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Educational Innovation, Open Educational Resources, and Gender in Latin American Universities

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Abstract: This article analyses the professional identities of nine women academics from different universities and Latin American countries in their relationship with open education (OE) and the production of open educational resources (OERs) for teaching, as a significant key to understand the meaning of being an academic today in a social and economic context such as the Latin American one, and the perspectives this contributes to educational innovation. It arises from the need to deepen research on systemic structures of empowerment for open-access creation and publication, where gender is critical, considering the imbalances that are evident in other fields of educational technology, and specifically in the use of OERs. A qualitative methodology based on grounded theory was implemented, together with the biographical method and digital ethnography, with in-depth interviews with nine women academics from different areas of knowledge from Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Uruguay. The results offer an insight into their professional identities and how this is configured in relation to education, open educational resources, and educational innovation in university teaching. Participation in the open education movement provides a space for empowerment and mobilisation, which contributes to a transformative identity, as an emerging habitus, that underpins educational innovation in this field.

Keywords: open education; open educational resources; gender; higher education; professional identity

1. Introduction

Adaptations to the conditions of advanced neoliberal capitalism [1,2] are among the expressions of a scenario in which Latin American universities are clearly called to undergo a transformation that has a substantial impact on them, permeating all processes and fields as well the professional identities of university faculties, which cannot be separated from their historicity and the social circumstances related to their roles [3]. Therefore, academic subjectivities are currently involved in a professional career that requires that they constantly establish objectives, 'achievements', 'plans', and 'visions' in annual review processes and in the institutionally compulsory career planning [4] and that research funds are pursued to ensure research time, as if non-externally funded research lacked any merit or value [5]. As a result, higher education is fractured by global hierarchies, national and world rankings, and the predominance of English language publications.

In this context, gender gaps still remain, and this is so in spite of the fact that, since the middle of the last century, women have been occupying a multitude of spaces in the academic world. However, gender inequality in academia continues and is well documented within a robust body of transnational literature [6–8] weighted towards the disadvantages faced by women academics working within exclusionary structures and practices and apparently deep-rooted gender power relations [9]. These problems have become even more acute as a result of the pandemic experienced over the past years, which has seen the deepening of the different gaps, including the gender gap [10]. The possible explanations for these problems include, among others, professional interruptions related

to family and motherhood, differences in career life cycles, access to collaboration networks, and others. [11].

In this context, women face a tough battle to be considered as producers of credible knowledge and to be respected in their professional practice—a battle that men in the academic world do not experience [12].

This is why women tend to take refuge in teaching [13], staying away from those spaces that compete for research funds and remaining, within teaching, in the lower levels of academia: teaching introductory and transition courses, or having occasional or fixed-term contracts, which influences the recognition of women as teachers. There is a prevailing assumption that soft skills (i.e., pastoral, school, care, and emotional work), which bridge gaps and break barriers, are a woman's job [14].

Along that way, we find the open education (OE) movement and the open educational resources (OERs) movement, which generate the need to recognise gender marks in the careers of the women working inside these movements—a path that shows the hybridity [15] of the world in which we live. In this case, the women academics engaging in this combine their initial professional development with their work in teaching and the training needs in this field, which, at the same time, requires the development of skills stemming from educational technology.

Who are these women academics, how have they built their identities and what are the implications of gender marks for the very process of development of OE movements?

This article presents a biographic research study that analyses the professional identities of nine women academics from different universities in Latin American countries in their relationship with OE and OER production for innovation in teaching, as a significant link to understand what it means to be a woman academic today in a social and economic context such as the Latin American one.

This text deals with the theoretical perspective from which the research is approached, combining a gender-based look with conceptualisations and the state of the art regarding professional identity, the academic field, OE and OERs from the Global South. Next, we present the results and discussion of our research work, which are the product of 24 h of recorded in-depth interviews with the cases under study. Lastly, we provide our conclusions.

1.1. Teacher Professional Identity and OE

In this study, we understand that professional identities are constructed relationally through one's individual trajectory, training, and employment [16]. This is the product of a socialization process that requires constant negotiation of the ways of being and doing in this profession, based on precedents. A shared common space comes into play between the individual, their socio-professional environment, and the institution where they work and opens the analysis to consideration of the academic and institutional field and the conditions imposed by the struggles and competition to appropriate the capital accumulated in each of them [17].

Understanding the academic profession as a field implies thinking about hierarchies and struggles between areas of knowledge and social power structures, with all of them being cut across by gender as an inescapable participant in the definition of who is speaking and on behalf of whom. In this sense, forms of access and employment conditions are elements that help us understand who women academics are and what they are like, why they participate in OE movements and how gender is a constituent part of that relationship. Paths for entry level and tenure of teaching positions in universities are determined by the socio-historical context, the field, the academic habitus and social capital [18,19]. In this context, it is extremely interesting to understand what is part and parcel of the job, the set of referential beliefs and techniques that are acquired in the profession.

Bourdieu uses the habitus to explain how individuals act, think, and perceive and approach the world and their role in a specific field. The habitus, as a set of 'structured and structuring provisions', both individual and shared [17] (p. 52), and implemented in

practice, presents and justifies individuals' perspectives, values, and actions in relation to the social spaces in which they coexist.

Therefore, professional identities are the result of a continuous biographic process, as there are elements in the socio-individual biographic space that help to understand the forms that this process takes on, intertwined with socialisation in one's home institution, which requires processes of constant negotiation of the ways of being and doing in the profession, based on precedents, and as adherence to institution-built professional models [20].

1.2. Academic Field and Work Conditions

The work performed by university teachers is heterogeneous and complex [21]. First, they are individuals who come from different disciplinary fields. In this context, each discipline has its particular beliefs, codes of thought, behavioural patterns, modes of communication and organisation, and specific forms of division of work and also differences in terms of recognition and prestige. As [18] suggests, the faculties of different university schools are distributed between the pole of economic and political power and the cultural prestige one. Disciplinary fields are distinguished from each other fundamentally by the economic capital and the cultural capital they possess [19]. Gender is not unrelated to this: the existence of a social imaginary around different professions and their feminine or masculine nature is not a new issue [22]. Social sciences and humanities are still a mostly women's niche, while exact sciences and engineering still receive a higher number of male students, a classification related to power structures in the scientific field [18].

In addition, the working conditions of university teachers have been transmuted in the last years towards monetisation and the competitiveness this implies [23]. In Latin America, university teaching has become a residual category made up by graduates from all fields and, more specifically, from those fields offering more limited and complex employment opportunities outside university [24]. The employment conditions and the fact that these educators hold several jobs determine the construction of the academic profession as salaried workers.

Reference [25], in a study on the identity of full-time, non-tenure track faculty, analyse their working conditions and suggest that their identities are constructed as hybrid and dualistic. Their work and roles contain some elements of a profession and some of a job. Their identity is dualistic because as teachers they express satisfaction, whereas as faculty members they articulate restricted self-determination with low self-esteem. This troubled and indistinct view of themselves as professionals is problematic, both for the daily work of teachers and for the institutions, which are, to a large extent, responsible for these uncertain conditions as they tend to diminish their capacities of agency.

The tension between research and teaching has also become part of the configuration of academic work, especially since the last decade, when competitiveness has increased as a result of the neoliberal conditions in which universities have been caught up. Numerous studies show that this has generated a sometimes unsustainable workload [26] that is, at the same time, intersected by gender. There are male-dominated spaces and also women-dominated spaces, with women being more committed to teaching than to research, which conditions their professional careers [13].

In sum, processes of women's socialisation have led them to adopt second-tier professional roles. Being a woman academic in Latin American universities is marked by an understanding of teaching that involves participating in a feminised space, which is undervalued in academia.

1.3. The Academic Field, Gender, and OE

As we have seen, the academic field is not free from struggles in which gender occupies a significant place. Women take shelter in teaching, even if they come from strong, dominant fields [19].

The study conducted by [27] demonstrates the male leadership of male professors and researchers in competitive research projects. Men are also responsible for a higher number of projects, contracts, and agreements, for higher amounts than those of women researchers, in spite of the fact that women's participation is higher in research groups. Among the obstacles that act as impediments to real equality between male and women academics, they point to family conditions, stereotypes, etc. The results show that women produce less research than men and have low levels of professional self-esteem. Factors such as the accumulation of social capital, family responsibilities and self-esteem are limitations experienced by women academics in their research careers [28]. Other possible reasons for gender inequalities in the academic world have been discussed in the literature, such as professional interruptions related to family and motherhood [29], differences in the life cycle of their careers, and access to collaboration networks [11]. Gender-related differences are consistent in all fields of knowledge. The evidence of an indirect effect is of particular concern, as men who publish mainly with women tend to be cited less often [30].

There is little work that explores women academics' professional identities in depth without comparing them with the male standard but on the basis of what they are, think, and do. How to they approach the field of OE and OER creation?

Different feminist perspectives have incorporated the decolonial approach to point out the absence of representation of subjectivities different from the white, male, and Eurocentric norm, which consequently defines a lack of neutrality in technology, designed and used in contexts structured by inequalities and exclusions, power, and privilege [31]. These perspectives have both enriched the critical discourse and contributed optimistic, resilient viewpoints, encountering alternative alliances and resistance within sociotechnical education systems.

For [32], becoming involved in the OE movement and OER production has its roots in the culture of sharing, transparency, and openness, which requires a change of mind-set and of the cultural and social capital involved. She concludes that the resulting academic habitus is at a crossroads and under tension: between the dominant traditional habitus that accumulates symbolic capital based on erudition and other emerging ones, such as participation in social networks and OE movements that propose a different culture of how that erudition should be and how it should be practiced, and which enable other forms of development.

Gender-based approaches in the field of OE and OERs are also recent. New concerns for the perspective of equity, diversity, and inclusion in OE have contributed empirically and theoretically to call into question whether OE is an instrument for social justice in itself. Recently, studies from the Global South [33–35] and other critical studies in the North [36,37] have favoured the emergence of new questions and critical approaches. Numerous voices have emerged that, based on the concept of social justice [38], and from different contexts, explore various theoretical and academic frameworks that account for other ways of understanding OE, focusing on the interests of those who OE currently serves, its purposes, and the power relations that structure it [39] setting a context for a renaissance of social justice, and locate and contextualise the Latin-American perspective globally. Nevertheless, these perspectives have been slightly overshadowed by other Global South regions in the English-dominated sphere, and it is time for a re-articulation of the state of the art in the Global South, and to analyse, from a decolonial perspective, the experiences of the Latin American region, while favouring a path for the emergence of its own perspective in the global concert of the OE landscape.

In that sense, women academics build their identity through their own perception of what is possible for a viable social life [40]. Sometimes they face unique challenges to be admitted and for the advancement of their academic careers, including potential disparities in their salaries and inequalities in promotion opportunities, along with sexual harassment and discriminatory treatment.

In this context, the gender marks [41] that are present in different research studies on women academics' identities [33] make reference to 'helping people', 'educating', or 'serv-

ing', in what constitutes the resignification of the public sphere and the private/domestic sphere as possible spaces in these women's life stories. In addition to the above, the professional work and the economic, authority, and decision-making possibilities this combination constructs configure subjects who also build different meanings regarding women attributes related to service, care work, or the protection of others. In addition, terms commonly assigned to women's work, such as 'administer' and 'organise', have been, to these women, tools or goals that strengthen their individuality, and which also empower them through the recognition of their work in the public sphere.

In this regard, the construction of the OE identity is understood to be transformative, troublesome, and liminal, while it is remarked that OE should be raising awareness of different cultures, systems of values, and epistemologies of subjects that critically reflect on their positionalities and subjectivities, not only from the perspective of 'being open' and 'embodiments of openness in themselves', but also from the decolonial perspective of the relevance of the body-political location of the subject who is speaking, and the feminist perspective of the social situation of the epistemic agent (gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and physical capabilities) [42,43].

Hence, the importance of representing the biographic process of construction of academic identities in adopting OERs and OE, a perspective that allows us to go in more depth into the subjective factors of the adoption of open practices, delve into the lives of these professionals, and throw light on the foundations and trajectories that structure their actions and decisions, within their academic practice and the way in which open practices are articulated in the construction of these identities, in their 'being open'.

Participating in the OE movement provides a possibility of agency that makes it possible to behave on the basis of expectations, motives, purposes, and capabilities that make them subjects of their action in a space of empowerment that provides a transforming open educator identity [44]. All of this is viewed and performed from a specific location: Latin America. Therefore, territoriality is relevant and locates the body politics of the woman subject that is speaking [42].

Aligned with this, OE studies need a perspective on agency and structure [33] that enables a look at the possibilities of innovation it offers, in addition to integrating both post-coloniality and de-coloniality perspectives. It is also relevant to oppose the dominant epistemologies of the North to the epistemologies of the South, from a non-epistemic perspective, a non-predominance of the dominant form of Euro-modernity (with its dualistic and instrumental rationality), thus enabling a pluriverse, the existence of many worlds, from visualising those ways of doing, thinking, and living that are invisible behind the abysmal line, an ecology of knowledge [45] of connected sociologies [46].

Therefore, there emerges a consensus on the need for deeper research into systemic empowerment structures for open-access creation and publication, where gender is critical, bearing in mind the imbalances seen in other fields of educational technology [47] and the evidence of gender inequality in women's access to educational resources and formal learning opportunities, a lack of gender and cultural sensitivity in curriculum design [48] (and gender differences in OER use, which is lower among women teachers) [49].

1.4. Research Questions

The questions that guided the research are:

- Who are they, and how do Latin American women academics working on OE perceive themselves? (Q1)
- How does adhering to the framework of OE and the production of OERs influence the construction of their professional identity? (Q2)

2. Materials and Methods

With a view to analysing the relationships between the construction of women academics' professional identities and OE, we opted for the interpretive paradigm and implemented a qualitative methodology based on grounded theory through the biographic method [50].

2.1. Selection of Subjects

For the initial selection, the Latin American Conference on Learning Technologies (LACLO) community was used, which allowed us to access a database of individuals with sufficient diversity to provide relevance, variability, and comparability, which are fundamental for the methodology chosen [51]. This is a teaching population sensitised and close to digital educational resource development.

The population includes 283 individuals from 10 countries in the Americas. Most participants are from Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela. Together, these countries account for almost 85% of the total number of participants in the population under study, with 59.4%, 13.8%, and 12.0%, respectively, thus constituting what we have called the high-participation group. For their part, Mexico, Chile, and Costa Rica together account for almost 10%, with a participation rate of 3.9%, 3.2%, and 2.8%, respectively, thus constituting the medium-participation group. Lastly, Cuba, Ecuador, Uruguay, and the United States together account for 5%, with a participation rate of 1.8%, 1.4%, 1.4%, and 0.4%, respectively. These constitute the low-participation group.

Out of the total, 120 participants are male (42%) and 163 are women (58%), which shows a slightly feminised field in Latin American educational technology and OE. Most women participants come from the field of computer science (50), educational computer science (25), education (25), physics (12), and chemistry (10).

For this study, we selected women differentiating them by country, then by institution and, lastly, by communities or work groups, with the set of groups being formed as follows: one country for each group, according to the classification by degree of participation (high, medium, low) presented above. From this, Brazil was initially selected but, as no response was received from the subjects, it was changed for Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Uruguay.

The nine women academics were selected with a view to maximising the differences between the comparison groups in order to generate substantive theory as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected academics, institution of affiliation, resources developed, and area of discipline.

Subject	Country	Institution	Resources	Disciplinary Area
V1	Venezuela	Universidad Central de Venezuela	Case studies, problems, exercises	Technology, Exact and Natural Sciences
V2	Venezuela	Universidad Central de Venezuela	Videos, presentations, images, illustrations, slides	Technology, Exact and Natural Sciences
CR1	Costa Rica	Universidad Estatal a Distancia	Videos, infographics, rubrics	Social, Humanities and Arts
CR2	Costa Rica	Universidad Estatal a Distancia	Digital radio, videoconferencing	Social, Humanities and Arts
CR3	Costa Rica	Universidad Estatal a Distancia	Videos, podcasts, simulations	Technology, Exact and Natural Sciences
CR4	Costa Rica	Universidad Estatal a Distancia	Test questions, solutions, rubrics	Social, Humanities and Arts
U1	Uruguay	Universidad de la República	Images, diagrams and diagrams of presentations	Technology, Exact and Natural Sciences
U2	Uruguay	Universidad de la República	Presentations (Prezi)	Health Sciences
U3	Uruguay	Universidad de la República	Videos and bibliography with images, audio-visuals, podcasts	Social, Humanities and Arts

The following information collection tools were used:

1. An open thematic interview aimed at identifying attitudes and practices in relation to OERs.
2. A biographic interview aimed at retrieving contextual information linked to the subjects' personal and professional teaching backgrounds and the characteristics of their educational centres as well as their culture, organisation, etc.

For carrying out the in-depth interviews, videoconference tools were used which enabled video recording. More than 24 h of recording were obtained, which corresponded to two to three interview instances with each subject, each lasting between 40 min and 1 h 20 min, with a total of 51 videos. These data were transcribed and integrated into MAXQDA 11 software. When quoting verbatim from interviews, the following codes were used: country, interviewee code, type of interview, paragraph in which the quote is placed, as in the following example: (Costa Rica/CR 1, focused, 2–2).

2.2. Analysis

The data analysis was performed following the procedures of open, axial, and selective coding, which led to the construction of the category 'Teacher Professional Identity Construction' and its properties and dimensions.

Two properties were identified, which we have called Teaching Career and Teaching Subject.

In the property Teaching Career, dimensions such as the following were identified: 1. Entry into the teaching profession, where the subjects explain the origin and the particularities of the process through which they became teachers, and any significant influences and people. 2. Teacher professional development, which deals with experiences linked to teacher training and peer-to-peer training, teaching evaluation processes, professional development possibilities through opportunities for mobility, existence of support and stimuli, access to postgraduate training and professional updating, as well as the conditions to access scientific information sources. 3. Teacher employment status, which expresses the particularities of the subjects' careers as teachers, promotions and advancement, seniority and salaries.

In the property Teaching Subject, three emerging dimensions were identified: 1. The meaning of teaching. Notions such as influence on students' lives, passion, the transmission of ethics, and teaching as giving and receiving nourish the experience of teaching with meanings. 2. Being open, which includes views and stances on OE. 3. Professional satisfaction. The perception of oneself as teacher, a retrospective look to the past and a prospective look to the future account for the Personal Satisfaction dimension in relation to Teacher Professional Identity.

3. Results

The narratives of the nine women academics under study express recurrences that enable an overview of their professional identities in terms of what they are, feel, and aim to be, and how this takes shape in relation to OE and OERs and teaching innovation. Most of them come from disciplines considered to be scientific, and the conditions set by their biographies in their personal and family history are strongly present in their process of engaging in teaching. This section itemises each of the categories of the study.

3.1. Entry into the Teaching Profession

In some of the cases under study, the women academics entered university teaching as a result of identification bonds with another woman teacher. In other cases, they did so through acquaintances that encouraged their entry into university teaching and, at the same time, became 'models' who guided them through the must-be and the social function of university teaching.

> ... over the course of your training there is always a reference that marks you. You say, OK, I'd like to be like this person ... (Uruguay\U 3 (bio) 40–41)

In other cases, entry into the profession results from countryside-to-city migration processes. Chance and opportunity, or 'rebound', is the interpretation that these women teachers make of the itineraries that lead a professional to become an academic. A significant relationship is also seen between a professional trajectory and entry into university, as is the identification of the teaching career with the possibility of a 'job' as employment refuge.

The interpretation of the entry into teaching expressed as a vocation originates in narratives that refer back to childhood, when they played to be teachers, and to inspiring mothers who were unable to exercise this profession. The gender dimension is also expressed in a distance teaching profession compatible with care practices.

> ... my profession ... comes from my mom's side, who was the person who made me feel it. It was something she liked and wasn't allowed to do in her day because that was frowned upon ... (Uruguay\U 3 (bio) 40–41)

3.2. Teacher Professional Development

In the field of teacher professional development, a tension is observed between research (closer to the disciplinary level) and teaching (within an educational framework), which expresses the changes of the new neoliberal university, with support and stimuli differentiated according to the type of university or budgetary and political matters, among others.

A significant presence of professional updating activities as an area for their professional development as teachers is also identified. The time factor seems to be a limitation to training, linked to teaching staff hiring modalities. There is no evidence of specific policies, so decisions are left to personal will, all of which seems to have an impact on the professionalisation of the institution's teachers.

> ... you always try to find those spaces; we always try to find free courses or we may possibly look for courses of a certain level which can be funded by our universities. (Costa Rica\CR 1 (bio) 37–38)

With respect to the pedagogical components of teacher training, it is perceived that all of these academics have participated in some course or training experience or other, but also in postgraduate courses that enable the acquisition of skills and competences in terms of both the contents of their disciplinary areas and pedagogic matters.

> Then I did another distance postgraduate course ... which was about the production of didactic materials and that was because my teaching quest was becoming more significant. Then some sporadic courses that were available. I took several courses on university teaching ... (Uruguay\U4 (bio) 45–47)

A marked interest in education as a disciplinary field is observed, which in some cases is manifested in hybrid training paths and, in other cases, in paths closely linked specifically to the teaching of their disciplinary field, in which they engaged out of interest. With regard to postgraduate training, a marked interest in the technology-education articulation is identified.

In addition, these hybrid profiles are linked to technical and pedagogic advisory roles at their institutions.

> ... and I'm now finishing my doctorate in Education because I think this mixture and interaction between the technology area ... and the education area is wonderful and great. (Venezuela\V–1 (bio) 6–12)

3.3. Teacher Employment Status

Regarding teacher employment status, some tensions are seen between the level of dedication and the types of positions (interim or contract teacher), and their impact on the level of participation in the fields of governance, academic direction, and management,

spaces of one's own to perform their functions, and opportunities to devote time to research. There is job insecurity, with work overload relative to the contracted hours, discontinuous hiring and unpaid holidays, continued mobility and loss of qualified human resources. There is also structural deterioration and a dividing line between those who decide to stay and those who leave. Lastly, there are inflation-depreciated wages, teachers who resign, and what they define as an 'institutional drain' and lack of autonomy. Human resource training is also marked by the certainty of being a generation that is bound to leave.

> ... because I have a contract that's renewed every year. On the other hand ... it's unbelievable that they have teachers with five-hour contracts; some even have three-hour contracts. (Uruguay\U 4 (bio) 26–26)

> I think it's hard right now that there should be many tutors who've been on the staff for a long time but haven't found a chance to get a steady job, and by that I mean becoming tenured. (Costa Rica\CR 2 (bio) 30–31)

> ... Well, that's a problem we have right now, as the number of enrolled students has also increased and they want us to work using the same resources we had in 2010. (Venezuela\V 2 (bio) 38–38)

A process of 'becoming an academic' is evident in the narratives. This process is seen as one of personal transformation: 'University transforms you'. It is a process marked by tensions between resistance and mobility, and lifelong learning. These trajectories show strong attachment to the institution and the teaching role. They are teachers with an identity, an academic identity, the identity of being educators.

> University changed me, and changed me a lot, and for the best. It made me a more able, more self-confident person. (Uruguay\U 3 (bio) 82–83)

> Between the way I was when I joined and the way I am now, I think I've matured a lot professionally. (Costa Rica\CR 1 (bio) 67–75)

3.4. Satisfaction with the Teaching Profession

The self-image that becomes evident in the narratives is that of a teacher in transformation, in training, in learning. They demand consistency from themselves and coherence between theory and practice. They perceive themselves as having an identity marked by work, dedication, experience. They are aiming at innovation, although there is also attachment to 'tradition'. They are strict, they seek equity, a balance with students, parity. Their action is student oriented. They are unsatisfied, they question practice. They seek to problematise and denaturalise what is usual; reflection on practice motivates them to change, to seek solutions—which promotes their self-improvement as teachers and allows them to visualise institutional challenges. Their roles are receiving and contributing, returning what has been given, freedom, increased responsibility. They have a role that is about commitment, ethics and the transmission of values. Reflection on practice and dissatisfaction is 'a thorn' that pricks them into improving.

> Yes, I like what we've done so far but I think it can always be better. (Costa Rica\CR 4 (bio) 66–66)

One of the most remarkable aspects is that satisfaction is not perceived by teachers as individual but as something that should be collective, aimed at institutional prestige and at an action whose effects last over time. Their look to the future lies between the personal and the collective. Personal development resides in their commitment to having an impact on the quality of the institution and its governance—keeping on building knowledge and the university sphere amidst discouragement and crisis, maintaining their individual and collective project.

The appraisal of the teaching profession is cut across by the social perception of this role and the university–society relationship, the impact of university to contribute to social change by performing the three functions university has: teaching, research, and extension, from a perspective of deep institutional commitment.

> . . . these three functions of university—teaching, research and extension—are a combination that makes university an institution with the ability to transform, as when I add the possibility to think, to research into what's going on, I can then pour that into my teaching as well . . . (Uruguay/U 4)

For faculties, being a university teacher is cut across by social perception.

> . . . but there are places where teachers still have more prestige than in others, such as university . . . (Uruguay\U 2 (bio) 99–99)

Their way of looking to the future is midway between the individual and the collective, between one's career as a personal process and the teaching career as an exercise of institutional construction. Two sides of the same coin, which is the profession of university teacher. Improving personal abilities and expanding one's ties with the outside world, searching for cooperation, 'going out to get some fresh air', 'expanding one's horizons', all of which is also determined by social and economic conditions.

> I think that's my vision: to be able to work a little more in cooperation with other parties, in other different contexts. (Costa Rica\CR 1 (bio) 68–68)

3.5. Being Open

There is a clear attitude to OE that is reflected in the idea that production financing and the sharing of educational resources is part of what is already paid for in teachers' wages; therefore, it would not be appropriate to expect higher salaries for copyright.

> I already got paid for the resource I made. That is . . . (Venezuela\V1)

The motivations to make educational resources open are structured around reutilisation, which enriches educational materials since comments, evaluations, changes, and improvements can be received from other specialists. This makes it possible to develop the materials in a 'more collaborative and collective' way, 'to know what others are doing' and to receive 'external contributions'.

Other motivational factors include making educational resources 'more global' and potentially accessible by anyone and anywhere, and making 'progress in knowledge', conceiving OERs as a contribution to scientific knowledge on the basis of the premise that 'knowledge should be public'.

Gaining more public visibility and influence as a result of the fact that 'a higher number of people will see', being able to 'expound it to your peers', developing 'more efficient communication' and being 'proud to see your work published' are also motivational factors to publish educational resources as OERs.

Sharing, they believe, is the 'essence of teaching' and 'should be almost mandatory'.

> . . . I believe that making it public should be part of the essence of teaching . . .
> The more global your material, the more collaborative the product you obtain.
> The more global your material, the more efficient the communication of it, and the higher the number of people. (Venezuela\V 1 (thematic; 1st part) 116–116)

4. Discussion

Through this paper, the questions guiding the research have been answered: Who are and how do Latin American women academics working in OE perceive themselves (Q1)? How does adherence to the OE framework and the production of OER influence the construction of professional identity (Q2)?

In relation to the first question (Q1), the self-designation 'I am a worker' evokes class consciousness, breaking one of the taboos that are typical of the academic habitus [18]. The hiring conditions and multiple forms of work of these women teachers are perhaps determining factors in the construction of this teacher professional identity.

Entry into the profession through the vehicle of another woman academic who acts as 'selector' or 'mentor' marks their trajectories, as these academics become 'models' that

serve as guides on how a university teacher should be. Family is another of the 'mentors' identified in the study, particularly mothers, who act as 'development networks' [52].

The various forms of choosing and entering university teaching and the subsequent trajectories account for the influence of capital, particularly social capital, in the subjects' trajectories. One can see a conception of teaching associated with the purpose and management of the university institution as a practice field that incorporates research and extension (work with other social players). This leads those who are predisposed to academic practices in OE and design of open digital resources to strategically adopt a habitus that incorporates different fields. 'Gaming strategies' are guided by objective limitations cut across by gender and the implicit possibilities of their respective positions. This results in a 'double-game' strategy, a commitment to OE that allows research participants to be relevant to a field and develop a habitus, even if residual [32]. The promotion and social prestige factor remain in the social imaginary on academic professionals, in spite of its fragmentation, segmentation, and expansion [24], all the more so in the case of Latin America, with a clear process of overcrowding in universities and heterogeneity of higher education institutions. On the one hand, in the cases analysed, these social promotion factors are affected by economic and political changes in the region, which—particularly in the case of Venezuela—have a deep impact on teachers' quality of life, professional careers, and teacher professional identity. On the other hand, some transformations can be seen in the higher education scenario at a global and regional level, which translates into the experience of a sort of identity crisis—which cannot be separated from its historicity and social circumstances—related to their professional role [3]. In short, it is along the paths to admission and continuance of staff in Latin American universities that teacher professional identity is built.

Our results also show that participation in the OE movement offers an opportunity for agency that allows teachers to behave according to expectations, reasons, and purposes—an ability that turns them into subjects for the development of innovative actions (Q2). It is a space for empowerment and mobilisation, which gives them a transformative identity [42]. Their visions and actions take place from a particular territory: Latin America. Therefore, territoriality is present and locates the body politics of the woman subject that is speaking [43]. This is manifested in the institutional construction commitment that is assumed, and the work carried out with others for its implementation.

Faculties' teaching careers could be described as extended, evolutionary, and with a marked tendency towards the convergence of education and technology. Their narratives reveal their dedication to what they call 'the academic career' in reference to the development of professional competence in the educational and technological field, to the detriment of their original professional development. Two paths that are presented as opposites and which imply different habitus in the framework of struggles in the academic field [19,32].

In the highly competitive context that universities have become, research and the fight for funds to conduct it are a male terrain; teaching offers stability [13] and the field of educational technology provides an empowering space to these women academics. It makes it possible to face the symbolic capital of the academic field, historically constructed [32] from a patriarchal stance. It is not by chance that most teachers interviewed have a background in fields of knowledge located within the space of power, although gender patterns place them on a softer side [14].

This evolution within the discipline-education-technology continuum accounts for the gender characteristics that are typical of the women academic profession and the development of competences needed to intervene in an educational context that increasingly requires not only knowledge on the disciplinary field, more identified with the academic profession, but also pedagogic and didactic knowledge as well as technological knowledge [53]. The trajectories of the cases analysed are driven by these needs. Development processes in these fields of teacher training are fundamental for selecting and developing educational resources and significantly integrating them into teaching practices.

Entry into the academic profession, a product of the gender conditions, cultural and social capital required, and the countryside-city migration processes that can be seen in the narratives of the academics under study, can be interpreted in the light of changes in educational policies [3]. The description of their teaching positions as 'work' explains this situation, even if it is a residual category [24].

Gender marks [41] become visible both in the choice of profession and in the access to the labour market and professional development, with preponderance of the altruistic moral discourse model, which articulates teaching action from its social perspective. The narratives reflect the role of the university sector, and especially women academics, in creating knowledge, educating young people, and contributing to the training of professionals in their disciplines.

5. Conclusions

The results of our research enable an understanding of the personal and professional identities of women engaged in educational innovation through the adoption of open education at universities of the Latin American region. The decolonial and feminist perspective allows us to observe the epistemic geopolitical-corporal transformation [54] that occurs as a result of the speaking of voices located in the margins of academy, as these are Latin American and women, and the forms that inhabit these identities and construct open education from the margins.

The study approaches from the biographical process to delve into the subjective factors of the adoption of open practices, delving into these professionals' lives and shedding light on the foundations and trajectories that structure actions and decisions that are articulated in the construction of their 'open being'. The recovery of their experience through these discourses locates the speaking woman body-politics subject [43], which implies a relevant result of this research. Participating in the open education movement offers these women academics to become subjects of their action enabling an innovative open educator identity [42].

The findings allow us to account the teachers' personal and professional identity as an important aspect to identify in OER adoption studies. The relevance of teachers' agency has been identified as a central factor in the adoption of OER, which is complemented by looking at identities from a critical and gender perspective.

Among the recommendations for improving ownership and agency in OER adoption, derived directly from the results of this study, is the need to integrate these perspectives into models of analysis, as well as action frameworks for practice and policy development at different levels. Supporting the agency of teachers is one of the main challenges, in particular promoting and favouring through policies, the inclusion of women in these processes. Integrating the OER perspective articulated with the various areas of professional development of women academics with co-participation characteristics, would allow appropriating their potential as agents of curricular change and innovation. The results also show the need to strengthen the key role played by women academics in the development of capacities through training tasks. Strengthening this participation implies giving visibility to these processes and enabling the women academics participation in the design and implementation of programs for the specific proposals' development, aimed at empowering the teaching community with knowledge for the broad exercise of their capacities for open sharing.

Peer groups can exert influence at the micro level, as learning spaces for the negotiation of meanings and the construction of the professional identity of women academics. Consequently, these educational communities should be the centre of policies and frameworks for action. The collaborative component provided by communities of practice allows the development of bottom-up policies and practices, favouring the participation and visibility of the actions carried out by women academics in open education in universities and in the current OER landscape.

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