influenced relationships with your constituents?
    - Can you think of a specific example?

- As a woman, how has your background influenced relationships with your colleagues?
    - Can you think of a specific example?

- Is your work what you imagined it would be?
    - How?

- What do you consider to be the most rewarding part of your job?

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed & your willingness to be open & candid regarding some of your personal experiences. I will take this information and analyze it along with the other interviews that I will be conducting to hopefully draw some conclusions regarding women of immigrant origin in elected political positions. I want to assure you again that your responses will be kept confidential & I will not use real names in my report. If you would like a copy of the final conclusions, I would be more than happy to provide that for you. Do you have any questions for me at this time? Again, thank you so much.

Appendix 3: List of Interviews

Name	Date of Interview	Form	Language	Transcript / Notes
Women of Immigrant Origin in Oregon				
Sofia	July 22, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Itzel	August 14, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Lucia	August 17, 2019 / October 14, 2019 / January 26, 2020	Skype and Text Messages	English	Partial Transcript, Notes
Belen	August 11, 2019	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Elisa	July 25, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Laura	August 22, 2019	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Veronica	August 25, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Elena	August 1 & 10, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Azar	October 28, 2019	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Meera	November 4, 2019	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Men of Immigrant Origin in Oregon				
Gael	August 15, 2019	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Ali	September 23, 2019	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Pablo	August 25, 2019	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Women of Immigrant Origin in Arizona and Georgia				
Iris	July 27, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Clara	July 18, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes
Isa	August 20, 2018	Skype	English	Transcript and Notes

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Brussels / Granada, 2022

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Department of Political Science