

**BECOMING PROFESSORIAL: GRADUATE STUDENT SOCIALIZATION  
AND THE REPRODUCTION OF INEQUALITY**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

For Candelas M. DeLuca and Frederick P. DeLuca.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF APPENDICES	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER	
<b>I. Introduction</b>	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Significance of the Problem	7
Purpose of the Study	9
<b>II. Literature Review</b>	13
Theories of Socialization	14
Socialization Explored in the Higher Education Literature	19
Models of Graduate Student Socialization	22
Descriptions of Graduate Students' Experiences	30
Race and Gender in Higher Education	34
Future Directions for Studying Graduate Student Socialization to	43

Faculty Careers	
<b>III. Methods</b>	49
Research Approach	49
Discipline, Site, and Participant Selection	50
Theoretical Foundations	52
Conceptual Framework	56
Evolution of the Intended Case Study Design	58
Data Collection	62
Analysis	67
Parameters of Qualitative Research and Interpretive Considerations	69
Limitations	74
<b>IV. Descriptions of Data and Study Participants</b>	77
University Site Descriptions	78
Graduate Student Participants	80
Faculty Participants	82
<b>V. Results: Messages and Mechanisms of Socialization</b>	84
The Weak Forms of the Hidden Curriculum	88
The Delivery of Socialization Messages	101
The Strong Forms of the Hidden Curriculum	115
<b>VI. Results: Exploring the Reproductive Functions of the Hidden Curriculum</b>	151
Acknowledging the Durability of Department Norms: “We’re all too middle class”	156

Processes of Reproduction	164
The Reproduction of Racism	174
Interrupting Reproduction and Challenging the Hidden Curriculum	185
<b>VII. Considering the Implications of Graduate Student Socialization and the Reproduction of Inequality</b>	189
Implications for Theory	192
Implications for Research: Scholarship and Methods	196
Implications for Practice	202
APPENDICES	209
BIBLIOGRAPHY	213

## LIST OF TABLES

### TABLE

I.1 Percentage of full-time instructional faculty, Fall 2011	2
IV.1 Graduate Student Participants	80
IV.2 Graduate Student Participant Summary	82
IV.3 Faculty Member Participants	82



## LIST OF FIGURES

### FIGURE

II.1 Trocchia and Berkowitz' (1999) model of doctoral student socialization	27
II.2 Conceptual framework of graduate student socialization.	44
III.1 Conceptual framework of graduate student socialization to faculty careers.	57

## LIST OF APPENDICES

### APPENDIX

A. Interview Protocol: Doctoral Students	210
B. Interview Protocol: Faculty	212

## **ABSTRACT**

### **BECOMING PROFESSORIAL: GRADUATE STUDENT SOCIALIZATION AND THE REPRODUCTION OF INEQUALITY**

by

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Although African Americans and Latino/as comprised almost 30 percent of the U.S. population, in 2010 they were awarded fewer than nine percent of the doctoral degrees. The consequences of this underrepresentation include a corresponding lack of faculty of color, intellectual vigor, and failure to capitalize on the nation's intellectual resources.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 37 faculty and graduate students in psychology at two institutions in the United States. I investigated graduate student socialization to faculty careers, and analyzed how students learned to be graduate students and faculty members, how faculty members engaged graduate student socialization, and how racism impacted graduate student socialization.

The socialization messages that graduate students received regarding what was required to become successful academics were delivered by the weak and strong forms of the hidden curriculum. In this study, the weak forms of the hidden curriculum I discovered included research, teaching, networking, commitment, public speaking, navigating politics, and flexibility. Factoring much more prominently into the lives of this study's participants, were the strong forms of the hidden curriculum. Strong forms of the hidden curriculum included confusion, submission and conformity, competition, masking, and disconnection. Socialization messages, regulated by the hidden curriculum and supported by departmental norms, were received by graduate students by watching faculty, interacting with faculty, interacting with peers, department communications, and with the absence of interaction and feedback.

There are specific ways in which the hidden curriculum serves to reproduce inequality, and specifically racism. As a result of the reproductive effects of the strong forms of the hidden curriculum, I recommended that the problems of underrepresentation and attrition in graduate education and the professoriate be addressed with an analytical approach that centers the extent to which norms and structures reflect the goals of graduate education, and reproduce inequity. Further study of the norms in graduate education, the mechanisms that support the operationalization of the norms, and the purposes of the norms, is warranted.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

The number of doctoral degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions in the United States is at an all-time high, with over 50,000 doctorates awarded in 2010 (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 2014). Over the last 30 years the popularity of some fields has waxed and waned, but the more interesting picture can be found in an examination of the trends of who gets doctoral degrees. In 2011, almost 30% of doctoral degrees conferred were to international students, or “non-resident aliens” (Survey of Earned Doctorates [SED], 2012); and of US citizens, Whites were overrepresented in every field with the exception of ethnic studies. Conversely, Latino\as and African Americans continue to be underrepresented (NCES, 2002, 2012; see Table I.1) though “the proportion of doctorates awarded to blacks or African Americans has risen from 4.0% in 1992 to 6.3% in 2012, and the proportion awarded to Hispanics or Latinos has risen from 3.3% in 1992 to 6.5% in 2012” (SED, 2012). There are positive indications that people of color are achieving within particular fields. For example, in the field of education, and for the first time in 2001, African Americans received doctoral degrees at rates equal to the proportion of African Americans reported in the US Census (NCES, 2004; US Census, 2001).

This persistent underrepresentation is cause for alarm for several reasons, but perhaps of most obvious conclusions: the lack of African American and Hispanic/Latino doctoral recipients signals the continuing challenge of racially diversifying faculties at US colleges and universities (Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation [WWNFF], 2005).<sup>1</sup> According to the Woodrow Wilson Nation Fellowship Foundation, in some disciplines, the proportion of African American and Hispanic/Latino faculty decreased or the rate of increase did not approximate the rate of increase in the population at large. Because of these findings, the WWNFF called for increased research attention into the retention of graduate students of color. The authors concluded that “it is simply unclear what works best, or what does not work, in ... retaining doctoral students of color” (p. 3). The authors shared a parallel concern for the underrepresentation of African American and Latino/a faculty.

Table I.1. Percentage of full-time instructional faculty, Fall 2011<sup>A</sup>

	Asst. professor	Assoc. professor	Professor	All ranks <sup>B</sup>	US population <sup>C</sup>
Asian American or Pacific Islander	13	10	8	9	5
Black or African American	7	6	4	6	13
Latino/a or Hispanic	5	4	3	4	17
Whites	75	80	85	79	63

<sup>A</sup> Source: National Center for Education Statistics. *Condition of Education*, 2014.

<sup>B</sup> Includes lecturers and instructors.

<sup>C</sup> Source: US Census Bureau, 2014.

Concern for and attention to the disproportionately small numbers of African American and Latino/a faculty in higher education in the United States produced scholarship that investigated their experiences and marginalization in academe (e.g., Alire, 2001;

<sup>1</sup> Asian Americans were not underrepresented at faculty ranks or as PhD recipients.

Antonio, 2002; Henfield, Owens, & Witherspoon, 2011; Moody, 2004; Park, 1996; Patton, 2009; Phillips, 2002; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Several studies addressed overt barriers to faculty equity, including gendered salary inequities, the disparities in representation, as well as differentials in job satisfaction (e.g., Bellas, 1993, 2001; Benjamin, 2001; Johnsrud, 1993, 1994; Olson & Maple, 1993; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008). Despite this attention to the experiences of faculty of color, there remains a need to consider the messages that faculty of color and white faculty received *before* they became faculty.

In this study I investigate the experiences and perspectives of graduate students and faculty members in two departments of psychology, at two universities in the United States. There is little publically available data that extracts the data provided in the table above by discipline and rank. The National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF; by the National Center for Education Statistics) last reported that in 2003, 81.4 percent of all full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff in the social sciences were White. While data is not available regarding the racial demographics of faculty in departments of psychology, a 2012 study by the American Psychological Association (APA) suggests that underrepresentation is a problem. In contrast to the data presented in the table above, where 79 percent of full-time faculty were White, the APA study of members reported that 85.6 percent of full-time faculty were White. Both the APA and NSOPF surveys underscore the underrepresentation of faculty of color as compared to the US population. In addition to underrepresentation, the data suggests that there are challenges with recruiting and retaining faculty of color: the National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates reported in 2012 that Whites received 74% of doctorates awarded to

US residents in the social sciences. Higher proportions of people of color are earning doctorates in the social sciences than are present in the professoriate.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Scholars have chronicled the extent to which the totality of the education system in the US reflects and perpetuate racial inequalities found in society at large. Myriad researchers have investigated the atrocious outcomes of a raced educational system. Topics of note have included, for example, the of underfunding of schools in areas dominated by African American and Latino peoples, disproportionate school punishment, tracking of minoritized students, and the institutionalization of high-stakes testing (see, for example, Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Dickens, 1996; Leonardo & Grubb, 2013; Haney et al., 2004). Recently, in *Separate & Unequal*, Carnevale and Strohl (2013) outlined the ways in which postsecondary education reproduces White racial privilege. Despite the fact that race and racism in the US continue to exact specific influence on social and educational equity (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), very little is known about the extent to which social identity characteristics (e.g., race and gender) interacting with systems of whiteness, and socio-historical legacies (e.g., racism and sexism), impact the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers. Moreover, models of graduate student socialization that characterize processes of knowledge and behavior transmission fail to account in any meaningful way for organizational norms or individual agency (aside from motivation) on the part of graduate students or faculty members.



Commonly, socialization as a concept encompasses the processes by which all the rites, rituals, norms, interests, and values of a highly integrated and complex system of higher education are communicated to and assimilated by new entrants to the profession (e.g., Bragg, 1976); or more specifically, socialization in graduate school includes learning the "specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms and interests of the profession" (Baird, 1993). In one of the earliest discussions and synthesis of the socialization literature specific to higher education and faculty careers, Bragg (1976) identified socialization processes as reciprocal. That is, although faculty members were the primary agents of socialization, "neophytes" or graduate students contributed to changing and challenging existing organizational cultures. Unfortunately, Bragg provided no further elaboration regarding *how* processes were reciprocal or how graduate students contributed to the socialization of their peers. Because models of graduate student socialization to faculty careers are inadequate, the traditional markers of "successful" socialization are rendered at best suspect, and at worst unusable.

One researcher identified successful socialization by two characteristics, speed of acculturation and completion of the degree (Parent, 2004); while another prioritized the degree of "internalization" of the professional identity and accompanying behaviors (Bragg, 1976). The latter defined successful socialization by the extent to which a graduate student had consumed the skills and markers of the profession provided to him or her, and integrated them into his or her identity. Weidman and Stein (2003) supported this model and concluded that successful socialization includes a graduate student demonstrating appropriate knowledge, skills, and values. Focusing on the individual neophyte graduate student as the sole recipient of the goods of socialization presumed

little agency on the part of the student, little variation in the translation and utilization of these “goods,” no consideration for the norms of graduate education (Braxton, Proper, and Bayer, 2011), and left available few options for responding to (or resisting) the pressures of social, cultural, and professional conformity.

All of the aforementioned socialization models follow what Friere (1970) described as the banking concept of education. Students were seen as repositories for knowledge and teachers make deposits. This model of education did not recognize students as being engaged participants in learning experiences; they had little to no agency or critical consciousness. While these socialization models did not consider explicitly graduate students as blank slates, they described professional learning processes that required students to adopt and absorb the knowledge and culture of the professional academic world. As much as these models did not account for graduate students’ agency and dismiss personal identity and development, they provided even less insight into potentials for organizational, structural, or cultural change.

Moreover, previous models of socialization to faculty careers did not account for social identity characteristics, institutionalized structures, or departmental norms. Some research focused on the experiences, satisfaction, and achievement of graduate students, and some investigations have been concerned particularly with specific identity characteristics (e.g., Johnson & Harvey, 2002; Margolis & Romero, 1998). This literature offered conclusions and recommendations for addressing the preparation or reform of the student but failed to consider the extent to which the setting, department, college, or academic culture could influence the experiences of the graduate students (e.g., Nettles, 1990). Structural or organizational change was not considered. This emphasis on the

deficit(s) of the student, to the exclusion of the department, is not surprising when socialization models approached the development of graduate students into faculty careers from this same vantage point. That is, popular models of socialization of graduate students to faculty careers considered the acculturation of students to existing organizational cultures in a temporally linear fashion with emphasis on the extent to which the student must change, adapt, and acquire new information and ways of being, rather than the extent to which the organization could change (or does change) as a result of student input and participation in an academic community, department, or organization. Acculturation models assumed that the new entrants were deficient and lacking in critical ways that the organization should address; and that norms and structures were essential and natural. Additionally, models implicitly assumed consistency and permanency of norms, structures, and settings such that a critical examination of this permanency was not possible.

### **Significance of the Problem**

Emphasizing an acculturation model of socialization of graduate students into faculty careers necessarily puts underrepresented students at a disadvantage. The overwhelming majority of faculty members at all ranks is disproportionately White and male, and in an acculturation model, by definition the general tendencies might be to endorse, support, and promote ways of being and knowing that reflect existing perspectives, histories, and traditions. This cultural inertia can support climates intolerant of difference and could result in lower enrollment and retention of students of color and other “nontraditional” individuals. Two gaps in existing research hinder reform efforts

designed to improve the recruitment, retention, satisfaction, and achievement of graduate students: the lack of knowledge about socialization processes (specifically what messages are being communicated, and the methods by which the messages are communicated); and the lack of attention to the context, norms, and structures of graduate education.

Prior research examined the experiences of graduate students, faculty, and particular subpopulations, in hopes that costly attrition could be curbed, new faculty members could be properly and successfully prepared for careers in academe, and that student and faculty communities could be diversified further to represent the diversity of the United States (e.g., Austin, 2002; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). If colleges and universities continue to be concerned with attending to structural diversity goals, the improvement of campus culture and climate, and creating programs for the acculturation of new faculty of color, without addressing institutional responsibility for organizational change, there will be little increase in the current numbers of faculty of color, and little improvement in the quality of their experiences. More specifically, rich information is needed about how graduate students learn to be faculty members so that colleges and universities institutions can effect, produce, and create necessary change. As Margolis and Romero (1998) concluded, “There are no detailed studies on the operation of hidden curricula in higher education or the (re)production of racial, ethnic, and gender hierarchies” (p. 10), and “Strategies for achieving educational equity in higher education require an understanding of the barriers and obstacles presented by the hidden curriculum” (p. 26). This study addresses those gaps.

Although treatments of socialization included descriptions of formal and informal processes, a few examinations identified the subtle or veiled processes and objectives of

socialization as the “hidden curriculum” (Cribb & Bignold, 1999; Hatt, Quach, Brown, & Anderson, 2009; Margolis & Romero, 1998). This characterization is usually reserved for the indirect ways that the curriculum inside schools socializes students “to the values and norms of modern society” (Feinberg & Soltis, 1992, p. 59). When applied to the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers, it includes those indirect ways in which graduate school life serves to socialize graduate students, or faculty-in-training, into the values and norms of modern, technological colleges and universities. Hidden curriculum as a descriptor also encompasses the indirect rewards and consequences for conformity to faculty culture.

Research identifying and examining the hidden curriculum of graduate education is necessary for several reasons. Colleges and universities require tools and strategies to better assess campus climates and cultures, for improved retention of graduates students in general and students of color in particular (WWFFF, 2005). The retention of graduate students of color is necessary to achieve proportional representation in academe. African American and Hispanic/Latino faculty are underrepresented in US colleges and universities. In order to attend to this problem, the numbers of PhD recipients from these groups must increase.

### **Purpose of the Study**

In this study, I examined the experiences of graduate students who aspired to faculty careers in order to further complicate existing models of socialization. I paid particular attention to the ways in which race and racism mediated and influenced formal and informal socialization mechanisms. Specifically, in-depth study into how graduate

students are being prepared for a professional life in academe provides insight for identifying and scrutinizing the formal and informal ways by which the culture of graduate education is supported, perpetuated, and reproduced. This study provides more accurate understandings of socialization to faculty careers and insight into graduate school attrition, completion, and representation. I used discoveries of the weak and strong forms of the hidden curriculum and analyzed how norms and dominant ideologies reproduce inequity.

I used the concept of hidden curriculum in order to study the socialization of graduate students into faculty roles.

The *hidden* curriculum refers to the knowledge, beliefs, values or practices which are implicit in the practice or culture of an institution or program and learned by its participants, but which are not explicitly derived from or openly designed to achieve the stated aims (Gilbert, 2009, p. 56).

Acknowledging the reproductive function of the hidden curriculum (Apple, 1980), I interrogated department norms, and this previously characterized one-way system (i.e., the socialization of graduate students by an organization or institution) in order to uncover the ways in which graduate students learn, resist, persist, translate, and assimilate the information necessary to succeed; and the mechanisms by which inequality is reproduced. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) conducted interviews with faculty of color at predominately white institutions and uncovered many norms to which faculty members are socialized. These norms included networking with influential senior faculty, publishing in "appropriate" journals, and the devaluation of teaching activities. Tierney and Bensimon identified unique ways in which faculty of color were included or excluded in the perpetuation of academic norms. These norms suggest the existence of

corresponding barriers to successful faculty careers –for both current faculty of color and for graduate students aspiring to the professoriate.

My study is unique in that I consider both the experiences and perspectives of graduate students and also faculty members. To date, no studies have presented the experiences and perspectives of graduate students along side those of their department faculty to study socialization. Using an exploratory-explanatory, multi-level method, I collected data at two public, research universities, interviewing faculty and graduate students in departments of psychology, in order to respond to the primary research question: How does socialization of graduate students to faculty careers occur? That is, what are the mechanisms by which graduate students become socialized to their academic paths? In this study I examined the messages received by graduate student participants and the ways in which these messages influenced strategies and behaviors. Furthermore, I investigated how the study participants gave and received messages regarding how to become a faculty member. I conducted interviews racially diverse sample of 37 faculty and graduate students in psychology programs. The data I collected allowed me to consider how common socialization theories and/or models engage social identity characteristics, individual agency, and departmental norms in graduate student socialization. Finally, I engaged dominant ideologies, like racism, and examined how inequality is reproduced in graduate education. The results of this study yields new insight to socialization in academe and assists in improving graduate education for the recruitment and retention of a diverse professoriate.

Perpetuating popular acculturation models of graduate student socialization into faculty careers necessarily puts underrepresented students at a disadvantage (Davidson &

Foster-Johnson, 2001). Because the overwhelming proportion of faculty members are White males, a cultural durability may influence particular ways of cultivating new faculty. Furthermore, though prior research described the experiences of graduate students, faculty, and particular subpopulations, in hopes that costly attrition could be curbed (e.g., Austin, 2002; Johnsrud, 1994; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999), none considered how dominant norms and ideologies affected these experiences. We know little about how graduate students receive implicit and explicit messages, and how they respond to those messages. We need a more detailed and complex understandings of how the values, norms, and behaviors of academe are reproduced.

Colleges and universities need tools and strategies to better assess campus climates and cultures for improved retention of graduates students in general and students of color in particular. Understanding the complexity of the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers will assist colleges and universities in improving recruitment and retention efforts. This study augments, nuances, and challenges, our existing knowledge of socialization in order to improve degree completion rates. At stake is the future of research, new knowledge creation, the health of our communities, and the promises of a diverse democracy (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002).



## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

In this chapter I introduce and critique of the socialization literature and more specifically, the scholarship on socialization in higher education. This body of literature spans several disciplines and invokes “socialization” in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. In general, the dominant discourse of socialization attempts to investigate how an individual becomes a member of a group or organization. The literature I critique fails to identify how individuals interact with and interpret their environments, and fails to consider how social identity characteristics, department norms, and context influence and interact with socialization processes.

First, I provide definitions of socialization and a brief discussion of relevant socialization theory. Then, I include the investigations of socialization models particular to graduate students. Several of these models influenced the literature describing graduate student “socialization experiences,” and as these descriptions suggest, social identity characteristics may be related to how students experience graduate school. To further examine the influences of race and gender on professional academic socialization, I devoted a section to the summary of “race and gender in higher education.” I conclude this chapter with a summary of the weaknesses in dominant conceptualizations of graduate student socialization and include a model for use in future research.

## **Theories of Socialization**

The integration of an individual into a group incorporates processes of personal development and role acquisition as addressed in investigations of socialization by the disciplines of psychology and sociology. The former is concerned primarily with an individual's developmental progressions in their acquisition of and adaptation to new social and cultural knowledge. For example, developmental psychology addressed gender and racial socialization for understanding "the mechanisms through which ... [specific] information, values, and perspectives" about society and culture are transmitted to new entrants (e.g., children), how an individual develops these particular facets of identity, and the effects of certain mechanisms of socialization (see for example, Hughes et al., 2006; Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006).

Sociology, as a discipline has been concerned very generally with socialization regarding the influence of structures and contexts on individuals' identity or role formation; the formation of structures, institutions, or organizations which require degrees of individual conformity; and the mechanisms that develop individuals into commonly oriented (grouped) participants. For example, literatures addressing class socialization investigated the extent to which a particular class membership and degree of identification with that membership influences an individual's behavior as "the everyday experiences associated with a person's class location that affect beliefs and attitudes about the structures of ... society" (Brimeyer, Miller, & Perrucci, 2006, p. 474). Also, socialization in schools has been characterized by the influence and content of messages where schools help to form students' behavior and values in formal and informal, implicit and explicit ways (see for example, Brint, Contreras, & Matthews, 2001).

The foundation of the discipline of sociology can be described as a persistent intellectual curiosity for describing social issues, phenomenon, order, relationships, etc., with “scientific” study. One of the most well-known sociological theorists, Emile Durkheim, devoted a majority of his intellectual and political energy to investigating the ways in which “social morals” become internalized through formal, structural means (e.g., education) and examined individuals’ characteristics in order to hypothesize the influences of social institutions (1922/1956). For example, the transmission of desirable morals can occur through formal institutions such as schools and churches. Durkheim’s marriage of education and socialization was fueled by his concern for the deterioration of a collective consciousness, and the necessary ways that this deterioration could be stymied (Ritzer, 1996). In these ways Durkheimian socialization suggested the promotion of functional necessities in support of common, and decidedly normative, processes and structures for inculcating norms and behaviors.

In critical departure from Durkheim (1922/1956), Merton (1949/1968) attended to structural functionalism. For this reason, Merton has been referenced in scholarship investigating socialization to the professions and in academe. Like Parsons (1937) before him, Merton was concerned with examining the capabilities of systems to engender and produce positive, as well as dysfunctional, functions and relationships. Unlike Parsons, who was concerned with large, complete, and complex systems, Merton focused attention to smaller scale classifications and “middle-range theories” addressing groups and organizations (Ritzer, 1996, p. 249). More specifically, Merton was concerned for the standardized and repetitive characteristics of “social roles, institutional patterns, social processes, cultural patterns, culturally patterned emotions, social norms, group

organization, social structure, devices for social control, etc.” (Merton, 1949/1968, p. 104) for their social functions, not for the investigation of individual actor motivations. Merton has been credited for his use of *anticipatory* socialization and his assumption that opportunities to engage in socialization processes follow defined patterns (Keith & Moore, 1995). Additionally, Merton (1949/1968) indicated that *socialization* was “a process through which individuals acquire[d] the values, norms, knowledge and skills needed to function in a given society” (Johnson & Harvey, 2002, p. 298). In these ways, Merton has been used by contemporary scholars to frame and inform the research into socialization processes in academe.

Later, and in a shift from earlier emphases on large-scale system analysis, Parsons (1959) suggested a human capital model of socialization. This model focused on the (alleged accuracy of) measurements of individual ability. The individual actor is less affected by social interactions or structural-cultural influences, but rather succeeds or fails as a function of his ability. Parsons assumed that there existed “universalistic criteria which operate uniformly across educational organizations” (Keith & Moore, 1995, p. 200) regardless of individual identity or organizational characteristics.

To this history we owe the infancy of our inquiry into the ways in which professions sustain and promote common norms, values, and practices, and the processes by which individuals become socialized into the professions. Despite early attention (e.g., Merton) to the social context and characteristics of an organization or group, the aforementioned theoretical foundations have been used more recently for focusing the study of socialization on the effects, characteristics, and experiences of the individual

being socialized –with little critical examination of the normative purposes of socialization.

Social reproduction theories compliment theories of socialization insofar as they provide insight into how systems of inequality are produced, maintained, and seamlessly repeated (or reproduced). Bourdieu’s work in cultural and social reproduction acknowledges socialization processes (specifically, education) as central to the transmission of norms, values, behaviors, and knowledge necessary to maintaining the status quo and protecting systems of inequitable power and privilege. In fact, Bourdieu contended that systems of education were critical in reproducing inequality and power relationships (1973).

It is not possible here for me to review or even summarize Bourdieu’s work on the topics of social and cultural reproduction, but I will risk conceptual violence (Leonardo, 2010) to introduce the concepts relevant to examining socialization processes within graduate education. While in this study I do not investigate social stratification or class reproduction, the focus and purpose of Bourdieu’s work, or the causes of or potentials to interrupt the reproduction of social stratification, I suggest that Bourdieu’s (1977) concepts of habitus, capital, field, and practice, are helpful for investigating and analyzing how academic subcultures are reproduced, and how in the state of constant reproduction, two forms of inequality, supported by dominant ideologies, are also reproduced: 1) inequalities that exist within the academic subculture (e.g., arbitrarily and symbolically privileging certain behaviors, identities, perspectives, and epistemological traditions), and 2) inequalities that exist in US society (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism).

Bourdieu explored habitus, capital, field, and practice in several of his works; here I reference only a few. *Habitus* (1977, 1984) refers to the constellation of values, beliefs, perceptions, and dispositions, informed by resources, previous experiences, and social-historical forces that frame both the identification of what is “appropriate,” and those appropriate behaviors, themselves. Bourdieu engages analytically with several forms of *capital*, namely social and cultural capital (1986). For example, cultural capital refers to those attitudes, preferences, and behaviors produced in a particular system of resources and schooling (formal and informal), that reflect institutionalized value. Social capital represents the aggregation of relational resources that reside in networks and social connections. *Field* (1984) approximates the implicit rules for action, codifies interactions and provides a setting by which standards are set and capital valued. Finally, *practice* captures how habitus and capital interact within a field to produce socialized actions and reactions.

Bourdieu maintains that education contributes to creating habitus, and frames possible actions of individual actors in a field, limited by the interactions with and uses of capital. Habitus simultaneously reflects and recreates historical power relations to enable the perpetuation of structures and the distribution of capital. The sociology of education, therefore,

... becomes the production of the habitus, that system of dispositions which acts as a mediation between structures and practice; more specifically, it becomes necessary to study the laws that determine the tendency of structures to reproduce themselves by producing agents endowed with the system of predispositions which is capable of engendering practices adapted to the structures and thereby contributing to the reproduction of the structures (1973/2003, p. 174).

These concepts are useful to consider how, through the interactions of structure and agency, processes of socialization in graduate education exist not only to produce

particularly credentialed academics, but also to perpetuate inequality within academia. Gopaul (2011) argued that Bourdieu's work was appropriate for addressing studies in doctoral education, and socialization in particular, and he concluded that the "tools" of capital, habitus, field, and practice "illuminate the very structural and procedural dynamics of doctoral education that serve to reconstitute particular inequities, thereby enabling some students, but also limiting the potentialities of others" (p. 13). We can use these tools to uncover the interactions and structures that reflect, reify, and legitimize academic power structures and mirror larger societal inequities.

In the following section I explore how socialization has been taken up in higher education literature.

### **Socialization Explored in Higher Education**

Though scholarship in education fields have adopted these aforementioned social science, approaches very little has been done to investigate habitus/norms the processes by which individuals learn how to be graduate students, and how they learn to be apprentices for a faculty career. The socialization of students has garnered attention recently as it applies to the development of graduate students and the preparation of researchers (e.g., Eisenhart & DeHaan, 2005; Lovitts, 2007), but there is a marked undertheorization of how graduate students are simultaneous and doubly socialized as graduate students and future scholars in a particular discipline. In this chapter I offer a critical reorganization of the socialization literature to suggest that more work is necessary to understand the mechanisms by which graduate students become familiar with the norms, values, and interests of their discipline. Additionally, I maintain that the

socialization models created having used this dominant and traditional definition are inadequate to account for and explore 1) dynamic processes of socialization and change in the academy; 2) the maintenance and transmission of norms; and, 3) the influence of race and racism on the messages and the mechanisms of socialization.

Professional socialization has been defined traditionally as the constellation of processes by which individuals develop and internalize norms, values, attitudes, interests, skills, and practices common to a particular profession, and perform them in “a socially acceptable fashion” (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957, p. 41). Socialization in graduate school involves attention to formal (e.g., structural, curricular, organization) as well as informal (e.g., unplanned or “unofficial” interactions) processes for two different yet related developmental experiences that include socialization for role acquisition as a graduate student, and socialization for entrance into the world of academe as a professional. Generally speaking, the socialization of graduate students explains how graduate students learn to be faculty (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994).

Some researchers presented graduate student socialization as an optional or ancillary aspect of doctoral socialization. Stage and Maple (1997) suggested that graduate student socialization was an intentional, active process by which graduate students became incorporated into a department. This characterization could be improved by including components for identifying the *implicit* ways in which values, norms, and behaviors are transmitted, as well as consideration for the graduate student as a socializing agent, contributing to the organizational culture as well as to their own socialization. The definition provided by Taylor and Antony (2001) in their study of African American doctoral socialization in education, suggested that there are hidden or



passive ways by which socialization occurs: “[socialization can be defined as] a process by which newcomers learn the encoded system of behavior specific to their area of expertise and the system of meanings and values attached to these behaviors” (p. 186); and the authors implied that socialization is something done to the graduate student as opposed to a process and context within which the student participates –along with other members of the organization, community, or academic department. This “one-way” absorption of a graduate student into an academic department and discipline has been used to support a type of acculturation or assimilation model. For example, Weiss (1981) attempted to empirically support a description of graduate student socialization processes where “students acquire a certain set of appropriate attitudes and self-conceptions and ultimately begin to enact the role for which they have been prepared” (p. 14). In a quantitative study of over 8000 doctoral students in a variety of disciplines and at a variety of institutions, Weiss concluded that successful socialization and commitment could be measured by productivity and professional self-concept, and informal contact with faculty was the largest significant predictor of increases in these factors. She suggested that further research should examine these relationships in greater depth so as to maximize the resources of the individual departments along with increasing the commitment of the graduate student.

Other scholars have explored graduate student socialization by examining how professional identities are formed. Baker and Lattuca (2010) contended that a variety of relationships and interactions in graduate education shape the associated processes of expertise and scholarly identity development. This “developmental networks approach” posited that in addition to faculty-student relationships, graduate students assimilate to

academic cultural norms by having and forming relationships with peers and others (Baker & Pifer, 2011; [Baker] Sweitzer, 2009). Similar to the approaches described above, this approach did not examine critically the norms that neophytes adopt to become “insiders,” and equated successful identity development with assimilation.

### **Models of Graduate Student Socialization**

According to traditional socialization models, in order for students to be successfully socialized into faculty careers, that is, for an individual student to adopt, acquire, commit to, and internalize the norms, values, for example, of the professoriate and pursue that career path within a particular discipline, they need to attempt, complete, and succeed at common academic tasks (e.g., coursework, comprehensive exams) and pre-professional experiences (e.g., conference going, publishing). In addition to these traditional markers of progress, students need to accurately observe, assess, and demonstrate knowledge of the relationship hierarchies, reward structures, and other normative structures (Austin, 2002; Staton & Darling, 1989, as cited in Weidman et al., 2001). The negotiation of these formal, informal, curricular, and normative dimensions of socialization has been recognized at least in part, as a subconscious process (Weidman et al., 2001). Because professional socialization involves cognitive as well as affective dimensions, researchers in higher education have addressed curricular aspects as well “dispositions” of graduate students’ experiences (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 4).

Few models exist that explain how graduate students progress through their department, acquire necessary tools, interact with significant others, and persist to degree. Differences in context, specifically departmental culture and discipline, may thwart

attempts to forward a common model of how graduate students are socialized to faculty careers. In a model that incorporated both psychological and sociological dimensions, Thornton and Nardi (1975) described the dynamics of role acquisition. This model explained the transformation and information attainment of an individual new to an organization and/or role by considering the individual's perspective along side that of the community or organization. This temporal stage model included four stages: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal. It is in the final stage of this model where an individual engages in some socialization reciprocity. She/he is actively involved in shaping the role, and thereby the organization, while internalizing the requirements for the new role. It is at this stage that the authors introduced the consequences of incongruence or "adjustment problems": if an individual experienced sufficient psychological disequilibrium, he or she could change their personal values to fit the new role, change the social structure, "go along" but receive little personal satisfaction, or relinquish the new role all together—in graduate education this could constitute attrition. Though these consequences were presented in the fourth stage, they could just as easily have been results of the earlier three stages.

A social support model for undergraduate students was forwarded by Tinto (1975, 1987) and applied to graduate student populations by Girves and Wemmerus (1988). This model investigated the connections of grades, student characteristics, financial support, satisfaction, involvement, and departmental characteristics to degree progress in doctoral programs. These researchers found no effect for grades or student characteristics on degree progress, but rather the strongest predictor was involvement and interaction with faculty. Their final model emphasized the importance of social connections and

integration, determining that persistence is a product of an individual's experience (e.g., relationships with faculty and financial support), and departmental characteristics (e.g., policies and discipline). Girves and Wemmerus found that bonds to a department were likely to reduce "premature voluntary departure." Though this model is helpful and instructive for developing further inquiry into how graduate students progress to degree, there are challenges with applying these researchers' conclusions. The study used a quantitative approach and collected data in 1984 across 42 programs at one large, research university, and equated "socialization" with "involvement." As a result, we have little information addressing *how* graduate students receive socialization messages and are apprenticed into faculty careers. Additionally, the graduate students who persisted to degree completion might not have been interested in pursuing a faculty career; the students may have successfully negotiated graduate student role acquisition, but not necessarily that of a future faculty member.

Rosenbaum (1986) developed a tournament model of socialization that refocused attention from the rational-actor-individual to the organizational impact of structurally sanctioned and timed *opportunities* for crucial activities. The most pronounced difference between the Rosenbaum and Girves and Wemmerus (1988) models is in the conceptualization of and effects of individual ability. Rosenbaum maintained that ability was an outcome of both demonstrated performance and structural opportunities, where Girves and Wemmerus constructed ability in terms of grades and that persistence to degree had little to do with ability, but rather was a function of student-faculty relationships and opportunities afforded to the individual student (dependent on departmental culture, policy, and financial assistance). Rosenbaum's conceptualization of

ability is instructive in the consideration of contextual influence for the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers. Beyond Girves and Wemmerus' identification of the importance of relationships with an organization's actors (i.e., faculty in a program), Rosenbaum identifies program structures that affect an individual student's socialization.

More recently, Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) built upon the work of Weidman (1989) that addressed the retention of undergraduate students, and Bragg (1976), who addressed graduate student socialization, in their attempt to create a conceptual framework for the discussion of *The Socialization of Graduate and Professional Students in Higher Education*. Despite the qualifier that students, departments, institutions, disciplines, and professions differ widely, Weidman et al. presented a model generalizable presumably across all permutations of program, discipline, and individual.

Owing in large part to the work of Thornton and Nardi (1975) summarized above, Weidman et al. (2001) presented four stages (i.e., anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal), three core elements (i.e., knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement), and the accompanying nature of identity and commitment (i.e., cognitive, cohesion, and control) (see Kanter, 1968) for inclusion in their model of graduate student socialization. The model that these scholars presented considered the dynamic and non-linear characteristics of human interactions and experiences, but did not illuminate a common path, order of experience, or possible critical relationships. It is possible, then, to assume, that Weidman et al. (2001) address all of the aforementioned characteristics in equal measure, without defining specific models or outcomes. The importance of context can be inferred from the Weidman et al. presentation, but as is obvious from the

aforementioned stages, elements, and characteristics, greater attention was paid to the individual and changes to the individual as opposed to the structural or institutional elements of socialization. Additionally, because the elements are not operationalized into measurable or actionable items it is difficult to extrapolate how departmental characteristics, or contextual factors, for example, interact with individual students' experiences.

The socialization of doctoral students includes a variety of interactions and experiences and some researchers have attempted to qualify the types of relationships that students forge within an academic program. Based on interviews with 28 doctoral students in 15 marketing programs, Trocchia and Berkowitz (1999) proposed four models of doctoral student socialization characterized by a matrix of "high" or "low" levels of formal (i.e., program structure) or informal (i.e., student-faculty interaction) socialization. More specifically, the "nurturing" model had high degrees of both formal and informal socialization; the "top down" model had a high degree of formal socialization and a low degree of informal socialization; the "near peers" model had a low degree of formal socialization and a high degree of informal socialization; and the "platonistic" had low degrees of both formal and informal socialization. Despite the fact that all of these models were characterized in some degree by the organizational culture of a department, the authors concluded that "inner desire" was the "key component to professional success" (p. 753), and the personal disposition or personality of the student was critical to understanding successful socialization in marketing doctoral programs. Additionally, Trocchia and Berkowitz suggested that the student could and/or should choose a particular socialization model based on their personality.

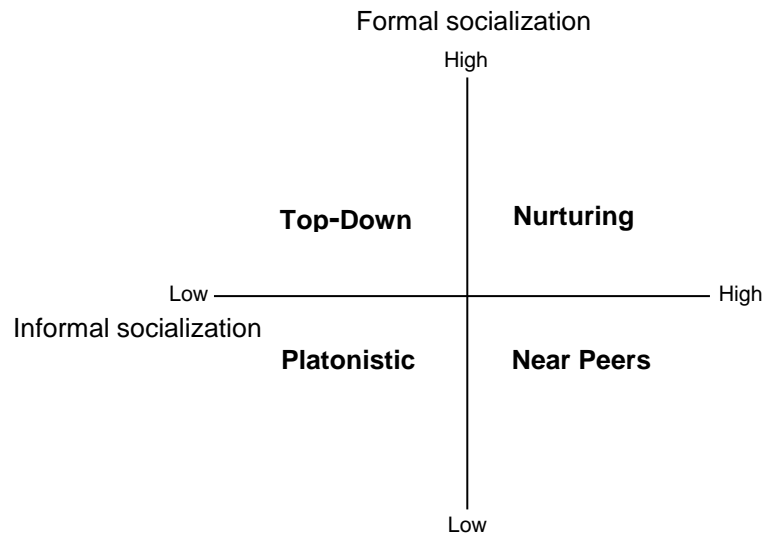


Figure II.1. Trocchia and Berkowitz' (1999) model of doctoral student socialization.

Most models of graduate student socialization presume that students *receive* or *acquire* new knowledge and skills and that it is an additive experience. Some researchers suggest that the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers also requires “resocialization,” or “transformation,” or “divestiture.” Although student novices are assumed to absorb and assimilate skills, attitudes, and values in an additive manner (i.e., “investiture”) the corollary, *divestiture*, “involves stripping away those personal characteristics seen as incompatible with the organizational ethos” (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994, p. 29).

Resocialization has been considered a corollary process to socialization (Wheeler, 1966). Within traditional socialization processes, “romantic notions” and other evidence of inaccurate or inappropriate orientations must be eliminated or reshaped in the developmental course towards academic socialization and professionalization (Weidman

et al., 2001). Freyberg and Ponarin (1993) studied resocialization in graduate students by looking at how attitudes toward teaching and undergraduate students changed over the course of one to three years, with comparisons of pre-candidates and candidates. Interviews with 19 doctoral students in sociology, political science, or language departments, at one large Midwestern research university revealed that commitments to teaching eroded as a student became a candidate, additionally, self-doubt and alienation lessened. Freyberg and Ponarin suggest that the “structural aspects of graduate schools tend to encourage the process of resocialization” (p. 144).

Freyberg and Ponarin (1993) identified three major structural aspects that contributed to resocialization, or the “[correcting of] some deficiency in earlier socialization” (Wheeler, 1966, p. 68). These included time constraints and stress, the reward structure for research, and the professional culture for research. Through these mechanisms graduate student pre-candidates were able to “adopt an altered self-identity which corresponds more closely with that of the research scholar,” improving their opinions of themselves and their professors, while their opinions of teaching and students become more negative (p. 144). Though these researchers observed that there were no differences in resocialization by gender or discipline, there was no discussion of race and resocialization results; we might speculate that the study sample included only white respondents.

Finally, in a quantitative study of 309 sociology doctoral students at 16 randomly chosen universities, Keith and Moore (1995) tested a professional socialization model they developed that contained variables informed by the aforementioned human capital (Parsons, 1959), social support (Tinto, 1975, 1987), and tournament (Rosenbaum, 1986)



models. The sociology programs chosen for this study included both public and private universities, and represented a range of prestige scores (Conference Board of Associated Research Councils, 1982), though there was an overrepresentation of students from “high” and “above-average” rated programs. Keith and Moore modeled three outcomes of professional socialization for their structural equation model analysis. These included professional confidence (an index of two items), satisfaction with the program (an index of three items), and career path preference (offering six career options). Predictor variables included demographic information about the participant, department prestige rank, initial funding, first-year graduate grade point average (GPA), access to faculty mentoring, professional activities, peer support and active graduate voice.

Keith and Moore (1995) found that first-year graduate GPA, access to faculty mentoring, and professional activities contributed to professional confidence in positive and significant ways, while peer support contributed negatively. Access to faculty mentoring, peer support, and active graduate voice were associated positively with general satisfaction. They were unable to model career path preferences. In general these authors found that access to mentoring was “quite important in students’ professional development and satisfaction” (p. 209). Keith and Moore concluded that in this study, mentoring was not found “to be associated with the demonstration of ability. Instead we discovered that it resulted from an exchange that occurs between faculty and students on the basis of attributes other than demonstrated ability” (p. 209). Though these researchers did not hypothesize as to the nature of these “attributes,” we might conclude that social identity characteristics could be subsumed in this descriptor. Race and age were found to be associated with other socialization characteristics and components: Whites were found

to receive higher first year grades than non-Whites; and based on some open-ended survey items, the authors concluded that “both alienation and racial insensitivity impede” the socialization of students of color and affect social support, integration into the program, and mentoring opportunities (pp. 210-211). Furthermore, the results of the Keith and Moore study did not identify causal links between mentoring and socialization, for example, or *how* students engage in various departmental or professional opportunities, but rather it provided correlations between various components of socialization.

Though these socialization models differ widely in regards to how they were empirically tested and derived; using them, we are unable to identify the mechanisms by which graduate students are socialized to faculty careers, how norms prescribe and proscribe behavior, or how race and racism influence socialization. Without further investigation and critique, these models reify dominant conceptualizations of socialization such that excessive attention is paid to the characteristics of the individual to the exclusion of department structures and socio-historical influences. As an illustration of this preoccupation, in the following section I present literature from the field of higher education that describes the “socialization experiences” of graduate students.

### **Descriptions of Graduate Students’ Experiences**

In addition to differences in definitions and theoretical perspectives evident from the corpus of socialization literature, sometimes it is difficult to disentangle socialization from its various incarnations. Socialization is mentioned in conjunction with experiences or “socialization experiences” (e.g., Turner & Thompson, 1993); role identity,

commitment, and acquisition (Thornton & Nardi, 1975); “[professional] preparation” (e.g., Austin, 2002); and integration and persistence (e.g., Tinto, 1987).

As a group, the literature that focused on graduate student socialization investigated and described the *experiences* of graduate students in higher education. The empirical pieces in this section have utilized quantitative as well as qualitative methods in order to capture the perspectives, perceptions, and reflections of graduate students enrolled in graduate programs. In addition to describing experiences of graduate student and/or subpopulations of graduate students (e.g., medical students, students in the life sciences, first year doctoral students, African American students), a portion of this graduate student socialization literature addresses the appropriateness or effectiveness of graduate education for preparing students for careers in academe –and the “major gap” between the needed preparation for the next generation of faculty and the current state of graduate preparation and support (Austin, 2002, p. 129). In general, this group of literature does not purport to investigate *how* graduate students receive socialization messages; how these messages might differ by discipline, departmental, context, or social identity; how norms influence socialization; or how students’ interpretations affect their behavior. In this group of studies, the experience of the graduate student was centered for the purpose of illuminating graduate school climates and cultures. Socialization, in this body of literature, is an “umbrella” term used to combine the social experiences of a graduate student in graduate school with more veiled or implicit reference to the mechanisms of socialization.

Some literature described graduate student experiences and targeted audiences of professional educators (e.g., faculty, deans) to propose reforms for graduate education,

and programmatic components of graduate education (e.g., teaching assistant training, mentoring). For example, some authors present empirical based works that target graduate students and focuses on “survival strategies” with hopes of improving socialization experiences and increasing degree completion goals (e.g., Austin, 2002a; Nelson & Lovitts, 2001). This “advocacy” literature challenges the dominant or traditional discourse of how students *should* progress through graduate education and highlights how graduate education is experienced by the students themselves. In this approach to investigating socialization, there is an explicit intent to call attention to inequality so that retention and satisfaction can be improved. For example, Austin (2002b) appealed to higher education leadership to reform graduate school in order to “better prepare the next generation of faculty” (p. 138). She suggested improvements in advising, cohesive curricula, explicit feedback, development opportunities, and intentional conversations about career paths; and emphasized the unique responsibility of those in the higher education scholarly community.

In a conceptual-biographical essay by three women of color faculty members, Balderrama, Texeira, and Valdez (2004) described the “struggles of women of color in the academy” in order to illuminate how colleges and universities replay socio-historical exclusions of people of color, more specifically how “differential treatment along race, class and gender is systemic and part of the historical ideology of academia within the US” (p. 136). While these scholars outlined the “negative and hostile” components of academic socialization, the majority of their piece was dedicated to autobiographical reflections of their professional journeys, and “practical strategies for the institution and

the individual for addressing the differential treatment of female scholars of color” (p. 146).

Most socialization models suggest that interaction with predecessors or field/profession experts (Wheeler, 1966) speeds socialization to faculty careers, such that investigations of graduate student experiences often include considerable prodding into the type and quantity of faculty interaction and/or mentoring (e.g., Blankenmeyer & Weber, 1996; Boyle & Boice, 1998; Bruce & Moore, 1995; Dixon-Reeves, 2003; Dolly, 1998; Turner & Thompson, 1993). We know less about how mentoring and the products of mentoring, for example, complement or depart from other sources of information. All of the aforementioned scholars who engaged in research that described graduate student experiences, identified this topic by using the term “socialization.” I argue that graduate student experiences comprise a component of socialization processes, but without attention to norms, structures, and dominant ideologies, this literature does not assist us in organizing these experiences into models of socialization.

Virtually without exception, the literature addressing the experiences of graduate students and early career faculty members conveys a stressful, uncertain, demanding, confusing, lonely, risky path. Graduate school is presented as something to endure, and/or survive, where new faculty are held with a bit more care, wishing them the best in what will prove to be a personal and professional marathon. Indeed, Austin (2002) found that the experiences of graduate students and new faculty can be characterized by uncertainty, disorganization, and lack of information. She concluded that there were four major themes that captured the experiences of graduate students (across disciplines). These included:

1. Graduate preparation for the professoriate is often not organized in a particularly systematic nor developmentally focused way.
2. Aspiring faculty and early career faculty members do not always receive sufficiently explicit statements of expectations or regular feedback.
3. Aspiring and early career faculty members often have a limited understanding of faculty careers, higher education history, and institutional differences.
4. Aspiring and early career faculty members express concern about the quality of life for academics (pp. 129-136).

### **Race and Gender in Higher Education**

As introduced earlier, socialization processes to faculty careers contain formal as well as informal elements. From a structural-functional perspective, these elements can be explored using a formal and hidden curriculum framework. Where the “formal curriculum” of graduate student socialization includes written policies, stated goals, or explicit codes of conduct and professional responsibilities, the hidden curriculum includes those veiled or implicit ways in which college life serves to socialize new faculty with rewards and consequences for professional conformity. There is a hidden curriculum, “weak” and “strong,” in academic culture (Margolis & Romero, 1998). Considering the interactions between habitus and capital, we might surmise that those individuals with the least cultural capital are most at risk for negative socialization experiences leading to attrition for and in faculty careers. These individuals are typically identified by ascribed social identity characteristics, such as race and gender, owing to dominant ideologies reflecting and protecting those in power. In this section I give attention to the literature that has investigated how race and gender influence and impact academic socialization.

Margolis & Romero (1998) explored the experiences of women of color in academe and found that individual women experience institutionally held ideological

contradictions and ambiguities. For example, while colleges and universities around the country espouse the desire to achieve a level of structural diversity in their faculties (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002), new hires who are women of color are frequently set up for failure. Despite an institutional commitment to structural diversity, that is the numerical representations of faculty of color, women of color often find that “their individual perspectives, community backgrounds, and analysis that shed light on issues of diversity are less valued” (Margolis & Romero, 1998, p. 24). Commonly, research interests in social justice and diversity are criticized as too narrowly tailored or excessively personal, and women of color faculty are encouraged to fit in with their departments’ research agenda and conduct “mainstream” research (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001).

Institutional ambivalence and contradictions involved the mixed messages given about the requirements for promotion and tenure processes. For example, typical tenure-track faculty positions at Research I institutions seldom reward the mentoring of students, transformative teaching pedagogy, or within-institution service at levels on par with research and publication production (Park, 1996; Tierney & Bensimon, 2002; Turner & Myers, 2002); but these can be the same activities for which early career women of color faculty are given responsibility. Researchers have suggested that women are at a particular disadvantage in current systems of promotion and tenure (Park, 1996).

Current working assumptions regarding (1) what constitutes good research, teaching, and service and (2) the relative importance of each of these endeavors reflect and perpetuate masculine values and practices, thus preventing the professional advancement of female faculty both individually and collectively. (Park, 1996, p. 47)

Additionally, faculty of color may face an undo burden in regards to service in academe (Baez, 2000; Tierney & Bensimon, 2002). The major element of academic life that works uniquely against minority faculty is the burden of "cultural taxation." According to Padilla (1994),

"Cultural taxation" is the obligation to show good citizenship toward the institution by serving its needs for ethnic representation on committees, or to demonstrate knowledge and commitment to a cultural group, which may even bring accolades to the institution of which is not usually rewarded by the institution on whose behalf the service was performed. (p. 26)

Faculty of color are frequently involved in more hours of service than White faculty members (Tierney & Bensimon, 2002). This extra service burden involves being on more committees, informally advising minority students, participating in search committee interviews and recruitment activities, being local cultural "experts," and being in positions of high visibility (e.g., moderating university-wide panel or introducing a lecture series). At times these opportunities can provide a means for networking and finding out about expectations, and it may also be flattering, but it also takes away from research productivity.

Indeed, women of color are in a triple bind if they aspire to tenured faculty positions in Research I institutions: 1) they must navigate the "traditional" expectations for promotion and tenure, 2) they must balance the traditional demands with the demands of mentoring students of color and those on the margins who invariably seek them out, and 3) they must balance the previous competing demands with their own personal identifications to their discipline and vocation. Women of color in faculty positions experience organizational barriers, hostile climates, lack of collegial respect, unwritten rules for governing university life (e.g., the limiting of committee involvement and time



with students), and a paucity of professional mentors (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). These characteristics taken in concert could be discussed as both being products and processes of the hidden curriculum of socialization to the professoriate.

The hidden curriculum of graduate education has produced implicit expectations for behavior. According to Margolis and Romero (1998) these expectations included competition, individualism, detachment from research, assertiveness, self-confidence, and loyalty to colleagues. They hypothesize that students experience an additional level of socialization complexity when there is a mismatch between these aforementioned behaviors and those rewarded in professional capacities by universities for tenure and promotion. Additionally, Margolis and Romero suggested that individual socio-cultural identity, life experiences, and research interests affect socialization. For example, women of color must navigate qualitatively distinct expectations from their mostly white colleagues in mostly white institutions. Elements of the “strong” form and coercive processes of the hidden curriculum of graduate school socialization identified in previous studies include stigmatization, blaming the victim, cooling out, stereotyping, absence, silence, exclusion, and tracking (Margolis & Romero, 1998).

In an effort to provide a conceptual framework for the construction of successful socialization processes for African American doctoral students in education, Taylor and Antony (2000) presented and attempted to test a “wise schooling” socialization model. These researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 African American doctoral students in education, at six universities in order to explore “[what kind of] theoretical framework [informs] the strategies for effective reform [of doctoral education] ... that reduce the threat of negative stereotypes and enhance African American students’

sense of belongingness?” (p. 185). In addition to collecting demographic information, Taylor and Antony focused on a line of inquiry to illuminate socialization processes:

[Generally] experiences in the doctoral program were explored, including their interactions with colleagues and faculty. In addition, they were asked to discuss the manner in which their professional and career aspirations were encouraged or hampered. Finally, they were asked to describe their ultimate career aspirations; whether or not they considered the professoriate as a goal and why; what they knew about faculty careers; and where they gained this information (p. 188).

Unfortunately, the authors presentation of findings consisted of a summary of “wise schooling” (Steele, 1992, 1997) strategies and few examples with little analysis of the original line of inquiry outlined above. Taylor and Antony found that all of the respondents experienced “tokenism, marginalization, and labeling” affecting “how African American issues were framed and researched, social interactions on campus, and how they were received by their departments, research projects, and faculty attitudes” (p. 190). Their conclusions therefore reflected a superimposed frame of suggestions on how to counteract stereotyping. Positive strategies for successful socialization (undefined by the authors) included those endorsed or experienced by the majority of the 12 respondents; such as effective mentoring, challenging work, emphases on the expandability of intelligence, intellectual belongingness, valuing multiple perspectives, and having successful faculty and students of color role models.

Hesli, Fink, and Duffy (2003) investigated the experiences of doctoral students in political science programs because of a discipline-wide concern over differential rates of program completion between women and men. All active PhD students from the Midwest region of the American Political Science Association were mailed a questionnaire (the authors did not share a response rate). The results of this quantitative study of 351 doctoral students suggested that “successful socialization” (captured by increased

“satisfaction with the graduate student experience”) was associated with positive (quality and quantity of) mentoring, positive perceptions about departmental support for addressing racial and sexual harassment, providing an orientation program, positive assessment of methods and statistics coursework, deciding to attend graduate school based on program reputation, and being male. Based on the results of the OLS regression, Hesli et al. concluded that “the single best predictor of level of dissatisfaction with the graduate student experience is whether the graduate student receives sufficient encouragement, mentoring, and consultation from faculty” (p. 459). Once again, this research approach and analysis method does not provide any insight into how socialization messages are received, or the norms involved in socialization processes. Additionally, the emphasis on and attention to satisfaction masks the complexity and depth of the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers.

Some research suggests that the challenges graduate students experience regarding faculty support and mentoring persist from graduate school into early faculty career experiences. In a study of 665 tenured engineering faculty at 19 “top-rated” universities, Jackson (2004) found that though there were no differences in productivity (e.g., publications, grants secured, course load, advisees supported) by race or gender, but White women and faculty of color “were more discouraged, less supported, and perceived the tenure process to be less fair” as compared to their White male colleagues (p. 172). The hallmark of the socialization experiences of White women and people of color throughout their education, concluded Jackson, is the “absence of favor” (p.179); not only did faculty of color report significantly higher rates of discouragement as compared to White men, they also reported experiencing racial and/or gender

discrimination at their employing universities. Jackson maintained that challenges in retaining White women and faculty of color in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields are owed to departments inadequately socializing, or integrating, persons who are not White and male, not to the individual capabilities or characteristics of the minority faculty member. In a thinly veiled indictment of the engineering field, this research underscored the influence and responsibilities of graduate programs to better prepare future faculty. In short, Jackson suggested that recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty could be improved if White male graduate students were socialized in different ways.

In a mixed methods study of how graduate students and faculty experience socialization at one Midwestern research university, Stewart and Dolotto (2005) focused on how the acculturation aspects of socialization in academe require new entrants from “subordinate identities” (i.e., underrepresented groups) to be “strip[ped] of their otherness” (p. 170). These researchers concluded that socialization pressures in higher education affect people of color and White women differently than their White male peers, resulting in the utilization of particular coping mechanisms. People of color were more likely to engage in “instrumental inaction” or “apparent nonactions that had the purpose of preserving the self, or negotiating the circumstances of the ‘problem’” (p. 176). Examples of these coping strategies particular to graduate students of color included “armoring” against contentions relationships and situations, strategic placement of self, and perseverance in the face of adversity or discouragement. More often than White graduate students, students of color experienced socialization as a process where they had the responsibility to manage their otherness and protect themselves from

disaffirming climates. These strategies and behaviors provide some insight into the relationship between dominant ideologies, social identity characteristics, and graduate student socialization.

Using the works of Tierney and Rhoads (1994), Tierney and Bensimon (1996), and Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Johnson and Harvey (2002) crafted a qualitative study of 17 full-time, Black faculty in the “soft sciences and humanities” at four historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to investigate how “African American faculty perceive their socialization experiences” and identify the “major barriers in the promotion and tenure (P & T) process of African American faculty at HBCUs” (p. 300). The study was limited to faculty in the soft sciences and humanities because prior research concluded that these fields have less agreement on standards of scholarship and less-clear expectations for promotion and tenure than the hard science fields (Stoecker, 1993). Johnson and Harvey described their study as one that “assess[ed] the process of socialization at HBCUs” and they focused on identifying how faculty received information and what processes they identified as supportive or harmful to socialization. These researchers assumed that the quality of the socialization experience impacted “how successful the promotion and tenure process will be for new faculty” (p. 308).

Johnson and Harvey (2002) determined that gender, institutional size, institutional location, and institutional type did not have any effect on faculty socialization. They presented three themes that emerged from the 17 semi-structured interviews. Productive socialization occurred through a number of mechanisms but “faculty believed that clear institutional values and expectations helped them in the socialization process” (p. 301).

Faculty learned of the values and expectations from institutional publications (e.g., handbooks, annual reports, catalogs), informal conversations with colleagues, and general positive feelings about/from “supportive environments” (pp.302-303). Lack of support from senior faculty and heavy work loads were identified as barriers. Senior faculty consistently failed to “show [early career faculty] the ropes.” The faculty in this study conveyed that they could have benefited by senior faculty sharing insights to “[departmental or institutional culture], policies and procedures, key introductions to individuals internal and external to the campus, shortcuts, answers to questions, and information about recent changes in advising and registration” (p. 306).

All respondents in the Johnson and Harvey (2002) study identified a heavy work load as the primary barrier in the promotion and tenure process. This study suggests that positive and negative socialization processes, and experiences of African American faculty at HBCUs, mirror those identified in studies involving participants from predominately White institutions (e.g., Baldwin, 1979; Fink, 1992; Mager & Myers, 1982), and that structural factors impact directly the socialization of new faculty. Though these studies provide us with components of academic socialization processes, we have yet to be able to identify dominant norms and how they affect socialization processes.

Several researchers have concluded that graduate student socialization processes have remained remarkably consistent following the post-World War II influx of students. For example, Weidman et al. (2001) examined “literature on professional and doctoral programs” from the last 50 years and concluded that “patterns of socialization continue to follow many of the long-standing norms associated with collegial culture” (p. 9). Austin (2002) underscored the stagnation of socialization processes and maintained that

significant changes in populations (student and faculty), academic requirements, and public sentiments and expectations, necessitate corresponding changes in socialization models or processes. My study, engages this inertia, and investigates how dominant norms and ideologies are reproduced in graduate student socialization.

### **Future Directions for Studying Graduate Student Socialization into Faculty Careers**

This review of the literature has contributed to the creation of a conceptual framework that I used to inform my study. In order to investigate and explain how graduate students are socialized to become faculty members, I developed a model that addresses both the development of the individual graduate student over time, as well as the departmental climate and culture in which this development occurs. This model requires specific attention to socio-historical phenomena such as sexism and racism, and how an individual identifies herself in light of cultural factors. Using a multi-level exploration of individual and context, I do not propose a stage model whereby graduate students acquire a list of values, skills, interests, and dispositions, but building upon Weidman et al. (2001), and using concepts from Bourdieu, I maintain that graduate student socialization is a result of complex functions, multiple interactions between an individual and her/his environment, and the reproduction of dominant norms and ideologies. Specifically, a student's experiencing dual socialization, as graduate student and as budding professor, creates a complexity for taking up messages, developing success strategies, and adopting behaviors in navigation of a doctoral program.

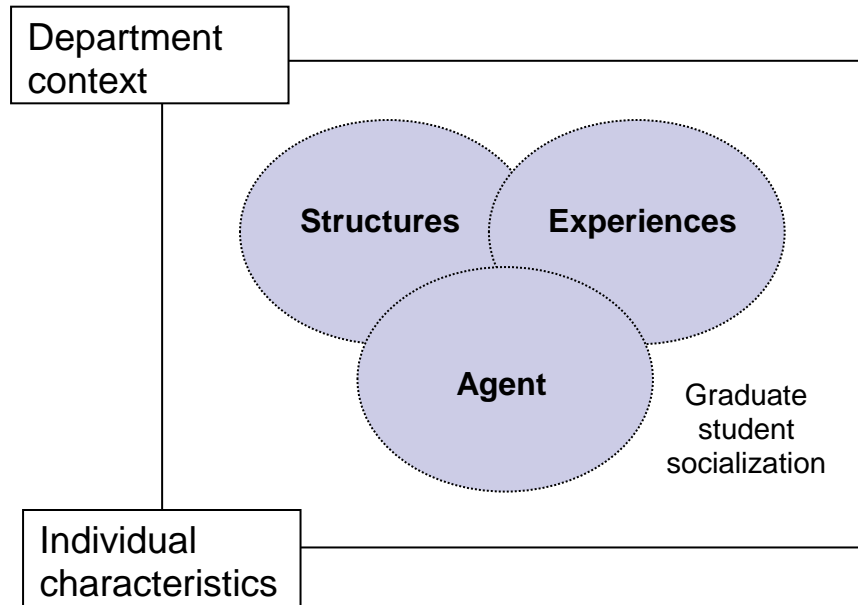


Figure II.2. Conceptual framework of graduate student socialization.

In this model, an individual’s social identity characteristics, prior experiences, and expectations form a foundation and perspectives with which she/he will enter a graduate program. The individual engages and interacts within a specific departmental context and culture, with specific norms, and within the structures of the doctoral program, while having experiences unique to their roles as a graduate student and a budding faculty member.

Individual characteristics to be explored and considered in this model include race and/or ethnicity, gender (e.g., Margolis & Romero, 1998; Padilla, 1994; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001; Tierney & Bensimon 2002), as well as dispositions, skills, and perspectives. This model requires consideration of the prior knowledge and generally speaking, “personality” with which the student chooses and enters a doctoral program



(Trocchia & Berkowitz, 1999) in addition to traditional markers of individual ability (Parsons, 1959).

In this model “departmental context” includes the culture and climate of a discipline and/or a specific doctoral program, the norms governing behaviors, values, and preferences, and the dominant socio-cultural ideologies that are reproduced. Previous research indicates that differences in cultures may prohibit generalizability of socialization models across disciplines (e.g., Stoecker, 1993). Markers and characteristics of the culture and climate of a program might be captured by identifying the history of the program, myth(s) and reputation(s) that have survived over time. Though many scholars have emphasized the importance of context (e.g., Durkheim, 1922; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Merton, 1949/1968; Trocchia & Berkowitz, 1999), empirical investigation is needed in order to account for the relationships between context and norms and the agency of the individual graduate student actor.

The programmatic or institutional structures included for exploration in this model include the policies, procedures, requirements, and traditions of a particular doctoral program. These factors comprise the formal ways in which new entrants receive messages of how to become a faculty member. Previous research has identified challenges to new entrants in discerning the requirements for successful completion of degree, promotion, or tenure (e.g., Austin, 2002; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Components such as reward structures and work requirements have been found to influence an individual’s acquisition and internalization of disciplinary values (Freyberg & Ponarin, 1993). Additionally, this consideration of programmatic structures allows for

the exploration of how individuals navigate these formal socialization processes, and for whom these structures apply in toto.

The agents of socialization include peers, staff, faculty members, and significant others (e.g., family and friends not associated with the doctoral program). This model requires identification of the quantity and quality of interactions and networks in order to account for the influence of traditional agents of graduate student socialization. The importance of faculty mentoring has been underscored (e.g., Bruce & Moore, 1995; Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Turner & Thompson, 1993) and further exploration is needed to identify the mechanisms by which mentoring contributes to “positive” socialization as well as resocialization or divestiture (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Peer interactions should be considered as a component of the organizational culture (Merton, 1949/1968; Tierney, 1997) as well as the extent to which individual graduate student peers affect the socialization of a particular graduate student.

Identifying significant experiences in the socialization of a graduate student is valuable for capturing informal processes as well as critical timing of opportunities afforded and available feedback (Austin, 2002; Rosenbaum, 1986). Graduate students may be navigating their doctoral program in various ways and exercising different levels of agency because of their experiences with faculty, peers, or structures –and these experiences may differ by race/ethnicity and/or gender (Delotto & Stewart, 2005). Furthermore, Freyberg and Ponarin (1993) found that the interests and values of a graduate student change over time, and are directly related to the student’s stage in the doctoral program (i.e., pre-candidate or candidate).

A simultaneous, multi-level orientation to graduate student socialization to faculty careers is necessary to account for the interactions between individual agency and programmatic context. This model accounts for the acculturation frameworks utilized by other researchers (e.g., Stage & Maple, 1997; Taylor & Antony, 2001; Weiss, 1981) while simultaneously affording consideration for the interactions between the targets and agents of socialization, departmental norms, and dominant ideologies.

As is evident from this literature review, considerable attention has been paid to examining the experiences of graduate students, faculty, and particular subpopulations. Austin (2002b) concluded that “we are not adequately preparing current graduate students who aspire to the faculty for the demands, challenges, and expectations that they are likely to face in the near future” (p. 120). Indeed, this research is necessary to understand thoroughly how individuals experience higher education, so that we might appropriately attend to attrition, and properly prepare graduate students for careers in academe. Attention to the mechanisms and contexts of academic socialization is warranted. Furthermore, although Weidman et al. (2001) suggested that diverse populations have affected socialization processes, deeper investigations into socialization to faculty careers is necessary to provide confirming or disconfirming evidence. In order to understand and possibly transform or improve the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers, we need socialization models that consider the individual, collective, and societal influences racism (Taylor & Antony, 2000), in addition to considering the discrete academic context.

Graduate student socialization to faculty careers has been studied from the perspective of faculty (e.g., Austin, 2002b; Golde, 2000; Reynolds, 1992) as the primary

agents of socialization (Baird, 1993), as well as from the perspective of the graduate students, or the targets of the socialization (e.g., Berry, Ettinger, McCullough, & Meneghel, 1994; Dowdy, Givens, Murillo, Shenoy, & Villenas, 2000; Egan, 1989). In addition to chronicling the experiences of graduate students and junior faculty (e.g., Austin, 2002a; Mahtani, 2004; Reynolds, 1992), in the previous chapter I presented literature that addressed the extent to which socialization processes have been modeled (e.g., Parente, 2004; Tinto, 1993; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001), or reduced and categorized into types including anticipatory and organizational socialization (e.g., Golde, 2000; Tierney, 1997; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), formal and informal socialization (Trocchia & Berkowitz, 1999), as well as acculturation (Reynolds, 1992). Research methods of the previous studies have included quantitative and qualitative approaches, but none have considered the influence of norms or the inclusion of faculty perspectives with graduate students. My study is unique in that I am considering both the experiences and perspectives of graduate students and also faculty members. To date, no studies have presented the experiences and perspectives of graduate students along side those of their department faculty to investigate socialization and the influence of norms. An additional gap in the empirical investigations of the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers is the investigation of race and racism, and the extent to which these inform, mediate, and/or translate processes of socialization. This study addresses these gaps.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methods**

#### **Research Approach**

Using the conceptual framework outlined in the previous chapter, I situate this investigation of graduate student socialization within a qualitative research approach in order to address the following questions:

- 1.) What are the messages graduate students receive about being a successful graduate student and faculty member?
- 2.) How do graduate students receive socialization messages? What are the mechanisms by which graduate students become socialized to faculty careers, and learn how to be successful?
- 3.) Do the messages graduate students receive differ by social identity characteristics; how are they mediated and influenced by societal forces (of racism and/or sexism, for example)?
- 4.) How do context and departmental norms create and support the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers? How do the societal systems of racism and sexism influence graduate student socialization?

To respond to these questions, I conducted interviews with faculty members and graduate students in two very different programs of graduate psychology, at two universities in the United States (discussed in depth in Chapter IV). I collected data that pay special attention to the lived experiences, agency, and voice of graduate students and faculty. As such, a qualitative approach was indicated to respond to the aforementioned questions and for investigating socialization as a phenomenon uncovered in a “natural” setting. Many researchers have underscored the necessity of qualitative approaches for responding to inquiries such as this one, and for investigating the complexities of social

identity characteristics such as race (e.g., Dowdy, et al., 2000; Mahtani, 2004). For example, in order to explore social processes and then interpret individuals' experiences, I collected interview data that reflected the complexity of an individual's behavior, and allowed for exploring motivations and the range of possible and multiple meanings that subject-informants attach to particular experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). By centering informants' unique, lived experiences along with their descriptions, reflections and meaning-making, qualitative methods can effectively investigate phenomenon in the social world.

### **Discipline, Site, and Participant Selection**

I chose the discipline of psychology in order to maximize the potential for interviewing a racially diverse group of graduate students and faculty. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), consistently between 2001 and 2011, the discipline of psychology conferred the largest percentage of doctorates to people of color, second only to education. For this study I interviewed 26 graduate students and 11 faculty members in departments of psychology at two institutions. I chose these two institutions based on several characteristics. Firstly, I wanted to have access to doctoral programs that granted the largest number of PhDs to recipients from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups (African American and Latino/a). As a result, I privileged large programs. Secondly, because I want to maximize the potential for graduate students being interested in and aspiring to be future faculty, I focused my site selection search on graduate programs that had a strong research emphasis (as compared to a clinical or practitioner emphasis) and were considered reputable by peer institutions. In order to

collect information on doctoral programs in psychology, I consulted a variety of sources, including publications from the National Center for Education Statistics, National Research Council, and the Survey of Earned Doctorates. The two programs I selected satisfied the aforementioned criteria.

Because I focused on uncovering the meanings that the students' make of their graduate education experiences, along side how the faculty interpret and participate in this system, the depth and richness of the findings were enhanced by situating this investigation within one discipline. By limiting my study to participants in the departments of psychology, I was able to delve deeper into the socialization practices, methods, strategies, and messages that may be common to psychology as a discipline, or may be more particular to a specific institution.

Investigations of graduate student socialization need to consider the developmental nature of socialization processes and as such should be attentive to the linear, temporal dimensions of structured graduate student experiences in doctoral programs (Baird, 1992; Freyberg & Ponarin, 1993). Specifically, Freyberg and Ponarin (1993) found that there were marked differences in the values and norms of precandidates as compared to candidates regarding the importance of research activities. And other researchers have demonstrated that expectations and particular markers of satisfaction also vary by stage of graduate study. In consideration of this research, I asked participants to reflect on their experiences in the department and invited them to compare themselves to their peers. In analyzing interview data, I was mindful of this potential for a "staged" experience.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

In the previous chapter I outlined the theoretical influences on my conceptualization of the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers. Here I discuss the methodological positioning necessary to respond to this study's research questions. I suggest that the explication of a multi-level approach requires attention to particular methodological strategies for the examination of social phenomenon. In particular, this study's consideration of racism necessitates a discussion of the methodological foundations unique to these substantive matters.

### **Critical race theory.**

My approach to this qualitative study is influenced by critical race theory (CRT) and the concept of hidden curriculum. CRT assumes that knowledge production is not a race-neutral endeavor, and that like any social activity, it is influenced by “conflictual and oppressive” and contested realities (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 4). Having gained prominence in the 1980s as an outgrowth of critical legal studies, CRT eschews color-blind perspectives that ignore the ways in which “racism is built into the structure of social institutions” (Roithmayr, 1999, p. 2). In application to this study, a CRT-influenced approach requires attention to and investigation of the ways in which race and racial power mediate social relationships in order to deconstruct the meanings associated with socialization processes and experiences. Additionally, my role and activities as a researcher were shaped by four basic assumptions,

- (a) Research fundamentally involves issues of power;
- (b) the research report is not transparent but, rather, is authored by a raced, gendered, classed, and politically oriented individual;
- (c) race, class and gender are crucial for understanding



experience; and (d) historic, traditional research has silenced members of oppressed and marginalized groups (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 66).

In extending these assumptions, CRT suggests that ostensibly race-neutral structures and processes in education (like socialization) “are in fact ways of forming and policing the racial boundaries of white supremacy and racism” (Roithmayr, 1999, p. 4). In these ways, I used a critical lens to query, collect data, and analyze relationships, strategies, and messages of the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers.

CRT, or a CRT-informed approach to research questions has been applied to research in higher education with increasing frequency (e.g., Daniel, 2007; Mitchell & Stewart, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Above all, this theoretical approach centers the deconstruction of race in social contexts, but not to the exclusion of other identity memberships. Solórzano and Yosso explain,

...the overall goal of a critical race theory in ...education is to develop a theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical strategy that accounts for the role of race and racism in US ... education, and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating other forms of subordination, such as gender, class, and sexual orientation (2001, p. 472).

In application to this study, a CRT-informed approach suggests that in order to complicate the traditional markers of graduate student life (e.g., satisfaction, retention, completion), a researcher must consider the ways in which a particular context described in historical, cultural, economic, and political terms, for example, influences the experiences of the individual. More specifically, Solórzano and Yosso provided several ways in which CRT can shape research in education. Firstly, race and racism should be approached with attention to “their intersectionality with other forms of subordination” (2001, p. 472). For this investigation, the consideration of racism is embedded within the intersectionality of other societal power systems, as well as the academic considerations

of norms, roles (i.e., graduate student and faculty member), and discipline. In analyzing interview data, I considered the intersections of multiple identity characteristics, the difficulties in disentangling identity characteristics, and the intersectionality of multiple social systems of power; and I asked the participants to reflect on these phenomena as well.

Secondly, CRT requires research in education to offer a challenge to dominant ideology, "in particular objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity as they mask the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 472). Thirdly, Solórzano and Yosso suggested that CRT requires a commitment to social justice for the elimination of various forms of discrimination and the corresponding empowerment of underrepresented groups. By giving voice to a diverse subset of graduate students in psychology, and centering their experiences, this research investigates the extent to which a common socialization path exists, and questions implicitly the aforementioned fallacies of the "master narrative" of success in the professoriate. Finally, experiential knowledge and the active voice of the research subject are made central in research on education. Capturing the narratives of graduate students is critical to identifying and exposing how race and racism, inform, and mediate a variety of mechanisms in the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers.

### **Hidden curriculum in education.**

The hidden curriculum of higher education encompasses those embedded, indirect, and/or implicit forces that impart the "lessons" necessary to cultivate appropriate

habits, sensibilities, behaviors, orientations, etc., to socialize students to the academy as well as their future professions. The concept of a hidden curriculum at work in the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers has been supported by several researchers (e.g., Esposito, 2011; Margolis, 2001; Margolis & Romero, 1998) though this idea has its foundations in social reproduction theories of education of the late 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Apple, 1971; Dreeben, 1968; Jackson, 1968).

The hidden curriculum of graduate student socialization operates within the dominant narrative of academic professionalization whereby those members in the most influential of positions, such as department chairs, leadership of research grant organizations, and members of publication editorial boards, act as gatekeepers to professional academic success. The complex inner-workings of the “multiversity” (Kerr, 2001) provide myriad ways in which dominant ideologies can be perpetuated and reproduced. Hence, the hidden curriculum of graduate student socialization, when identified and investigated through a critical empirical lens, can be seen as an organizing framework by which individual experiences and collective forms of oppression may be simultaneously described in order to promote equity and justice in academe. One way of challenging and interrupting the inequities present in higher education involves identifying the aforementioned elements of the strong form of the hidden curriculum. The implication being that by naming the stereotyping, silences, or exclusion (Margolis & Romero, 1998) experienced by women of color, for example, the power and characteristics of the hidden curriculum may be exposed and therefore transformed.

In addition to CRT and the hidden curriculum, the investigation of the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers requires a theoretical lens appropriate

for the integration of multiple social identities and ecological models (i.e., individual, institutional, systemic, and societal). Price (2001) suggested critical empiricism as an approach to the study of identity intersectionality and injustice in education. Critical empiricism reframes traditional empirical research approaches by centering race, class, and gender, and includes the necessities of praxis informed by a Marxist tradition. For example, Price suggested that social scientists and educators link empirical and narrative evidence with a critical consciousness of participation in –as well as resistance toward– a capitalist informed, superficial ideal of democratic idealism that constrains the potentials for social justice education, “The challenge for educators who research and teach for social justice is to resist our own participation within these systems of oppression, which mediate the process and context of a liberatory learning experience” (p. 122). Indeed, for example, it could be difficult to address the popular argument of “the lack of qualified Ph.D.’s” if the capitalist economy is left unconsidered, or market forces are dismissed (e.g., Phillips, 2002). In these ways situating and interrogating macro-societal forces and legacies may further explain, complicate, and illuminate findings.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework that guided this study’s design combined an organizational socialization lens (Tierney, 1997; Weidman, Stein, & Twale, 2001) informed by critical race theory and the concept of hidden curriculum in order to examine how graduate students develop habits, interests, values, and norms particular to faculty careers. These theories and conceptual underpinnings informed the assumptions and framing of the research methods. For example, privileging the existence of a hidden

curriculum supported the emic approach to this research study by acknowledging the potential of embedded practices and norms to shape the socialization experiences of graduate students to faculty careers.

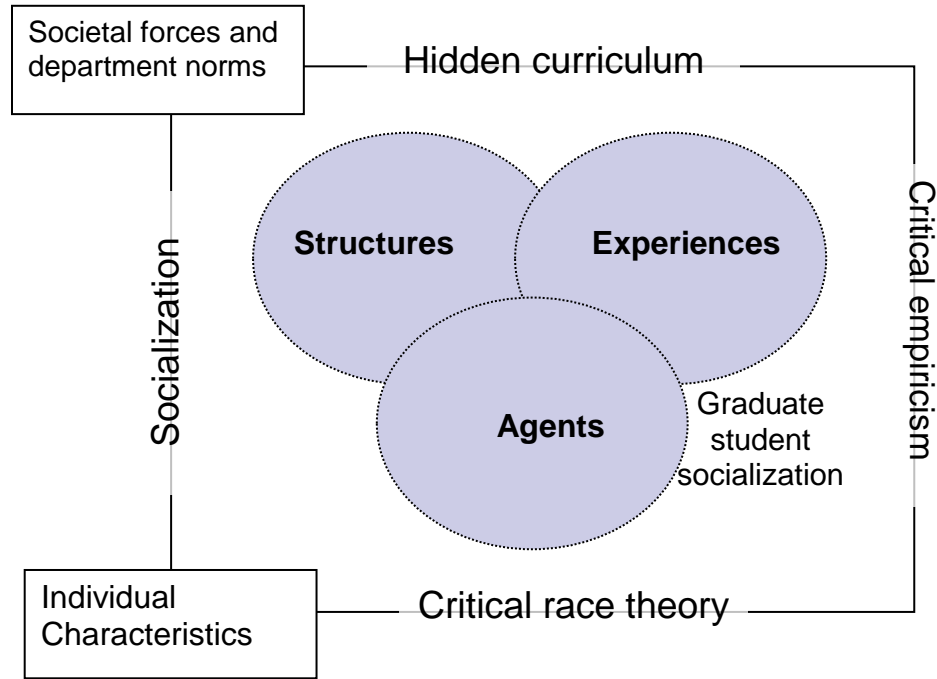


Figure III.1. Conceptual framework of graduate student socialization to faculty careers.

The particular characteristics of popular graduate student socialization models emphasize a *development* of behaviors, norms, dispositions, habits, and interests that are common to the professoriate within a particular disciplinary context. The process of becoming professoriate is part of the “enculturation process” where graduate students “learn to act as productive members of their graduate department” (Boyle & Boice, 1998, p. 87) and graduate students are the subjects of necessary change and development. Additionally, and some might argue to large extent, the development of the graduate student in the dual roles of graduate student and faculty-in-training require re-socialization, or an unlearning of pre-existing dispositions (e.g., Freyberg & Ponarin,

1993) As explored in more depth in the previous chapter, contemporary models of graduate student socialization described processes that capture incompletely the professional development of graduate students to faculty careers.

### **Evolution of the Intended Case Study Design**

I used case study method to structure my approach to data collection. This method was indicated for three reasons (see Yin, 1994). First, I endeavored to investigate processes and reasons, answering *how* and *why* questions. Second, as a researcher, I had little influence upon the phenomenon under study. And, third, I studied a phenomenon (socialization in graduate education) in two “real-life” contexts (graduate departments of psychology) that would provide insights to how messages and norms interact in each unique case. More specifically, I applied an exploratory-explanatory, multiple site method in order to explore and explain the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers within the real-life context of two specific doctoral programs in psychology. While capturing the experiences and perspectives of graduate students and faculty in each of two doctoral programs, I was particularly mindful of power and privilege, racism and sexism, and how they might interact with social identity characteristics, and/or role performance.

Qualitative approaches assume that “people construct meanings in relation to their environment and previous experiences” (Morgan & Drury, 2003, p. 4); therefore, simultaneous to collecting individual-level data, I situated this data in a specific disciplinary context and illuminated how the context informed informants’ experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This design was helpful for organizing and analyzing the data

required for investigating socialization as a social phenomenon simultaneously experienced individually and collectively.

Additionally, the qualitative approach I adopted assumes that the researcher will interact with the study participants, “interrogate data, draw upon their own experiences, follow-up leads and check out hunches” (Morgan & Drury, p. 4). As I discuss in greater detail further along in this chapter, I intended to remain flexible in the acquisition of interview participants and other data sources, and included reflections on my experiences, and accounted for the tone of participants’ contributions (e.g., providing my interpretations regarding sarcasm, incredulity, frustrations). As a part of the interactions I had with graduate students and faculty members, I asked them to reflect on their experiences with and perspectives on graduate student socialization. As a result of my inserting myself into the local phenomenon under study, I provide reflections on the extent to which I may have affected a student’s or faculty member’s behavior, experiences, etc.

Finally, this method was indicated for my exploration of graduate student socialization for the extent to which it assisted in explaining the mechanisms or causal links embedded in the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers. And, as Reynolds (1992) suggested, this method is indicated for an interpretive research project when the investigator desires to “understand causal links among actions” and “uncover the meanings individuals give to their actions ... and experiences” (p. 640).

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, my study was both exploratory and explanatory, requiring a qualitative case study approach in order to uncover processes in the context of a “natural” setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I anticipated that

distinctions in context (in particular, research focus of programs, reputational status, and geographic locations) would result in distinct cases and provide unique conclusions as to how graduate students were socialized to faculty careers. This did not happen. As I conducted interviews at two sites such, I compared and synthesized transcript data and discovered that there were more similarities regarding perspectives and experiences with graduate student socialization *across* sites than differences *between* them.

I investigated graduate student socialization as complex social phenomena without structuring a priori hypotheses (Bernard, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). While I did not intend to prove or disprove explicit hypotheses for how graduate students in psychology are socialized to faculty careers, I contend that investigating social phenomena without a priori hypotheses is possible only theoretically. All researchers, me included, are influenced by a host of prior knowledge (including existing research, theoretical framing, and personal experiences) that impacts the construction of studies, the analyses of data, and the interpretation of the results. In consideration of this treatment of a priori hypotheses, I approach this study mindful of my immersion in the data, potentials for rich conceptualization of social phenomena, and systematic approach to data analysis (El Hussein, Hirst, Salyers, & Osuji, 2014; Myers, 2009). And while this study did not evidence unique cases, this approach provided for the development of theoretical concepts (Dillon, 2012) attending to the phenomena of graduate student socialization to faculty careers.

I endeavored to identify categories that described patterns in the data, and then in analysis, using the lenses of CRT and the concept of hidden curriculum, to evidence



theoretical concepts that illuminated graduate student socialization. Dillon (2012)

explained how researchers produce new theoretical concepts:

They accomplish this by using systematic and thorough procedures. As researchers collect data, they simultaneously analyze these data using induction, deduction, abductive reasoning, and verification to develop theory. This theory provides a full explanation of a process or scheme associated with particular phenomena (p. 1).

This approach requires rich data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). In this study I collected in-depth interviews and had them transcribed verbatim. I used the transcriptions and the audio recordings as part of the data corpus. I used these two sources simultaneously as they provided necessary complements: for example, statements evidenced in the transcript could take on particular meanings when considering the tone of the participant. The verbal expression of sarcasm provided the most common reason to consider both written interview transcripts and audio recordings. For example, if when I asked a graduate student “How is graduate school going?” and s/he responded “Oh, it’s wonderful,” using the written transcript alone might provide a positive interpretation (e.g., “respondent is having a good graduate school experience”). The audio recording of the same comment provides tone and might provide evidence that the participant intended a meaning opposite of the words used, providing a negative interpretation (e.g., “respondent is not having a good graduate school experience”). Both the written transcriptions and the audio recordings provided rich data sources.

I discuss the data analysis method and processes in a following “Analysis” section. In brief, I extracted the emergent themes and categories of socialization using a constant comparative approach to the data analysis, at times simultaneous to or overlapping with my conducting in-depth interviews with graduate students and faculty

members in order to investigate how graduate students and faculty participate in, and make meaning of the processes by which they acquire “the specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms and interests of the profession” (Baird, 1993, p. 1). Because I designed this study to address and investigate the *lived experiences* of graduate students, in-depth interviews with participants have been suggested to be a judicious technique (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I collected data consisting of structural artifacts (e.g., policies, procedures, and guidelines found in written and electronic forms) of the professional field and department, in addition to having conducted interviews.

### **Data Collection**

In general, interviews are an appropriate tool for gathering information “to understand the world as seen by the respondent” (Patton, 2002, p. 21) and uncover significant meanings from particular situations in the respondent’s own words (Krathwohl, 1998). Constructing protocols for in-depth interviews of graduate students aspiring to the professoriate required considerable methodological thought and this approach was appropriate for investigating how social identity characteristics were involved in social phenomenon. I used a partially structured interview approach (Krathwohl, 1998) in order to engage the participants in “directing” the interview, allow the responses to the open-ended questions influence the interview, and provide for flexibility so that I might add or modify questions during the interview, as well as for subsequent interviews.

Structuring open-ended questions, conducting semi-structured interviews, and soliciting personal narratives are all data collection approaches that have been used in the investigation of the socialization in graduate school. (e.g., Golde, 2000; Johnson & Harvey, 2002; Mahtani, 2004; Neisler, 1999, Stage & Maple, 1996). Similar to previous research of graduate student socialization, I asked interviewees to share their experiences, perspectives on graduate school and graduate student socialization; and I paid particular attention to race and gender, racism and sexism, and the forces that reproduce these systems. Though most of what I asked participants to share addresses their current status as a graduate student or faculty member, I also asked participants to reflect back to recall past events and experiences (e.g., Jackson, 2004; Romero & Margolis, 2000).

### **Research participants.**

I began my study with purposeful, snowball sampling (Patton, 2002) of graduate students with the assistance of personal contacts in the respective programs or program coordinators, and because of the emic nature of this project I amended this strategy as the study progressed (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999). As I engaged with participants, I followed their suggestions for persons with whom I could speak to illuminate socialization processes. For example, when I asked a graduate student participant to reflect on their experiences in the department, I also asked her/him to direct me to individuals who were having similar experiences, and those who were having dissimilar experiences. Similarly, I asked participants who were faculty members to recommend other faculty members with whom I should speak. In order to address this study's focus, I made concerted efforts to interview graduate students and faculty from racial/ethnic groups

underrepresented in graduate education, African Americans and Latino/as; and I chose institutions based on the extent to which the graduate student population of the departments of psychology were racially diverse.

Because of the nature of the subject under study, access to informants required care, respect, sensitivity, and trust. The snowball technique for identifying and recruiting participants relies on the ability of informants to refer the researcher to other possible informants. I recruited participants in this manner (in addition to email messages distributed with the assistance of department administrators). This sampling technique enables the researcher to have assistance in identifying appropriate informants, but also credibility as a researcher is given additional credence because of the process of a “referral.”

I identified and approached faculty for this study after talking with a few graduate student participants. I attempted to interview the chair of each department as well as faculty members who students identify as having frequent contact or infrequent contact with students, and at least one faculty member who they identify as being particularly influential in the department (or field). With this purposeful, critical case sampling I hoped to collect socialization stories from a range of faculty in the department, not only those who students would identify as being particularly or uniquely concerned with their success or uniquely unconcerned.

I made every effort to be completely transparent with informants concerning this study. The informants were briefed on the purpose and scope of the study, the measures taken to insure confidentiality and anonymity, researcher role, procedures for safe data storage, exit procedures, and reciprocity. Each informant was provided a consent form for

participation. The consent form outlined much of the aforementioned characteristics of the study. The participants were assured that their identities would not be exposed in the report of the findings. For example, in reporting the findings, I identified participants' race, but obscured their institution and specialization area. Additionally, I informed the participants that the transcribed interviews (stripped of names) were kept on a password protected external hard drive, and should an informant choose not to participate her material will be destroyed or returned to her/him.

### **Interview processes.**

During the semi-structured interviews, I included questions that encouraged the participant to explain her/his interpretation of her/his experiences in graduate school. Because other research have maintained that graduate students experience dual socialization, that is simultaneously they are socialized into a graduate education community as well as a profession (Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Golde, 2000), I offered participants the opportunity to discuss experiences with both transitions to graduate school and the training and development for entrance into faculty life. Though I have presented this dual socialization as conceptually distinct, I anticipated that students would discuss graduate school experiences, messages, and strategies, for example, less dualistically. With the faculty member participants, asked about how they interpreted and participated in what they saw as the processes of graduate student socialization. Additionally, I gave the faculty members opportunity to reflect on their own socialization experiences.

Each participant was interviewed once, for about 60 minutes, though several exceeded 90 minutes. All interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the participants, and I assigned pseudonyms to keep confidential the participants' identity. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by professional transcribers, with the transcriber having affirmed in writing that no digital copies of the interviews were retained. I edited and corrected all of the transcripts while reviewing the audio files.

I interviewed graduate students at all of stages of their program (this included new entrants, examiners, and dissertators) once. By using this multi-cohort, single time point design I am attempting to minimize the effects that I as a researcher have on the socialization experiences and reflections of the participants. That is, I am not interviewing the same participant more than once or as she/he experiences the three graduate education stages, but rather at one point in time. Previous research suggests that, although arguably methodologically preferred, longitudinal designs may increase the difficulty of minimizing researcher influence regarding the socialization experiences of the participants. For example, other researchers report how while interviewing graduate student participants, the students expressed gratitude for the researchers' work because previous to their conversations with the researchers, no one in their academic community seemed to care or solicit the opinion of the graduate student (e.g., Golde, 2002; Romero & Margolis, 1998). In this way the interviews can be thought of as interventions, and to minimize the effect I might have on how students experience and engage socialization to faculty careers, I interviewed participants only once.

## **Analysis**

In general, I followed the qualitative data analysis steps suggested by Creswell (2003). As a departure from these suggested steps, I reviewed interview data simultaneous to the collection. That is, as the data collection procedures progressed, and as the interviews were transcribed, I reviewed the transcriptions in order to gain a general sense of themes, common experiences, or apparent anomalies, in addition to reviewing and amending the interview protocol.

During data collection and after collection ceased, I reviewed, organized, and prepared the data for analysis. I had the digitally recorded interviews professionally transcribed. All of the digitally maintained data was housed on a non-networked, free-standing hard drive, password protected, and secured in an off-campus site (accessible only by me). I analyzed the data using a constant comparative method, and simultaneous to data collection, I reviewed transcriptions as they became available in order to amend the interview protocol for emergent themes or issues. I synthesized and interpreted the experiences of the graduate students and faculty in the study for the constant comparative discovery (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of robust themes and categories. This constant comparative method enabled me to identify emergent patterns in the data and how they varied (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Because of my reliance on an emic method for categorizing and analyzing, there was little opportunity for addressing convergence or divergence in the results. Specifically, since the categories emerged in the data analysis stage of the study, participants were not given the opportunity to agree or disagree with the perspectives of other participants. For example, when I asked participants what it took to be a successful graduate student, they did not reply in the negative with “here is what

is involved with *not* being successful.” The results presented, therefore, reflect categorization and interpretive organization that emerged from the data of how the participants described success, and provided little opportunity for identifying divergence.

In general, the data analysis phase of my study can be characterized as reflective with embedded analytical conversations, the periodic revisiting of data, and critical examination of emergent categories and themes. Though I began with a loose coding structure based on the research questions discussed above and reflected in the interview protocols, I attended closely to information that challenged my entering assumptions. To do this systematically, I developed and amended codes and categories throughout the data collection and analysis periods. I created, scrutinized, and amended codes as data became available –throughout the collection and organization processes. Codes were organized in the support of categories, in order to eventually identify themes and relationships. The final data analysis step involved the development of a model to describe the product of the interpretations of the emergent themes and the relationship between the categories (Creswell, 2003, Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

I started my analyses using atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software to support the coding of the interviews, as well as the identification and organization of themes and phenomena. This software allows multiple coding structures and levels to be “queried” or organized within and across study participants. I abandoned the use of this software after I discovered that I needed a more tactile method for engaging with the data. For me, the participants’ contributions were not adequately represented on a two dimensional computer screen. I opted for what I engaged in as a more interactive method: firstly, I used paper copies to color-code first-pass coding of categories. Secondly, I took no less



than three critical, analytical passes at the data to amend codes. Thirdly, I extracted representative interview excerpts from all participants and placed them on colored note cards that reflected the colors I used to identify the codes. Fourthly, I organized the codes and excerpts into families. Finally, I used these families to identify categories. These categories resulted in the themes presented in Chapters V and VI. Using these methods, I identified the socialization messages graduate students receive about becoming faculty members, the mechanisms by which these messages are delivered, and the themes of socialization (and reproduction) that emerged.

### **Parameters of Qualitative Research and Interpretive Considerations**

#### **My role as researcher.**

I attempted to pay close attention to honoring the stories and experiences of the people who consented to participating in this study. To the participants, I communicated as transparently as possible my desire to simultaneously consider the “material conditions organizing their individual contemporary lives” as well as “the social structures that shape and inform the processes by which individual as members of historically defined groups negotiate and interpret their social location” (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999, p. 135). In administering the semi-structured protocol, and analyzing the interview data, I attempted to recognize the intersections as well as distinctions of self and society. I communicated my role as researcher, to give voice to particular experiences and perspectives by building trust and rapport, and encouraging participants to assume a role in co-constructing the interview, ensuring the integrity of collection and analysis.

Critical empiricism shares much in common with a critical multicultural feminist approach to educational research. The latter presumes an activism component to traditional “intellectual” pursuits with identity intersectionality: 1) situating one’s identities in relation to those as subject, 2) critical reflection, 3) addressing inequities, and 4) “reflecting on new possibilities” (Knight, 2000, p.171). Locating one’s self, as researcher, requires a participant-observer orientation most common to ethnography. This approach requires resistance to myths of researcher neutrality, “value-free” conclusions, context-independent inquiry, and apolitical and ahistorical foundations. For a researcher considerate of the power of narrative, this approach reframes the researcher-subject relationship to include the necessary self-reflexive properties. Conversations are engaging, potentially transformative processes where researcher influences subject, and subject influences researcher. The traditional framing of bias is dismissed for the more critical, as well as empowering, notion of situating self-as-researcher in a political, historical, intellectual, and socio-cultural context.

As suggested by other researchers like Knight (2000), this type of study requires additional attention to the roles and orientation/s of the researcher. Throughout the process, I made attempts be aware and self-reflective regarding my assumptions, prior experiences, and role in this study. My orientation to the investigation of the socialization experiences of graduate students is personal and political; I have a particular socio-cultural history that I bring to this project. As a multi-ethnic white woman, of “Hispanic” heritage, having been raised in a small Midwestern town in a working class family, I have experienced numerous disconnects between the ways I have experienced and navigated higher education as compared to that of my White, male peers, for example. I entered this

conversation concerned with the individual experiences of graduate students and faculty, and I was motivated by the potential implications of this investigation for intentional interruption of the higher education hidden curriculum in order to create a more equitable, diverse, and just system.

### **Trustworthiness.**

In qualitative research, trustworthiness can refer to the extent to which a study demonstrates: transparent data collection and analysis procedures, credible findings aligned with participants' "truth," and potentials for applicability (see, for example, Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Prior to constructing this study, I created and administered a pilot study to investigate the experiences of five graduate students in a department of sociology. This pilot study enabled me to practice interviewing techniques and explore how participants responded to interview questions. By reviewing audio recordings and transcripts I was able to evaluate how I asked questions, and how the questions elicited information. Specifically, in this pilot study I discovered that my interview questions were too broad, and the follow-up prompts were too vague to collect rich data on the participants' experiences. I reviewed my impressions with experienced researchers and they helped me practice a more direct and transparent interview style. Additionally, the pilot study provided me experience in the logistical considerations of a research study. I found participant recruitment and interview transcription to be more time consuming than I anticipated. I used these lessons from my pilot study to inform the creation of this inquiry.

In addition to having piloted an interview protocol for graduate students, I used multiple strategies to bolster the study's trustworthiness and the validity of my findings. These strategies included continual engagement of existing literature, triangulation, thick description, and the presentation of "discrepant information" (Creswell, 2003). In attempts to triangulate different data sources (participant roles), I compared the interviews across site and across informant role (e.g., student versus faculty informants). I routinely consulted existing research to engage, respond to, and critique the results of the study. I did not engage in post-interview member checking for several reasons: during the interviews I mirrored participant's conclusions so as to affirm that I was receiving meaning as the participant intended; throughout the analysis, I employed a low level of inference regarding participants' contributions; and, individual participant's contributions were supported and verified by other participants. Also, member checking assumes that there is "a fixed truth or reality that can be accounted for by a researcher and can be confirmed by a respondent" (Harper & Cole, 2012); and I was concerned only with interpreting individual participants' contributions as point-in-time reflections.

I have included a copy of the semi-structured interview protocols in the Appendix. I used existing research and conceptual frameworks to develop these questions (e.g., Dallimore, 2003; Golde & Dore, 2001; Margolis & Romero, 1998; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). I began with general questions for the interviews, anticipating that the informants would contribute to the direction and scope of the conversation. As a part of the investigation of the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers, I paid close attention to the ways in which possible markers of marginalization (e.g., race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability) were reflected in the narratives of the

participants and how they made meaning from their respective experiences and roles in the graduate student socialization process.

### **Generalizability.**

The qualitative approach I employed to respond to the aforementioned research questions was appropriate and indicated by the inquiry focus. The approach required rich data sources, constant comparative analysis, and thick description, to investigate graduate student socialization as a social phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Focusing on a contemporary phenomenon, I needed to conduct in-depth interviews so that participants could share their perspectives on, and experiences with, graduate student socialization; as such this method was necessary and essential. The sample of graduate student and faculty member participants was necessary to examine graduate student socialization and the reproduction of inequality in-depth, and from different perspectives (Myers, 2000). This approach (and the potentials for creating theoretical concepts in response to the research questions) is not a limitation but a strength.

Regardless of the appropriateness of the method I chose to guide my study, there are common misconceptions that I will address here about the utility of qualitative research. Standards of generalizability common to quantitative research are at times misapplied to qualitative research. The statistical conventions and considerations of population sampling, representativeness, construct validity, and narrow replicability, to name a few, are components generally required in quantitative research. Although I do not attempt to generalize the findings of this study to particular populations; say, the experiences of all graduate students desirous of faculty careers, or all graduate students in

psychology programs; it is my intention that the results provide examples and possibilities for explaining and complicating socialization processes and existing models. The results, therefore, can be generalized to theoretical or analytical propositions (e.g., socialization in graduate psychology programs), not to a statistical proposition or population (Yin, 1994).

I provide this justification as a reminder of some epistemological considerations—with consideration of critical race theory, and a grounded theory method—that this study should be considered distinct from scientism and any narrow, positivist construction of evidence, knowledge, and their value. The issue, then, of statistical generalizability is not appropriate for examination of this study's results. Rather, the merits of this study should be evaluated considering the extent to which understandings and theoretical concepts presented adequately describe and explain the phenomenon of graduate student socialization (Myers, 2000).

### **Limitations**

The success of this study rested on the availability, participation, and candor of the informants, and their comfort with me as an interviewer. Reliant on the responses I received for appeals to participate in this study, the data I collected and the resulting findings could have been influenced by a possible selectivity bias. Participants who elected to participate may have already been interested in or concerned with graduate students socialization. This is of particular concern for the graduate student participants (as more than one faculty participant offered that they had not thought about graduate student socialization until my interview). Extending the time I spent on participant

recruitment, and increasing the numbers of participants, may have resulted in greater variation of perspectives and reflections; or, of course, additional participants could have simply provided confirmation of the findings presented here.

The institutions chosen for this study were typed as “research universities – very high research activity” by Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2005). As such, there are characteristics and expectations for research production that differ from other doctorate granting institutions (e.g., those typed “doctoral/research universities”). This suggests that should I have conducted interviews with participants from other types of doctoral institutions, perceptions and experiences with socialization to faculty careers could have varied from the findings of this study. Similarly, the participants in this study were limited to departments of psychology. Further study should investigate the extent to which the findings presented here could apply to doctoral study in other disciplines.

For reasons explained earlier, I collected data at one point in time. I was sensitive to the fact that for many of the participants, my questions were intrusive and their participation did not come without risk. I did not get the impression during any of the interviews that participants were not being honest or thoughtful, and as a result, they provided rich data. As is evident, however, in the findings presented in Chapters V and IV, some participants were experiencing a lot of pain and frustration. Follow-up interviews could have provided information regarding the resolution of their challenges, or presented opportunities for connecting participants to resources. Generally, further inquiry into graduate student socialization might benefit, comparatively, by a longitudinal design, to capture graduate and faculty member experiences at more than one point over

several years. While a longitudinal approach would further strengthen the research-study-as-intervention concern (discussed earlier), it could provide findings valuable for comparison with this study.

Finally, the construction of this study and the interpretation of the results are limited by assimilationist research conventions and the hegemony of the academy. “Mainstream deployment and acceptance of [dominant] ideologies” create conditions that require the defense of non-dominant assertions, specifically regarding inequities and the forces of racism and sexism, for example (Cook, 2008). These conventions require imagined distance from a research inquiry and/or from research participants, and the performance of researcher neutrality. For example, in conducting interviews and analyzing interview data, I cannot be certain that I was investigating *the thing* (e.g., graduate student socialization) or *representations of the thing* (e.g., reflective performances and retrospective evaluations of graduate student socialization). I have had to construct a narrative responding to the domination of colorblind ideologies – in concrete and nebulous ways, my voice is limited by the domination of Whiteness in the academy, and the assumptions that curricular and pedagogical practices are race-neutral. “In theory, the education system is colorblind; but in fact, it is racially polarized and exacerbates the intergenerational reproduction of white racial privilege” (Carnevale & Stroh, 2013, p. 3).



## CHAPTER IV

### Descriptions of Data and Study Participants

I conducted interviews with 26 graduate students and 11 faculty members in departments of psychology, at two universities in the United States. I included in this study participants from clinical, social, personality, and developmental psychology areas; and faculty and graduate students who were interested in faculty careers upon completing their degree. The participants in this study first received an email recruitment message sent on my behalf by department administrative assistants. I employed a snowball sampling strategy and asked participants during the interviews who they recommend I speak with to investigate the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers. So, in addition to receiving an open call for study participants, some received an individually addressed email soliciting their participation. Eleven of the graduate students interviewed were in social psychology; the next largest subfields represented were personality with seven, developmental with four, and clinical with three participants. The interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. They ranged in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours.

Here I describe the universities and participants of my study in brief. I provide some demographic characteristics along with a summary comment of how they were experiencing academic life in their respective university. I have been intentional in this presentation of the participants to omit any characteristics that could contribute to identifying them. As such, I have assigned pseudonyms, omitted including the year in

which the interviews were conducted, and chose to not disclose the location of the universities, the psychology areas in which the participants study and work, or reference faculty members' tenure in the field.

### **University Site Descriptions**

As I discussed in Chapter II, I chose the two university sites in consideration of a multiple factors: size, geographical context, national ranking, and diversity of graduate students enrolled. I expected marked differences in student experiences and faculty member perspectives because of the significant differences in the contexts (i.e., research focus, geographical and cultural setting). The universities in this study differed significantly by program size and selectivity. One had a research agenda commonly considered very traditional and politically conservative, and the other was known for progressive research and having a politically liberal agenda. Despite these differences in context, participants at each university had remarkably similar perspectives on their experiences, and about how to become a faculty member.

As a result of the overwhelming commonalities in the students' and faculty members' contributions, a comparative analysis was not indicated, and I opted to analyze the interview transcripts as one group instead of grouping them by university. Within the results discussion, I inserted clarifying and descriptive comments about each university when additional context information was warranted to appreciate excerpts from the participants. I have tried to protect the identities of all of my study participants. About one third of the graduate student participants were very concerned about the extent to which their stories could identify them, and they were concerned with possible

repercussions for even the appearance of disagreeing with their advisors and faculty members. All of the graduate student participants were aware of the extent to which networking and personal contacts could make or break a career. Several students requested I turn off the digital recorder during our interviews so that they could tell me an illustrative, personal story. Of course, I complied with their wishes and those “off the record” exchanges were not considered part of the data corpus. Additionally, faculty members shared sensitive assessments of their peers, and of themselves.

I have provided pseudonyms for the institutions at which participants worked and/or were enrolled, and to the participants themselves. Throughout the presentation of the results, I have been acutely aware of and concerned with providing public anonymity to the participants of this study. The graduate student and faculty participants in my study could be easily identified should I provide a combination of program specifics and personal identity characteristics. As more than one participant pointed out, “it’s a small world” –and the participants believed in the potential for negative consequences, from their university and the field. So, as a result of my conservative approach to characterizing individual participants, I have decided not to identify field specializations and have changed details of the stories provided to me. In some cases, took liberty in presenting participants’ experiences, providing examples similar to the ones provided to me, obscured identifying characteristics.

## Graduate Student Participants

I interviewed 26 students in two departments of psychology. The students provided the demographic identifiers that appear below, and I included a general comment to summarize the students' orientation to graduate school.

Table IV.1. Graduate Student Participants

Pseudonym	Year	Gender <sup>a</sup>	Race or ethnicity <sup>b</sup>	Notes
Caleb	6	M	W	Caleb has been very successful, but has found the experience to be very isolating, and work has taken up his life.
Christy	5	F	W	She experienced stress from having to manage her advisors' different personalities, because "they all hate each other."
Denise	1	F	B	She said that her biggest challenge was time management and adjusting to the frenetic pace of the program.
Edith	3	F	L	Edith was surprised at the extent to which her ethnicity proved to be significant to her graduate school experiences and a fascination for others.
KayLynn	6	F	W	KayLynn has floundered a bit, trying to find an advisor as she nears her dissertating phase.
Khalil	3	M	A	Khalil feels his research interests are not well received in his department. He takes pains to conceal his interest in non-academic careers, but says he is keeping his options open.
Kiernan	3	M	W	Kiernan feels very well suited for graduate school and does not take criticisms or rejections seriously.
Kira	4	F	A	She identified as a more reserved person and didn't take to the jousting of in-class discussion.
Kirby	1	M	W	Kirby does not take to the amorphous nature of graduate school, wishes he had a mentor.
Lacey	2	F	B	Lacey loves graduate school and is challenged by how her work load increases each year. She struggles to identify a research interest.
Lara	4	F	B	Lara gets lots of encouragement from her advisor and feels supported by a network of African American students.
Matilda	2	F	W	Matilda credits the support of her advisor for getting her through her first year, she is nervous about "branching out" and adding another advisor.
Nancy	2	F	W	Nancy was surprised to find the students in her program were welcoming.

Pseudonym	Year	Gender <sup>a</sup>	Race or ethnicity <sup>b</sup>	Notes
Nathaniel	6	M	W	Nathaniel has felt insecure and depressed for the majority of his time in the program.
Nellie	4	F	L	Nellie credits her survival to having had life and work experience before entering graduate school, and “knowing [her]self.”
Norman	3	M	B	Norman feels like he fits in better than most of his peers, he doesn’t expect much from his advisors, and is more confident.
Olivia	4	F	W	Olivia says she wouldn’t have been able to make it through without her advisors; she is surprised how lonely and isolated she feels.
Oren	2	M	W	Oren mentions his working class roots as a cause of his feelings of disconnection, and is very uncertain about pursuing an academic career.
Randi	3	F	A	Randi returned to graduate school after earning two Master’s degrees and working full time in professional careers for more than 10 years. She really values her peers and says everyone is excited and engaged.
Talisa	5	F	W	Talisa had issues with her chair, and took her concerns to department leadership. Her advisor was very demanding, but never gave any feedback. She isn’t comfortable having had all male advisors.
Thomas	2	M	W	If it were not for Thomas’s advisor, he says he would have left.
Valeria	3	F	B	Valeria noted that she gets different kinds of support from each of her three advisors. She attributes the bad behavior of her white peers to their white mentors.
Vance	4	M	B	Vance stresses the importance of support systems outside of graduate school. He is surprised at how diverse in personality the faculty members in his department are.
Vanessa	3	F	L	No one in the department is doing the research she is doing; she feels supported by her advisors, but like an outsider with her peers.
Wallace	5	M	L	Wallace is accustomed to criticism and doesn’t take it personally. He has adapted to his advisors critical style.
Wendy	4	F	W	Wendy is buoyed by how supportive the faculty are of her interests and has experienced her program as being very supportive of social justice.

<sup>a</sup> F = female, M = Male.

<sup>b</sup> A = Asian American, B = African American or Black, L = Latino/a, W = White.

Table IV.2. Graduate Student Participant Summary

	University 1	University 2	Total
Graduate student participants	9	17	26
Gender identity	2 – male 7 – female	8 – male 9 – female	10 – male 16 – female
Race or ethnicity	1 – African American 2 – Asian American 1 – Latino/a 5 – White	1 – Asian American 5 – African American 3 – Latino/a 8 – White	6 – African American 3 – Asian American 4 – Latino/a 13 – White
Years in doctoral program	0 – 1 <sup>st</sup> year 3 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> year 1 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> year 3 – 4 <sup>th</sup> year 1 – 5 <sup>th</sup> year 1 – 6 <sup>th</sup> year	2 – 1 <sup>st</sup> year 2 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> year 6 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> year 3 – 4 <sup>th</sup> year 2 – 5 <sup>th</sup> year 2 – 6 <sup>th</sup> year	2 – 1 <sup>st</sup> year 5 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> year 7 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> year 6 – 4 <sup>th</sup> year 3 – 5 <sup>th</sup> year 3 – 6 <sup>th</sup> year

### Faculty Participants

All of the 11 faculty participants in this study were in tenured in their positions; with a balance of associate and full professor ranks. I provide some demographic markers below, and a summary comment that addresses how the faculty member thought they engaged graduate students and socialization. Six of the participants were women, and five were men; three identified as African American; one, Latino; and seven, White.

Table IV. 3. Faculty Member Participants

Faculty participant	Gender <sup>a</sup>	Race or ethnicity <sup>b</sup>	Notes
Carl	M	B	Carl prided himself on working with students who were struggling; students who his colleagues thought would not succeed. Nearing retirement, he lamented that a regret of his career is that he had not “replicated” himself.
Edgar	M	W	Edgar was surprised by the extent to which he believed “this White man narrative” that he succeeded solely on his

Faculty participant	Gender <sup>a</sup>	Race or ethnicity <sup>b</sup>	Notes
			own merit without benefit of mentoring or connections.
Frank	M	W	Frank said that he was passionate about social justice and that his perspective influenced how he approached the development of graduate students.
Kayla	F	W	Kayla assessed that she had similar mentoring styles as compared to her colleagues; and pointed to the first year professional seminar course and the area's handbook as the vehicles for how graduate students learn how to be faculty members.
Kirk	M	W	Kirk attributed his orientation to the field to his graduate experiences in the 1970s and saw himself as uniquely unconcerned with reproducing traditional academic psychology.
Nash	M	B	Nash saw his role in the department as a truth teller. He confronted students for focusing too narrowly on their identity issues ("me-search") and called out faculty members for poor behavior.
Natalie	F	W	Natalie was intentional in how she mentored and interacted with graduate students. She talked about how she created structures for students to get support and learn how to be successful.
Phillip	M	L	Phillip interacted with his graduate students in ways similar to how his graduate school mentor worked with him, but he was not entirely confident that he knew how to manage conflict or uncomfortable interactions with his graduate students.
Rebecca	F	W	Rebecca recounted how students came to her when they had challenges with other faculty members, and as a result, she had unique insight as to graduate student experiences. She was concerned that the department as a whole was not intentional in addressing ethics in research and mentoring.
Tamara	F	B	Tamara was intentional about crafting a mentoring strategy using how she was mentored in graduate school, and providing unique support to African American students in the department.
Timothy	M	W	Timothy saw himself as a bit of an outsider as compared to his faculty peers. He had not been an academic for his entire professional career; and he preferred to work one-on-one with graduate students.

<sup>a</sup> F = female, M = Male.

<sup>b</sup> B = African American or Black, L = Latino/a, W = White.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Results: Messages and Mechanism of Socialization**

To uncover the mechanisms or processes of socialization, I endeavored first to identify the messages that graduate students received about being successful; then, I investigated the ways by which students received those messages. Here I discuss the messages and mechanisms of graduate student socialization; and later I provide a cohesive and comprehensive discussion of how the messages and mechanisms of the socialization of graduate students involves in small measure professional training, and in larger measure, the reproduction of inequity.

The messages that graduate students received about being successful, that is, the instructions they received about how to complete graduate school, were attached to the messages that they received about how to successfully compete for post-doctoral and tenure-track faculty positions. The identification of these messages (i.e., instructions, cautions) and mechanisms (i.e., how the messages are transmitted and the processes of sanctions and rewards), taken as a comprehensive whole, comprise a critical perspective on what can be considered legitimate knowledge in graduate education (Apple & King, 1977). The hidden curriculum in graduate school is made up of a system of formal and informal lessons (reflecting the assumptions for what is valued) by which agents (i.e., faculty members, disciplinary collectives) socialize targets (i.e., graduate students) to faculty careers.



This engagement and examination of *curriculum* in doctoral education has long considered the totality of “what it is that graduates learn” (Gilbert, 2009, p. 56) and has been separated theoretically, and analytically, from the ways in which graduate students learn or engage. Despite these separations, I contend that socialization messages and mechanisms together form a hidden curriculum of the “tacit teaching of social norms and values” of the discipline and the processes by which graduate students learn how to be faculty members.

Apple and King (1977) identified strong and weak forms of the hidden curriculum. Providing a historical perspective on the creation of curriculum they identified the weak forms as those that directly “preserved some of [organized society’s] valued forms of interaction and meaning,” and the strong forms as “everyday meanings ... seen as essential elements in the preservation of existing social privilege, interests, and knowledge, which were the prerogatives of one element of the population, maintained at the expense of less powerful groups” (p. 345). In doctoral education, the weak forms, while implicit, could be described as those elements that have commonly been assumed to have value in the production of graduates and the advancement of the profession.

More specifically, the weak forms of the hidden curriculum of socialization addressed the products that the targets (i.e., graduate students) were expected to produce and the kind of people they were to become as professional psychologists, namely, as future faculty members in departments of psychology. The agents (i.e., faculty members) communicated the importance of the products necessary to become faculty members: conducting research, publishing and presenting research, and winning grants and awards. The agents also communicated the importance of being a certain kind of professional and

developing a professional identity characterized by networking, presenting, commitment, navigating politics, and flexibility. These weak forms of the hidden curriculum were not codified, nor were achievement metrics attached to them, but their value for creating academic psychologists was widely accepted. That is, the agents and the targets assumed that there was a direct and significant correlation between these components and the needs of the professional psychology field. By this assumption, it is necessary for the field of psychology for graduate schools to reproduce these products and professional identities. Indeed, the aforementioned components would not be criticized by the American Psychological Association or any other accrediting body.<sup>2</sup> In fact, but for the absence of a mention of ethics, these products and professional identities align well with the APA's mission.

In my interviews with graduate student targets, and faculty member agents, the participants spent little time discussing these components of the weak hidden curriculum. Rather, they reflected on other, more consuming lessons, they described as amorphous, mysterious, and vague. The experiences and processes they were narrating I have identified as the strong forms of the hidden curriculum – those components that serve to reproduce inequality and support the maintenance of the status quo at the expense of the less powerful. The components of the strong hidden curriculum complicate the ways in which the weak hidden curriculum is delivered and provide insight into the inertia of higher education and the mechanisms of the reproduction of inequality.

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<sup>2</sup> The American Psychological Association provides myriad guidelines for the “Responsible Conduct of Research.” In addition to providing resources mentorship, the APA offers this statement: “Mentoring a less-experienced researcher is a professional responsibility of all scientists. The ultimate goal of the mentor is to establish the trainee as an independent researcher. Mentoring responsibilities include sharing knowledge and skills, overseeing the trainee’s work, helping the trainee to make contact with other researchers, and assisting with career counseling. The trainee reciprocates by providing work hours and a fresh perspective for the mentor, and taking a proactive role in learning, developing and landing a job.” <http://www.apa.org/research/responsible/mentoring/index.aspx>

Graduate students, as the targets of the socialization processes, recognized that they were receiving training to learn how to be faculty members. This is what they desired; this is why they applied and accepted admittance to their graduate programs. All of the graduate student participants in this study were highly motivated to receive PhDs.<sup>3</sup> The faculty members, as the agents of the socialization process, maintained that their recruitment and rigorous admissions processes provided them with the best and brightest of prospective candidates. As agents and targets, faculty and graduates students were actively engaged in socialization processes to develop new professionals in psychology. Supported by this active engagement, I discovered a complex, strong hidden curriculum that served to reproduce norms and inequity, with forms I identified as confusion, masking, submission and conformity, competition, and disconnection.

In this chapter, I first discuss the weak forms of the hidden curriculum and identify those implicit products and processes commonly viewed as having direct value in the production of professional academics. Following, I identify the ways in which graduate students received the messages of success. These mechanisms are critical to understanding the final section: the strong forms of the hidden curriculum. You will see below how the implicit curriculum components that support the maintenance of the status quo and the reproduction of inequality rely in large part on the delivery of the socializations messages by passive means requiring high levels of inference.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of this writing, I was able to determine that, indeed, all of the graduate participants had successfully completed their programs and received a PhD.

<sup>4</sup> Note. In the presentation of the results, I do not infer or attribute an experience or perspective to any of the participants' identity characteristics. The influence of sociocultural characteristics such as gender, race, and class, were addressed by the participants and emerged in the analyses as initiated by the participants' contributions.

## **The Weak Forms of the Hidden Curriculum**

In this section I explore and explain the messages received by graduate students, and delivered in part by faculty members, regarding the components necessary to be successful in academe. I asked graduate student participants what they thought was necessary to be considered a successful graduate student in their department. While answering this question (and the accompanying prompts), students most often volunteered that what was necessary to be a successful graduate student mirrored what was necessary to be a successful faculty member. In fact, the graduate student participants in this study saw no difference between what was necessary to be a successful graduate student and what they thought was necessary to be a successful faculty member. Vance's comment was representative of this group of graduate students, "Most of the things that we, graduate students, do are the things that faculty members do," he asked his advisor, "'is it always going to be like graduate school?' and she basically said 'yes.'"; and Lara said, "It takes the same things to be a successful faculty member as it does to be a successful graduate student." This is significant because it illustrates that this orientation to graduate school, shared by faculty and graduate students, promotes the notion that the two spheres of participants (students and faculty) share norms, values, and perspectives on success and how to be successful. The weak forms of the hidden curriculum support what Weidman and Stein (2003) called "the cognitive dimensions (knowledge and skills) of a role," and they linked these dimensions to faculty requirements, concluding "it is clear that the cognitive dimensions of the professional role are closely related to the requirements of the student role" (p.644).

A type of dual socialization that I discussed earlier was not realized by the graduate student participants. For participants in this study, being socialized as a student and learning what was necessary to be a successful graduate student, involved the exact same markers, behaviors, and processes, as being socialized in(to) a faculty career.

When asked about what they know about being successful graduate students, participants recounted markers of weak hidden curriculum, that is, those parts of the hidden curriculum assumed to have direct value to the production of professional researchers in the discipline. The weak curriculum messages graduate students recalled fell into two categories: there were messages regarding professional products that outlined what someone should *produce* to be successful; and messages regarding professional identities that outlined who someone should *be* to be successful. The professional behaviors supportive of success included conducting research, publishing, teaching, and winning awards. These are considered part of the weak hidden curriculum in graduate school, not because these components are unknown to graduate student participants (Margolis & Romero, 1998), but because they are a) not a codified part of graduate school curricula; b) they are not formally assessed; and c) the quality and measureable importance of these components are amorphous. In most graduate programs, students are not assessed or receive grades for conducting research, publishing, teaching, or winning awards; and they reported receiving confusing, and at times contradictory messages, from faculty about the weight given to these products. I discuss below seven components of the weak hidden curriculum that address skills, behaviors, and dispositions necessary to be successful as an academic. They include research, teaching, networking, commitment, public speaking, navigating politics, and flexibility.

### **Weak hidden curriculum: Research.**

The graduate students in this study reported having received messages regarding the importance of research and publishing, and none challenged these messages. Two students were very clear that all that was required to be a successful graduate student and faculty member was “publications.” By observing their peers, several students decided that conducting research and publishing while in graduate school was important to being a successful graduate student. Matilda said that she used her cohort peers as a resource and that she learned “you have to do well with research, do a study or two each semester and eventually piece them together for publication,” from “watching other students.” She learned about being successful “mostly by observing.” Vanessa concurred that publications in the “best journals” matter “a whole, whole lot.”

While the importance of research and publishing might appear self-evident to the reader as well as to the participants of this study, graduate students were not as clear on quantity or quality, and reported receiving conflicting messages. The graduate student participants reported that when they received direct advice from a particular faculty member, they did not know if other faculty members concurred. Valeria recalled a faculty member saying “‘You’re never, ever going to get a job unless you have five single authored publications by the time you leave here.’ But then another professor heard about this and told us, ‘it’s not true!’” As a result, students were confident that publishing was important, but they had no idea with this meant in reality.

Christy, for example, was anxious about her possibly low number of publications and felt that she “wasn’t as versed in psychological theories as [she] should be.” Christy

learned the importance of getting published by listening to disparaging comments her advisor and supervisor would make about others, “he said, ‘I see people applying for the post doc [position] and they’re coming out of graduate school without publications.

Wow. How can you go to graduate school and have no publications?’” Christy concluded that because she had more than “zero” publications, she was not doing as poorly as she thought. Another student, Olivia, knew you had to be “super productive” from watching her advisor, but she added, “I don’t know how to quantify it.”

Several student participants reported that it was important to have a narrow research agenda, but expressed some ambivalence about how to do this. Christy reported that she had a mentor endorse a focused research agenda only after she expressed concern to him that she was becoming “a one trick pony.” Part of Christy’s anxiety involved her feelings toward the credibility she was building by supporting her boss’ research agenda,

How am I going to build this sort of research agenda and like, build it from scratch, basically? And so that’s just daunting to think about building that whole thing. But, it’s exciting, too. It’s incredibly exciting to think that I could do all my own research. I couldn’t care less [about my boss’ research agenda]. Really, it’s not my area of interest.

Other students endorsed a broad research agenda. Thomas, for example, said, “I’m still trying to figure out the whole faculty thing. (...) I think you have to have a diverse range of interests.” For the few students who endeavored to secure professional positions that were not research focused (and were comfortable disclosing this to me), they said they still knew that research was important. Lacey shared, “I had a statistics TA, early on, tell me: be sure you get good research experience.”

A few faculty participants in this study shared that they communicated to students the importance of good research, as compared to a lot of research, and that they spent time with their advisees addressing research agendas. Nash shared,

And I always tell students that you got to try to avoid ME-search, which a lot of our students really like to do. They [are working out their] identity journey. Well, that's really interesting but it may not be generalizable. You've got to make your work marketable, and don't make it sound like it's just going to be for a specific, select group that the field may not be that interested in. You've got to develop a program of research that should be, maybe fundable. And often we do not give our students a good sense of how they need to do that.

Nash suggested that students who did not identify as white, or heterosexual, were more susceptible to this pitfall of a too-personal-research agenda. I discuss this sentiment in greater detail later, in my treatment of the strong hidden curriculum.

Some graduate students expressed linkages between these behaviors while at once being uncertain of the standard for merit. Christy stated that it was necessary to get funding and win grant awards in order to sustain research and publishing, "The 'publish or perish' thing is alive and well. You have to have a staff of people, which means you have to be incredibly well funded –to pay people to do it for you, or you collaborate with other people." She also shared this story,

I worked for a woman right [as an undergraduate], they were hiring a new faculty member. ... She was like, okay, go to this pile of applications and anybody who has funding put it in this pile and anybody who doesn't put in that pile. I was like, oh, you need funding. It was like my first like thought. God, I have to get funding somehow because when I apply for a job they're going to put me in the not funded pile and they're not even going to look at me.

Christy understood the need for funding as a high stakes behavior: not having funding could cost you a job interview, and it could prevent you from producing and publishing research.



### **Weak hidden curriculum: Teaching.**

Several graduate student participants cited teaching as a component of being a successful graduate student and faculty member. It is included here because students assigned an importance to it, and because teaching assistantships were part of the psychology departments' sanctioned activities—either for funding or experience. Students assigned value to this skill and shared experiences and resources with their peers regarding the “how-to's” of teaching undergraduates. Several graduate student participants enjoyed teaching and wanted to develop their teaching skills. None of the faculty members in this study spoke about teaching.

Graduate students were not clear about the relative importance of this component compared to the others. Denise puts together a conclusion that is at odds with her own values,

They're not teaching us to teach but I think they know that. I mean, one thing that was kind of surprising that they're not teaching, is ... like, we're going to be going out for professor positions, but, we're not really taught to teach, and I was ... but I can kind of see why. We're not [taught], because, it's not like you're going to get published for it or, you know, it's not like you get an award for it or anything. So it's kind of just something you have to do.

With the absence of any institutionalized, explicit assessments to the contrary, Denise concluded that publishing and getting research awards are the markers of a successful career.

Christy shared, “I think teaching is big,” and she repeated this several times during our interview, but she did not know how she came to this conclusion. From having interviewed Natalie, one of the three faculty members she identified as her mentors, I suggested that Christy observed the intention and care that Natalie put into teaching and then surmised that it was important. Lacey, too, said that teaching was important, but then

she added, “I don’t know how I learned this. I just assumed, I guess.” Wendy, another graduate student, said that as a faculty member, “you have to be as committed to teaching students as you are to the research,” but she did not know how she came to this conclusion, “It’s just kind of there. It’s in the air, I think.”

### **Weak hidden curriculum: Networking.**

Students received lessons in how to create professional identities. This part of the weak hidden curriculum incorporated the “soft skills” of being a professional academic. Students identified the importance of networking, managing people, visibility, goal setting, commitment, presenting, and navigating “politics.”

While faculty members did not mention networking as significant to being successful in graduate school, graduate students consistently expressed the importance of networking, and conference going reinforced their perceptions of the importance of knowing other scholars in the field, in person, not just being familiar with their work. Without exception, they saw their advisor as being the gatekeeper to a world of professional connections. One student, Caleb, described his positive experiences:

My advisor has put me in touch with other people in the field, outside of this university and that’s been really helpful just to get feedback about my work from people who aren’t [in this department] (...) And that’s been one of the most important steps for me, networking beyond these walls. [My advisor] has helped me get a better sense of the field around the country.

For Christy, another graduate student, networking was the first function she mentioned when she reflected on how she had been socialized to the profession, and she made it clear that faculty member involvement was vital,

One of the ways I think for faculty members to help graduate students is to make connections. So one of the big things for me is making connections within other

professional organizations and talking to other faculty members from other places ... the professional sort of networking, it's really huge in Academia.

And Edith remarked, "I think networking [is important to being a successful graduate student], you know, getting to know people, not just in your department but outside of the university."

Consistent with social network theorists (e.g., Kilduff & Tsai, 2003) who maintain that learning develops as a result of interactions with a range of professionals and peers, graduate students saw networking as both important to their success as graduate students, and also important to being a successful faculty member. Denise commented, "you have to be really good at networking [to be a faculty member]... to maximize your exposure, connect with people and work with people and stuff –be good at network management."

### **Weak hidden curriculum: Commitment.**

In order to be a successful graduate student, and faculty member, the graduate student participants identified needing to have a disposition for commitment; and they defined commitment as the willingness to put a lot of time into work. Thomas said, "Work is super, super important." Denise said that her advisor told her "we invest in you, so keep on." All of the faculty participants mentioned "hard work" as a necessary component to being a successful graduate student. They recognized that commitment could be evaluated in terms of time, but also in terms of balancing competing demands, and engaging the competitive atmosphere. Timothy, a faculty member, offered, "The disposition to work incredibly hard is the best characteristic of a successful graduate student," and:

I even tell my graduate students [about how hard they should be expecting to work as a professor], you just work sixty, seventy, eighty hours a week. And, they always think that I'm joking because they are working so hard [now]. And [when they get a tenure-track position], they work twice as hard. And I think that's just a bad surprise for grad students because the amount of readings, the amount of teaching, the amount of collegiate expectations for service work on top of the research, is really a tough surprise. And people think they've made it when they get their first job. And what they find is they're just working harder than they ever did.

Graduate students in this study were very aware of the demands of a faculty position at reputable institutions. They watched the faculty in their department, and were certain as to the time commitment this career choice would require.

The students reported seeing their advisors working all the time, sending and replying to emails at all hours, and concluded that to be successful, "you have to be a workaholic." And a faculty participant, Edgar, added, "This place is a paradise for workaholics." Talisa, a graduate student, felt as if this message—that work should be an all-consuming priority—was communicated clearly to students by faculty. She described a "depressing" computer lab that had "crappy computers," uncomfortable chairs, and no windows.

I think someone had to complain. And so they bought us like new chairs that were really nice. And then, they wrote a letter saying, "Well now you should be spending 18 hours a day working. Now there is no excuse to take a break." And it was sort of supposed to be a joke, but it was more true than you realized, like that that's exactly the message that you're giving us. And you just wrote it down, directly. But [it's] the message you've been giving us all along.

Graduate students received messages that committing to the work of academe, in excess of a traditional nine-to-five work week, was necessary to be successful.

### **Weak hidden curriculum: Public speaking.**

Graduate students learned from their faculty advisors how to create and deliver research presentations. Some faculty met one-on-one with students, or held sessions for any students, others created workshops for all of their advisees. Contexts addressed by the faculty included conference presentations and job talks. One graduate student, Denise, recounted how one of her advisors addressed “professional conduct,” “he said, ‘when you go out [attending a conference], don’t drink; there’s no room for error.’ (...) [He] also [addressed] how to give a job talk, and how to speak [to] avoid slang, and how to structure your presentation.” Another faculty advisor spent considerable time on how to communicate and give feedback at a research presentation, Valeria, a graduate student, shared,

My advisor said, “okay, I’m going to teach you guys how to give feedback. There’s a way to give feedback. And the way that you give feedback is not by crushing someone else. There’s a way to send a message that you want someone else to receive, so that they’re work improves.” And so we had this whole activity [using] presentations we’d be giving at conferences.

In addition to foundational components of how to deliver a presentation or job talk, public speaking involved communicating a level of expertise. Nathaniel remarked, “There’s some level of selling yourself and knowing how to sell your work.” Student participants identified that speaking authoritatively was critical to being a successful faculty member. They observed many forums in which faculty were in front of people, locally, nationally, and internationally, to present their work. The confidence necessary goes beyond those characteristics of public speaking basics –the participants saw confidence more than a disposition, but also as a strategy to deflect criticism.

### **Weak hidden curriculum: Navigating politics.**

Students reported learning about the weak hidden curriculum soft skills primarily through their own experiences and “trial and error.” Vance, a graduate student, talked about this learning process “of how to work with different faculty members (...) you have to know how to work with each one, differently” ; while Matilda said that it was important to learn “the hierarchy.”

Students were using “politics” to signify challenges with and among faculty members. They witnessed verbal arguments between faculty members in the department and had had expectations that disagreements would have been handled differently. Nancy, a graduate student remarked, “I was surprised to see how faculty don’t get along, how they talk about their students, and how they have no remorse (...) how they are completely inappropriate. And no one calls them out.”

Politics, for some participants, referenced human resource management skills, or leadership skills. Norman, a graduate student, thought “to be a good faculty member, you have to be a good politician. It would be important to be a good mentor, too. Because the graduate students are going to be doing all of your work for you.” A few faculty members provided insight in to this aspect of the hidden curriculum. They shared that it was necessary for students to be able to work with multiple people and manage relationships. Edgar, a faculty member, gave an example of these human relation skills when he described his perspective on how students should behave with their advisor, “try to stick up for yourself, and try to figure out a way to do what they insist, but also do what you want.”

Repeatedly, both the graduate student and faculty participants in this study identified confidence as critical component to professional success. A part of navigating the politics of the department and field required enacting confidence. Kayla, a faculty member, shared this lesson, “Really what distinguishes [graduate students], what distinguishes the stars from the ones who aren’t, it isn’t due to aptitude. I really don’t think it’s due to ability. The kinds of abilities that really help are how confident you are.” I discuss in depth confidence as an aspect of the hidden curriculum later in this chapter.

### **Weak hidden curriculum: Flexibility.**

Flexibility was part of the weak hidden curriculum addressing adaptation and resilience in researchers. A few participants mentioned the importance of this soft skill, and that they were not offered guidance on how this was or could be taught. One graduate student, Nathaniel, explained it thusly,

No one ever talked to me about this, no one ever suggested that one of the important things about being an academic is knowing how to respond to failure, what to do when you’re uncertain or uncomfortable about something, or how to get help. But as far as I can tell those things are pretty critical.

A few faculty members, too, were concerned that graduate students should have the ability to adapt in the face of failure. Kirk said students should develop “the ability to win or lose.”

While all of the participants in some measure identified receiving messages regarding the importance of these seven components of the weak hidden curriculum (research, teaching, networking, commitment, public speaking, navigating politics, and flexibility), most were hard pressed to communicate *how* graduate students could learn or acquire these skills and dispositions. In the next section, I discuss the ways in which

graduate students received messages embedded in socialization and how they learned or uncovered what it takes to be successful in academia.

### **The Delivery of Socialization Messages**

Students were watching one another, their faculty advisors, and all of the professors. They retrieved meaning from several sources and evaluated almost constantly what they saw and heard. Students took guesses as to what was necessary to become a successful faculty member and admitted that they really did not know. One graduate student, Norman, remarked, “[Graduate students are socialized to faculty careers] in very slippery ways.”

Study participants identified five distinct pathways for how graduate students learned what was important in a professional, academic career. These included:

1. Watching faculty
2. Having a conversation with a faculty member
3. Socializing meaning with and through graduate student peers (observing, processing, and storytelling)
4. Official department communications (e.g., progress letters, professional seminars)
5. The absence of interaction and feedback

These mechanisms for delivering messages of socialization assumed a particular complexity when the culture of the two departments was considered. The graduate students were keen on explaining and describing the competitive environment. They saw the graduate school experience as a perpetual process of competing for faculty attention and accolades, competing for research positions and publications, competing for awards,



and, ultimately, competing for jobs. The honors were few, and the contenders many. Additionally, since the markers of success in the aforementioned areas of professional behavior and disposition were oblique, graduate students seemed to interpret each and every interaction and context as a competition. I provide a few examples of the importance of context below.

At one of the two institutions, the competitive markers of the graduate school experience had an epicenter at weekly presentation sessions where graduate students, faculty, and invited speakers would present their research and then engage the gallery. Graduate students in this study attributed much of their learning of how to be professional to these sessions. The lessons learned took place at the weekly presentations, but also in the general environment, apart from, but related to, the actual sessions. These presentations became larger than just the activity occupying a specific space and time; they were woven into the fabric of the department culture. Students could, and did, opt not to actively participate in the verbal volleying. But opting out of the presentation sessions (e.g., not attending, not participating) did nothing to obviate the function and effects of this department structure. For the graduate students in this study, the presentation sessions provided, simultaneously, specific lessons of professional behavior and a more far reaching, symbolic touchstone of how to compete and succeed as a faculty member. Norman, a graduate student, observed, “We’re attacked a lot in [my area]. People make comments [in the presentation sessions] to undercut somebody and make themselves look better. But I don’t participate. The space isn’t there for us to help each other, so I just don’t contribute.”

Graduate students in this study watched the presenters at the weekly sessions and were keenly aware of how each presenter was received, and how the gallery responded to the presentation. Vanessa explained, “I watch other students and see how they are perceived, or how they’re received by faculty ... that’s how you know what you’re supposed to be doing.” Taking the observation one step further, Matilda identified the stars of the department as people who “make smart comments at the [weekly presentation sessions]”; but she was uncertain as to how to identify the smart comments: “Some people have a tendency to show off. Some people, to me, seem so obvious that they’re making comments to make themselves look smart as opposed to being actually interested in the topic.” The weekly presentations provided a unique opportunity to bring faculty and students together, in the same space, and the students reported learning much more than the presentation topic of the week.

The process and effects of presentation sessions at the second university were similar to those described above, though instead of providing a stage for competition and performance for the graduate students in the gallery, according to the graduate student participants, the faculty members attacked each other. In this forum, the graduate students felt as if they were bait or fodder, alternatively trying to protect their advisor and student presenters from the faculty gallery’s vituperative challenges. Randi, a graduate student, described this experience, where student presenters were

...usually completely slashed by professors (...) one of my friends who presented just had one of the professors say, “so I don’t get the point of this whole thing.” [But] they don’t put the students down as much as they put each other down. And the student is caught in the middle. So your advisor will want to put down the person who’s asking you a question. And the other professor will actually be wanting to put down your professor. So they will be criticizing you but actually they’re trying to criticize the advisor. [The students] are all very nice. I think we’re even nicer because we perceive that people are already feeling so hurt. We

all feel so badly, [so] the students are trying to be on their best behavior and ask their questions really nicely.

Considering this explicit and implicit climate of competition, below I identify the five mechanisms by which graduate students received messages regarding what it takes to be successful in an academic career.

### **Watching faculty.**

When I asked the graduate student participants to explain what was necessary to become a successful graduate student, they noted that it was the same family of behaviors required to be a successful faculty member. So, they drew conclusions that in order to be successful, like the faculty they saw in their departments, they should identify the behaviors they saw in these faculty members: they learned about the behaviors by watching faculty. Kirby, a graduate student, described this strategy,

I think the means by which [graduate students are] socialized comes through interactions with their advisors, meetings, [weekly presentations]. I think that's where it happens. [The faculty,] they model. All you have to do is sit around and watch how they act. You see what they're doing and how they act.

Other graduate students concurred. Nancy said, learning "by example is a very powerful way." Valeria summarized,

...people learn by watching their advisors. I think that's how you learn what you're supposed to be doing (...) you learn through seeing, and you will get it at some point kind of a thing. I don't think there's like --despite what the faculty members are telling you-- I don't think there's explicit dissemination of information related to becoming a professor.

And Vanessa concurred, "We learn about being a professor by a lot of observation. It's a rare occurrence, I think, to talk about what you should expect [with a faculty member]."

The faculty participants in this study confirmed that this is the method by which they, too, learned how to be/come faculty members. Kayla, a faculty member, stated simply, “[I learned] by looking around me, no one told me [anything].” Edgar said he learned how to be a faculty member “on the job. I would be doing what the faculty around me were doing.” And this passive delivery of lessons, as a primary way of learning professional behavior, was normalized and accepted. Faculty expected students to emulate them, as Rebecca asked, “you don’t get any training, you look around at the other people, right?”

Another faculty member who described herself as an intentional mentor said, “I think there’s a lot of indirect kind of socialization. You know, as you see what your advisor’s doing.” Phillip said “I don’t think you ever learn how to be a professor. It’s a very practical, on the ground experience.” Nash agreed and said that it is something you learn by doing, and had just one thought on how students learn to be faculty, “through mimicking their advisors, mimicking other faculty, imitating”; but added that this strategy is effective only “sometimes. [And with a tinge of sarcasm] well, they can’t all be me.”

Some participants acknowledged that they had not thought about how they learned what it took to be a successful academic. A graduate student, KayLynn, who was nearing her defense date offered this reflection,

I think, looking back, I wasn’t even aware that I was watching and learning. But I certainly was. I was noticing, how does *this* visiting professor interact with *this* tenured professor (...) So, we learn by watching and having relationships with people (...) I think that we learn by seeing who’s rewarded and for what.

KayLynn internalized some of the messages she felt she learned from watching one of her advisors. She shared that while her advisor did not directly tell her how important it

was for her to regularly publish, KayLynn witnessed the anxiety experienced by her advisor on this topic, “I saw her doing that for herself. I saw her feeling insecure at herself about not having things published. So, I guess by modeling, she was showing me ‘here’s how not to feel good about yourself.’”

### **Interactions with faculty members.**

Interactions with faculty members have been proved to be critical to graduate student success (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Most of the graduate students in this study felt as if they were in constant competition for faculty time, attention, and accolades. In the absence of direct feedback from or interaction with faculty members, students resorted to cues, clues, and meaning making that required high levels of inference. Students mentioned that positive signs included faculty members sharing articles with students, and praising student contributions in class. These actions by faculty were interpreted as supportive and were regarded as rare coins. Both graduate student and faculty participants agreed that interactions with faculty provided an important vehicle for transmitting message of how to be successful. These two groups, however, differed as to their evaluations of the frequency of faculty-graduate student contact. A few students had mentorship-like relationships with their faculty advisor, had regular access to their advisor, and shared that they could and did talk about all sorts of work and personal issues. Most graduate students, however, lamented that they did not feel comfortable with their advisor, did not see them as often as they would have liked, and/or felt that their advisor treated them with a larger amount of hostility than care.

Faculty members had a different perspective regarding the department culture and the quality of graduate student interactions with faculty members. “Students are given a lot of advice. We do a lot and make it easy for people [to learn how to be successful],” said Kayla, a faculty member, when she described the ways in which expectations are communicated to students. She was referencing the expectations for research, delivering presentations, and “what it would take to get a job.” But when I asked *how* these expectations were communicated to graduate students, she cited the professional seminar required of first year students; she did not suggest that faculty members, as advisors, would communicate these expectations to their graduate student advisees. But a peer of Kayla’s explained the socialization mechanisms in this way,

I think [graduate students] get the message [of what it takes to be successful] from their advisors. In our program, we have a pro-seminar the first year, (...) And I know that they get lots of those messages initially. Well, some of those messages. But I also fear that the messages are uneven. So, they don’t necessarily get those messages from advisors.

A few faculty participants explained the oddities and inconsistencies in their colleagues behavior by discussing emotional intelligence: Nash summarized that faculty as a group were not skilled socially, and that students would be well served by learning how to deal with difficult personalities. Edgar had this suggestion, “[To learn about being successful,] I suppose you’d start with your advisor (...) but don’t give up if your advisor isn’t helpful. You need to have social support, too, because faculty are a little bit bizarre. They are often obtuse.”

The competition for faculty attention encouraged some students to ask for what they really wanted and needed: feedback. Graduate student participants asked their advisors for advice on how to be successful, and how to navigate research work. A few

students reported ways in which faculty advisors provided them with guidance. Vanessa said that she met with her advisor regularly and, “she gives me feedback on my writing, or we make an action plan for next steps in the research.” Thomas offered that his advisor “communicates a lot via email. She’s supportive of almost anything I want to do, and she has mentoring down to an art.” Valeria said that her professors shared what it is like to be a faculty member, but was unable to provide an example of when this happened, “a lot of these messages are implicit.”

When the graduate students talked with faculty members about their graduate school process, meeting milestones, and formulating career plans, they reported receiving advice in the form of statements (or pronouncements) of the consequences for not conforming. Rather than receiving guidance for *how* to be successful, and how to acquire skills or dispositions, they were met with a description of the costs if they were not successful. The consequences of not meeting expectations were not communicated in terms of proceeding in the program, but rather were communicated in terms of succeeding in a faculty career. One graduate student, Oren, summarized the interactions in this way,

They instill fear, like you have this narrow track [of what you’re supposed to do], and they scare you about getting off the track. Something bad might happen, like, ‘where do you want to be? do you want to end up with nothing? You’ll have a PhD with no job?’ We’re just told ‘this is what you have to do’ and it’s scary.

Other students, like Caleb, were told that the incentive to get along with faculty was that they needed to get “at least three letters, good letters of recommendation (...) It’s all about those letters of recommendation because that’s what gets you a job.”

Students who received direct socialization message from their faculty advisors spoke of several forms of one-on-one interaction. These included weekly meetings,

emails to share articles, providing feedback on manuscripts, and making introductions at conferences. None of the graduate student participants shared that a faculty member had given feedback that they were not doing well, but the students assumed that if there was a problem “professors will contact you or pull you aside if they think there are problems with your progress.”

While there was not a common theme among the faculty, or between the graduate students and faculty participants, regarding the amount of faculty-student interaction taking place in their program, all of the participants in this study shared a perspective about the importance of this interaction. Kayla, a faculty member, said, “you need to get hooked up with a faculty member.” Another faculty member, Kirk, explained why this is so critical to graduate student success,

It really takes having somebody to watch over you and to watch your back, basically; someone who sort of is watching out for [the graduate student] and guarding them. And then, when that expands outward to the rest of the field...you know a lot of stuff is still done by person-to-person rather than institution-to-institution kind of stuff. It’s all very personal. Who knows who and who talks to whom and when you try to view it in the terms of a professional training, [good research skills,] that’s all fine and good. You have to do that but that’s not where it’s at.

A few faculty participants shared that it was the responsibility of the graduate student to “create a bond with their advisor.” Rebecca said that graduate students should get to know faculty outside of school. And, Timothy, another faculty member, stated that graduate students learned how to be successful “through a mentoring relationship where they effectively work in the same mold that they’re expected to work as a professional.”

All of the participants in this study underscored the importance of having a good advisor-advisee pairing to graduate student success. Generally, the faculty in this study believed that the messages of what is required to be successful were delivered, or



assumed to be delivered, by interactions between graduate students and their advisors, and they were careful to point out that mentoring, as a process, looked very different from faculty member to faculty member. Timothy described the variation in this way,

[Messages of how to be successful are] communicated to varying degrees. It really depends on the mentor. Some faculty do a wonderful job of mentoring. Other faculty prefer a more professional and probably less personal [relationship]. So it really depends a little bit on the fit and what students expect.

Graduate students, too, underscored the value of a mentoring relationship, but the majority described disappointment in their relationships with faculty members. Several students in the study felt very alone, without a faculty mentor, in their graduate school journey. For example, when I asked Matilda “In what ways do faculty encourage you?” without a hint of sarcasm she asked, “what do you mean, ‘encourage me’? Encourage me to do what?”

In these department cultures, where the strong hidden curriculum included masking, performance, and public criticism (discussed later), graduate student participants did not trust all of the advice or even guidelines communicated by faculty. Khalil remembered when a program chair addressed his cohort,

He said, ‘we believe in you and if you don’t succeed don’t blame yourself. You should really be blaming us because that means we didn’t do a good job training you. You know we want you to be able to go out there and represent our school. And show that we produce premiere psychologists.’ (...) So, I thought that was an interesting sort of thing to say. I don’t buy it. But it makes everybody happy.

Interactions with faculty members, while valued by the graduate student participants in this study, were seen as precious commodities, but were also fraught with anxiety and trepidation.

### **Interactions with peers.**

Researchers have posited that peer interactions are critical to the success of graduate students, but have focused on the support and community building functions of these interactions (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Leonard & Becker, 2009) rather than the transmission of academic norms. Graduate student and faculty participants both identified the importance of graduate student peers for delivering messages of socialization. Graduate students Edith and Matilda concluded that they pick up “little things” from anywhere they can. Both described how they watched faculty and graduate student peers, “Everybody is watching each other.”

A faculty member said that he relied on students to learn what it takes to be successful from “peer group norms.” Edgar offered,

One assumes that students will have some instruction or informal or implicit instruction from their advisors, mentors, but I suspect that a good deal of it is peer shaped, and some of that is pretty valuable, because we as faculty aren't even aware of some of the real obstacles and hurdles.

Common spaces provided sanctioned opportunities for students to talk with one another about all manner of graduate student life. Students intentionally used, and avoided, strategies such as spending time in the computer lab and roaming the halls. Students reported talking about research, primarily, because the competitive environments at these two universities complicated peer interactions. Students spoke about not wanting to show weakness, and as a result their interactions with peers could be less than authentic. Valeria mentioned that she did not want other students to “know her business,” and was fearful that her stories, experiences, and personal life could be used against her. A few students identified other graduate students as mentors: Vanessa cited a more senior

student with whom she talked “about a lot of stuff.” And Wallace offered, “I asked more advanced students what they would do differently.”

### **Department communications and structures.**

Faculty members cited program structures (e.g., professional seminars, advisor relationships) as both *what* graduate students needed to do to be successful, and *how* they learned what it takes to be successful. This included availing themselves of their advisors, using the department handbook, completing coursework, and passing the candidacy exam. A few faculty referenced department publications, Kayla offered, “we have a comprehensive handbook.” But despite the general consensus on the part of faculty that socialization messages were communicated directly and often, there seemed to be a large disconnect between how the faculty thought students were receiving messages and how the graduate students reported receiving messages (or not). For example, more than one faculty member pointed to the value of the first year professional seminar, and a few mentioned the program handbook. None of the graduate students I interviewed mentioned the professional seminar in positive terms. And, I asked the graduate student participants how the program handbook helped them learn how to be successful, and none said that they saw or used a program handbook.

At both institutions, graduate students received yearly letters addressing their progress in their respective program. Several students referred to the yearly progress letter they received from the program or department chair as evidence they were progressing satisfactorily. Students added that if they were not progressing satisfactorily, they assumed there would have been some mention in the letter.

According to graduate students, professional seminars (required, first-year courses) were not helpful for learning what was necessary to be a successful graduate student or faculty member. They were looking for opportunities to learn about the soft skills they thought were important to being a successful graduate student and faculty member. In the professional seminars, students reported being lectured to on the topics of the history of the program, ranking of journals based on reputation, and what to read to generate research ideas. But they did not feel comfortable addressing what they saw as weaknesses in the seminar. Students, like Talisa, were very disappointed that the professional seminar did not include

anything practical like the [expectations for research and publishing, or negotiating relationships with mentors]. It was almost a waste of time because it didn't touch on those things. But of course it didn't, because there was a faculty member teaching it, and we had to behave diplomatically with him, too. He had power over us.

And Norman concluded, "There is a pro-sem where you can ask questions about [program milestones], and the answers are usually pretty unclear. When I really need to know, I ask older students." Faculty members, on the other hand, placed a great deal of trust in the promise of the professional seminar to deliver guidance. Kayla observed, "We give students a lot of advice. Each of the areas has a pro-sem (...) And a lot of what goes on there is professional socialization."

Wallace, a graduate student, provided an example of this disconnect between faculty and students regarding the communication of socialization messages. He points to a physical artifact in his workspace: "We have a scoreboard [in my lab]. It's this big bulletin board where everyone pins up copies of their latest publications. They [faculty] say 'we want to have an exchange of ideas' but it's really a matter of 'oh, look what

journal I published in.” Other students characterized departmental newsletters in a similar fashion. They identified faculty and graduate student stars in their department as those who had their accomplishments publicized in the newsletters and official announcements.

### **The absence of interaction and feedback.**

While I questioned and prodded graduate students to identify specific ways by which they received messages about how to be successful in academia, in general, they struggled to recount where or how they learned how to be a successful graduate student and/or faculty member. Repeatedly, they described having “a feeling” or a hunch. Thomas reported how there was “an understanding [in his department] about what kind of research you should be doing,” when I asked Thomas to explain how he came to this understanding, he replied, “It’s nothing that’s said out loud. I guess I’ve learned that through intuition or sometimes a lack of [faculty] response.” And from a different university, Valeria shared her perspective on the durability of the implicit message culture,

[It’s a] you-learn-through-seeing and you-will-get-it-at-some-point kind of thing. I don’t think there’s like --despite what the faculty members are telling you-- I don’t think there’s explicit dissemination of information related to becoming a professor (...) The messages are very implicit . The old school people in a context dictate the norms and then people emulate those norms...either implicitly or explicitly.

In the absence of feedback, several students deferred to the adage “no news is good news.” Thomas offered, “I fell like if there’s a problem your advisor will take you into a room and talk to you about it.” Other students were not confident that their advisor would take this level of care. Talisa shared that her advisor was “challenging. He doesn’t

give me feedback. He's really demanding, but neglectful." Oren, too, said he did not get any feedback from his advisors. Kirby concluded, "I could disappear and my advisors wouldn't notice. I was hoping to meet more regularly."

The climate of competition in the departments contributed to an environment of constant comparison among graduate students. Students compared themselves to their peers regarding work hours, publications, presentation success, and as Norman described, "who's favorites of who." Competition served a purpose, and supplemented the absence of feedback from faculty. The culture supported and magnified a need for acknowledgment and recognition. The graduate students organized their time and attention based on this quest for recognition. Olivia remarked, "I don't think faculty are going to come right out and tell you this is what they want you to do; they depend on student's competing with one another."

Kirby, another graduate student, had a lot to say about how in the absence of feedback, the climate of competition exacerbated insecurities and encouraged "lame" behaviors.

I think it is pretension, to walk around like I'm the smartest guy in the place. So on the one hand I can judge it and I can say, I think it's pretty lame. When people walk around and act like their smart and they ask the potentially, you know mean questions. They...another thing they do is they tend to um...act like they have a lot of projects going. Act like they have a lot of undergraduates working under them and possibly do have a lot of undergraduates under them. And you know pretty soon they start referring to the lab as their lab. [Laughs] Just referencing that...you know as if they have their own lab. And I think to myself...I don't say anything but I think you have to be a faculty member to have a lab. Maybe that's just me um...and so I think a lot of it is just a show that people put on. And I think that's lame. But then on the other hand if I was as sure as they are that they want to be [an academic]...maybe I would act the same way. Like if I found the thing that I thought was my passion. Then, I might play it up too. I think it's rewarded...like I think that behavior is rewarded.

I investigated *how* students learned what was necessary to be a successful graduate student and faculty member, to assist in identifying socialization to faculty careers. Identifying the mechanisms by which messages are delivered provided insight and support for uncovering the norms and understanding the culture of these graduate departments.

In the following section I consider how these implicit messages, and sometimes subtle mechanisms, interact in the strong hidden curriculum.

### **The Strong Forms of the Hidden Curriculum**

The strong form of the hidden curriculum comprises covert messages and mechanisms that serve to perpetuate inequality, stifle individuality, and enable conformity to a set of norms regulated by dominant ideologies. We can categorize strong forms as “everyday meanings ... seen as essential elements in the preservation of existing social privilege, interests, and knowledge, which were the prerogatives of one element of the population, [and] maintained at the expense of less powerful groups” (Apple & King, 1977, p. 345). Speaking colloquially, it is hard to play by the rules when the rules are not shared with you, or there are no rules, but the culture created by the strong hidden curriculum is one that minimizes opportunities for challenge and change. This strong hidden curriculum supports isolating students from the sources of power (the discipline and faculty), from their peers (and potential allies), and from their authentic selves (individual agency).

In this section I describe the five components of the strong hidden curriculum that emerged from participants’ assessment of the culture and climate of their departments.

While the participants in this study received both direct and indirect messages regarding what was necessary to be a successful graduate student, then faculty member, the utility of this hidden curriculum was not lost on them. They had some critical consciousness or insight into the extent to which the strong hidden curriculum served to reproduce existing structures and support inequality.

A few of the components described below (for example, confusion and masking) could be seen as graduate students' *responses to the curriculum* as compared to the curriculum itself. This interpretation does not hold because the faculty agents of socialization, those in power responsible for developing and delivering the curriculum, confirmed, delivered, and promoted those same components that graduate students experienced. Faculty members acknowledge the presence and value of confusion and masking, for example, and their contribution to the maintenance of departmental culture. The components of the strong hidden curriculum discussed below are not reactions to the experiences of graduate education, but rather requirements for reproducing dominant norms and maintaining the status quo. The strong hidden curriculum components include: confusion, submission and conformity, competition, masking, and disconnection. In Chapter VI, I discuss how the hidden curriculum systemically contributes to the reproduction of dysfunction and inequity.

**Strong hidden curriculum: Confusion.**

“Graduate school is amorphous; it’s too amorphous” (Kirby, graduate student).



All participants in this study concluded that conducting research, publishing, teaching, and getting awards were important to becoming a successful faculty member, but they shared (or alluded to) having confusion as to what kind of work would be judged meritoriously, or how to accomplish this work. Both students and faculty participants were confused about the necessary scope, depth, amount or other nuanced characteristics of the weak hidden curriculum discussed earlier.

Confusion for some students seemed to be, by design, a component of graduate education. Oren, a graduate student, identified what he saw as mixed messages,

I was really thrown off by [the sole focus of academia being publishing], because [when you apply] you write this big statement of purpose about your passion for what you're going to do. And then, you get in and you're thrown in doing some research studies that you don't really care about that much.

When students' experiences did not match their expectations, or when explicit and official messages did not ring true, and they did not understand the rationale behind department processes and faculty behaviors, they were left to surmise motive and purpose, and/or to acknowledge the confusion.

### ***Confusion regarding how to be successful.***

When graduate student participants reported talking to their peers about their research agenda, they were confused about the decidedly distinct messages they were getting from faculty members --over a topic that they assumed faculty had a common understanding. For example, most students reported that their advisors encouraged them to narrow or "focus" their interests, but others were told directly that their interests were too narrow. Khalil shared that faculty members spoke to him "about broadening my interests," he was told "your interests are great, but we want to show that you have

breadth. We want to make sure that you get hired when you get out.” While it is entirely possible that Khalil’s interests were sufficiently narrow, he questioned the validity of this advice when he observed none of his White peers receiving the same messages. He also wondered if he received what he interpreted as veiled criticism because of his work in an emerging specialization, seen as unusual to his traditional and conservative psychology professors. This perceived lack of clarity regarding their research endeavors and interests affected students as they reflected on their current graduate student standing, how they were perceived by faculty, and how they may or may not be affecting their employment opportunities after receiving the PhD.

While the socialization processes seemed more clear to faculty than graduate student participants (students needed to have a close relationship with their advisor, complete program requirements, deliver presentations, and publish research findings), in fact a few faculty members said explicitly that they did not know what was required to be successful in graduate school. One faculty member, Rebecca, described graduate education in this way,

[Students] come into “Vague-land,” where people say your grades don’t matter. And you say, “Well, what does matter?” And [the faculty] say, “Well, at least, we’ll know it when we see it.” So, the guidelines of what to do to look good are not explicit; they’re not communicated because they’re not that clear.

And Rebecca had colleagues who could not respond to my question or describe how to be a successful graduate student. Timothy admitted, “That’s a tough question.” A few faculty members assessed their department as so fractured that they were certain that students were getting mixed messages regarding what they needed to do to be successful. Nash described this condition:

Part of the problem in [my area] is that we send mixed messages. I've heard faculty say, "Oh, [this program requirement] it'll be like a little pilot study." Other times I've heard them say, "Well you know it should be something that's of a publishable nature, although you don't have to get it published." Well those are two completely different things.

Another faculty member, Carl, thought that the confusion involved in graduate education was not an isolated, department specific challenge. He remarked, "there's a way in which we as a profession, and students get involved in this, too, we make a mystery out of what we do."

Students described the condition of anxiety, of living with confusion regarding their status and how well they were doing. Lacey shared, "I don't know how you learn what you need to be successful. (...) you don't get feedback [from faculty] that often. Nobody's going around saying, 'Oh, you're doing a great job.'" And Talisa echoed, "we *might* get feedback on what we're doing. It's hard to know if you're doing well. A lot of it is uncertain, actually."

All the students in this study experienced confusion as a strong form of the hidden curriculum, and the confusion was not limited to those who were struggling. Graduate students who were identified as "stars" and students who were mostly satisfied with their graduate school experience also expressed confusion about what it takes to be successful. Even Thomas, a graduate student who said he had a "helpful" mentor, characterized his knowledge of what he needed to do to be successful in this way, "I know that there are four major program milestones, but other than that, it's more or less a mystery. And I think the faculty knows that."

### *Confusion regarding mentorship.*

Other students, like Lacey, expressed confusion regarding how graduate student-faculty matches are made, or how students receive opportunities, and hinted at more sinister goings-on, behind the proverbial curtain. Nancy shared Lacey's view, and reflected on this confusion during several topics of our conversation. She was talking about the competitive nature of her program and offered, "I don't know how [decisions are made]... It's been very mysterious how you get different resources, but there's a competitive element to it." She added later, "it may be luck of the draw" and "it's random, but it's not." This lack of transparency, and thus confusion as to how to curry faculty attention, left graduate students struggling to make meaning. Another student, Tamara, hypothesized, "[Faculty] seem to handpick students, and nobody knows how it happens. I think some of the students are handpicked based on what they say in class."

Both Nancy and Lacey thought that they needed mentoring, and wanted better relationships with faculty, and they did not know what to do with the contradictions they saw. Nancy had a lot of questions and was very confused about not only what was expected of her, but also what, ultimately, it took to be successful as a graduate student. She said that she would like feedback but was skeptical about her prospects, "I'm guessing [about what is important] all the time ... when you have an advisor that is less than stellar, you're not getting feedback." Nancy, like others, tried to forge mentoring relationships with faculty members other than her advisor, and felt unsuccessful.

Graduate students in this study recalled being told at one time or another that they should work with more than one faculty member and that switching advisors was fine. A few students had advisors that encouraged this sort of movement, and most students said

it was something they were told as first year students, “in orientation, or something.” Regardless of the department rhetoric, the majority of students in this study were fearful of switching advisors. Several participants had stories about this confusion. Randi shared, “We are encouraged at least in theory to seek whoever we find works best with us. (...) it hasn’t happened to me, but I know of people who have had to ask to switch and there have been some not good feelings.” Whether or not an individual graduate student had bad experiences with switching advisors or adding mentors, they all knew of student-faculty “break-ups” that did not go well, and this added to their confusion between what they were told publically, in orientation, for example, and the reality of which they were trying to make sense.

Students felt as if they were receiving mixed messages. They knew that they needed, and they wanted, faculty interaction, but they did not know how to go about creating mentoring relationships. Norman, a graduate student, struggled to make sense of this confusion, “On the surface, [faculty] encourage you to work with other people. But I know there are professors who are possessive of their students.” Students were unsure as to how to approach finding a mentor, or switching advisors when they perceived some professors as being possessive, others they saw demonstrating hostility, others they knew were not accessible. One faculty member, Rebecca, confirmed this paradoxical reality that the students had described, and suggested that, indeed, there could be consequences for switching advisors. She shared that when students switch advisors, some faculty will speak badly about the students.

Faculty participants in this study were aware that students were confused about how to get the mentoring they needed, and they were also aware that students had

trepidation about switching or adding advisors. Most had advice for how the students should change, and Timothy was clear about the extent to which the responsibility for good mentoring matches rested in and with the graduate students:

I think some students have trouble identifying a faculty member that they feel comfortable with. So sometimes they latch onto a person who isn't a good fit and it takes a year or two then, to correct that. Students should shop around for mentors.

Some of the confusion that graduate students were experiencing was acknowledged by and known to the faculty in this study, but most of the faculty participants thought this confusion, and the responsibility for confronting it, lay with the students. Furthermore, while faculty members knew that students thought that some professors were possessive or difficult, they were reticent to suggest that their colleagues had any responsibility to improve mentoring relationships. Kayla, a faculty member, had this to say:

We try to help [students find a mentor], but sometimes, it takes a while for a student to get a good match. They don't feel comfortable. But there are lots of faculty. And what's nice about here is that the faculty really don't try and take ownership of graduate students. So, if it's not working out in one lab, faculty members are not usually offended. Students may be worried about offending the faculty member. And they have to learn that the faculty, usually, don't have a problem with that.

Another faculty member, Kirk, expressed more confusion when describing the mentoring-matching process, and acknowledged that there could be challenges with switching:

I don't know [how matching occurs]. We have an initial assignment of a student to advisors as sort of a best guess on the interests of the students and advisors. And sometimes that works and sometimes that doesn't. But we try to make it easy for them to switch. [There aren't any consequences of switching,] officially. If there are it depends on the advisor. But the students believe there are consequences.

And despite the sympathetic rhetoric of his peers, Philip, a faculty member, admitted to having had several pairings that did not end well. He shared, “it’s hard [for students] to switch advisors. That’s happened to me. It happens a lot,” and he did not know how a student should navigate such a situation, “I don’t think I’ve ever had an explicit discussion. Things have been kind of implicit.” Philip, too, did not know how to navigate mentoring relationships with students, and he did not feel comfortable having conversations about mentoring with graduate students. Rebecca shared that when students switch advisors, the faculty will “say not so nice things about the student.”

Students received messages from faculty that they should “shop around” for mentors, and switch advisors as they liked, but they did not know how to navigate a reality that contradicted the rhetoric. Graduate students shared their challenges and those of their peers: they had gone to department leadership with complaints, and had experienced retribution from faculty for not conforming –and this situation added to students’ uncertainty as to how to get the mentoring they needed.

The confusion around mentoring relationships was complicated by the relationships faculty had with each other. Students felt as if they had to adjust to faculty’s personality quirks, hot buttons, and preferences; but they also had to manage relationships between faculty members. One graduate student, Nellie, explained,

One of the biggest challenges [of graduate school] would be what goes on with the faculty. And it has made us [graduate students] very uncomfortable. And it doesn’t always make for a very good learning environment. When we are in the [weekly research] presentations there is open bickering and put-downs. And that’s just, that’s very tense and scary and nobody likes that. And that doesn’t make for a really comfortable place.

Other students talked about the concrete ways in which they had to manage differing faculty expectations. For one of her program’s milestones Kira worked with three faculty

members, “each faculty member had a different idea of how [my project] should be. I felt like I had to please each one of them, and yet that made me get pulled apart, in different directions.” In her efforts to please different faculty, Kira described the time and effort it took to please different faculty, simultaneously, and concluded that her project ultimately suffered because it seemed “schizophrenic.”

This confusion regarding how to be successful in graduate school, and how to forge good mentoring relationships, did little to empower graduate students and faculty. When the official rhetoric did not match the lived reality, both faculty members and graduate students struggled around navigating the interpersonal environment.

**Strong hidden curriculum: Submission and conformity.**

The socialization of graduate students to faculty careers relied on submission and conformity. This is another component of the strong hidden curriculum. The pressures to conform to department norms influenced student behavior, orientations to research, and perspectives on work-life balance. Graduate students (as the targets of socialization) were required to submit to the research interests and behaviors of their advisors, and other faculty in their program (the agents of socialization) for fear of individual retribution on the part of faculty agents. Graduate students were concerned that if they did not conform, consequences could include reduced faculty interaction, threatened authorship credit, and/or reduced research opportunities. This lesson in submission and conformity was supported by the power differentials between faculty and graduate students (described elsewhere, for example, Braxton, Prosper, & Bayer, 2011). But in this study, not only were the student fears understood, at least in part, by their faculty members, here the



students' fears were substantiated by these faculty members: students did face consequences for not conforming.

Students received and perpetuated the message that connections to "big name" faculty are important for succeeding in academia. A few student participants stated that they were treated poorly by their advisor, or that they received little to no guidance, or their relationship was absent of any care. However, these students stayed with their advisor because they felt stuck, or they chose to stay because they anticipated that they would benefit in the future by being attached to said person. Edith, a graduate student shared,

If you're lucky, you have an advisor who tells you when you're doing things well, and also tells you when you're not. I've heard some stories of advisors that are really brutal ... and some grad students continue to work with people just because of their name, but they're a beast.

Christy synthesized the lessons she learned and the messages she received about being successful when she formulated advice she would have for an incoming student, "buy everything, hook, line and sinker. Don't question their stance or world view. Write, kiss ass, and keep your mouth shut. Stay in view."

Student felt pressure to conform to the department's and their faculty's research agenda. Thomas elaborated upon the messages that Christy shared, "There's an understanding about what kind of research you should be doing in this department." All of the graduate students in this study chose to pursue a terminal degree at well regarded institutions that have very high levels of research productivity; all students, save two had had research experience before beginning their doctoral studies. Despite this interest in, and emphasis on, conducting research, not all students were interested in careers primarily defined by research productivity. Several were interested in careers at teaching

institutions, or community service and applied research, but all students felt pressure to communicate that they were interested in the same career (path) as their advisors. Khalil felt he had to tread very lightly with his advisor. After sharing that he might be interested in an alternative career, Khalil remembered that his advisor remarked, “well, you’re a really good researcher, too. I don’t want you to give up on that.” He felt as if he was in an awkward position: his advisor did not discourage him, explicitly, but he felt as if he only received support for the extent to which he was mirroring his advisor’s interests. In general, graduate students were aware that the expectation on the part of the faculty was that the graduate student would desire and pursue a faculty career similar to theirs. Like Khalil, Kira had other interests, but she hid them from the faculty.

Students received other lessons in conformity by watching how other graduate students were treated, and by studying faculty behavior. In brief, while students listened to faculty –what was said and how it was said– they also took note of the power dynamics embedded in the interactions. Conformity was endorsed and reified by faculty members when they pointed out the non-conformists and used these individuals as “the teach against” example, or the cautionary tale. Talisa provided an example of the strength of this conformity component of the hidden curriculum,

I hear about students’ breakdowns **from faculty**. Several [faculty members] gossip to try and make you feel comfortable, I think. Sometimes they talk about rivalries with other faculty. It’s all very interesting, but it makes me feel like I never want to do anything that deviates from the norm in any way. (emphasis added)

Neither graduate students nor faculty members suggested that there were negative consequences to conforming; none of the participants questioned the value of a homogenized sociocultural department environment.

### *Conformity to a work life.*

Conformity was not limited to work product or research. In the absence of direct feedback, graduate students questioned how long activities and tasks should take; students were concerned that they were not working enough hours. Oren shared,

I learned [about the academic lifestyle] mostly through observation. I realized just from talking with people that all the [faculty] people never just sort of went home and enjoyed their time. I can tell that my peers have a lot of anxiety about the academic lifestyle.

And, reflecting on the cost of this sort of submission and conformity, he added later, “to be a successful faculty member, I think you have to put your work before your personal happiness, a lot of commitment and dedication.” While these quotations are particular to Oren, other students repeatedly echoed his characterization of the work life, and the sacrifices expected. Caleb offered,

The advice that I got, “you’re going to work and work until you’re dead” is probably true. (...) I send emails at three in the morning and professors respond. I think, God, it’s not going to end. This is just how it’s going to be. And that’s sort of frightening.

Conformity became a component of submission when it ceased to be an inclination or choice entered into without fear of consequence, imposed from an entity wielding power, which compounded the students’ difficulty in interpreting and navigating expectations for time-on-work and life priorities. Denise, a graduate student, shared how she received this message of conformity,

This faculty member said, “you have to make a list of all the things that draw time in your life. You know, your partner, your parents, your job” (...) and then, she said “you have to cross out everything but five, and those [that are crossed out] are dead to you.” She was dead serious.

The strong hidden curriculum that promoted commitment to a certain type of work life angered and depressed students, and they were conflicted. They wanted to commit to the academic work about which they were passionate, but the messages they received instructed them that it had to be at the expense of anything and everything else. Denise went on to say that she challenged her professor, asking her, “do you mean I have to cross out my grandmother if she’s not in the top five?” And her professor answered, “Yes.” I asked Denise what she did with this exchange. She told me, “Nothing. I went home and cried.” Students were conflicted by this pressure to commit to a certain type of work life not only because it challenged the time and interests they had in non-academic activities, but also because objectively they knew that this modeled work life was not healthy.

Faculty members in this study were open with me regarding the type of commitment they expected from graduate students, and the type of professional life that the graduate students could expect. For most of the faculty in this study, a work-life *imbalance* was something they described dispassionately, though some with only the slightest hint of regret. Kayla, a faculty member, was very clear about the consequences of not conforming to this particular all-encompassing work life. She said, “to the extent that you have other burdens or other responsibilities, it’s going to take away from the time that you can put into this activity. And it’s less likely you’ll be seen as a star.” Only one faculty member, Tamara, explained that while she thought she worked too much, she wanted her students to know that she had a life outside of the department, and that she made time for things that were important to her. Tamara wanted to show students that

there were many paths to becoming successful, and that there were other models for carving out a life in conjunction with commitment to a faculty career.

For some, the issues of success and work-life balance had gendered and racialized markers. Early in my interview with Timothy, a faculty member, he offered this evaluation of what it takes to be successful in graduate school:

I think the disposition to work incredibly hard is probably the best characteristic of a successful graduate student. And frankly, that's why some of the Asian graduate students, some of the female graduate students, probably do better than our male graduate students. In my experience, the males tend to not work as hard and have a more balanced life. And a lot of females and minorities tend to be extremely driven and willing to sacrifice almost everything. So they work harder and put in more time. And I think that comes at a cost because they're over invested in a career and sometimes they lose out on a balanced life or a personal life. So I've seen a fair number of our minority students run into difficulty after two, three, four years where they have psychological problems or medical problems or personal problems because they've over-invested in academics.

In this faculty member's opinion, women and "minorities," work harder and do better in graduate school as compared to their White male peers (who have better balance in their lives). But only to a point: women and minorities are also responsible for *over* investing themselves, creating medical and personal issues for themselves, and jeopardizing their success. White men did not work as hard as their peers, but they were more successful because of it. Despite this assessment, Timothy saw the pressure to conform as race- and gender-neutral. Conformity to a particular work life was part of the fabric of being a successful academic.

The pressure to conform to an imbalanced work life was closely intertwined with the masking form of the strong hidden curriculum (discussed below). Students understood the pressure to conform, but they also felt pressure to do so while displaying a particular raced and gendered, confident persona. Graduate students suggested that the

behaviors to which they were being socialized could be ascribed stereotypically to White men. The messages students received addressed that to a certain extent, any student, regardless of sociocultural identity characteristics, could be successful and/or seen as successful dependent only on their ability to emulate the successful (white, cisgender male) faculty in their department. And, as a few of the graduate student participants pointed out, there were a few successful White, cisgender female professors whose behavior was indistinguishable from the aforementioned men. I discuss these raced and gendered markers and norms in detail in Chapter VI.

*Submission and servitude.*

Submission and servitude as a form of the strong hidden curriculum had characteristic markers of labor-management relations. While the conditions of graduate students as workers have become a topic as of late for activists and attorneys<sup>5</sup>, servitude as an expectation and prerequisite for success is not made explicit in common descriptors of graduate education. The graduate students in this study felt pressure to submit to this wholly hierarchical, labor-management model of graduate education. According to Denise, a graduate student, there were no illusions as to the terms of the faculty-graduate student relationship, “We are here to further [faculty] work.” In this same vein, students often referred to their advisors as their “boss” (when they worked for this same faculty member). There was a great deal of distance between these students and this type of advisor, and they did not identify their bosses as mentors. Matilda offered that this hierarchical relationship was not what she had expected. She was surprised when she

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, Bannister, 2005; Bousquet, 2008; and Epstein, 2012.

experienced “more separation [between graduate students and faculty], formal, like a boss-worker relationship.”

Students in this study received explicit messages about how they would have relationships with faculty members. But these messages addressing expectations for graduate student work also had implications for shaping them as future faculty members. Nathaniel described, “my advisor told me, ‘don’t get too discouraged about the problems you have running experiments, because once you’re a professor, you’ll have grad students to do that for you.” Students understood that they too were expected to contribute to reproducing the labor-management model of graduate education, that these were the expectations of the field and simultaneously a requirement for and a marker of success.

Oren, for example, was disappointed in what he experienced as a disconnect between the aims of higher education and the realities of working *for* his advisor. He described his advisor as being focused exclusively on publishing, to the exclusion of a social purpose or value:

She was very much socializing what I would consider a business productivity model of academia. [In contrast] I feel like some people, you go into academia because you’re interested in a social problem of some sort, and you’re really passionate about that and you want to work on that. And it’s not about just getting something published.

A few faculty members in this study recognized the expectation of submission in their colleagues. Nash offered this observation regarding the kinds of advisor-advisee relationships he saw in his department, “I’m less proprietary [as compared to my colleagues], but there are some faculty that see this as indentured servitude.”

The culture of academe, and under the guise of academic freedom, allows faculty to run their “shops” as they see fit. There are pressures on graduate students to attach themselves to well-known scholars, and obtain authorship on publications. This lesson of servitude to faculty members was taught in sometimes very explicit ways. Another faculty member, Carl, described a colleague as wholly inflexible, using what he labeled a traditional mentoring model requiring complete conformity on the part of the graduate students,

He’s just flat out unethical. He’s a sociopath who’s a psychologist. He will do almost anything to get something, somebody in the shop, and then once you’re in the shop, you do things his way with his data. Just a horrible scene.

### **Strong hidden curriculum: Competition.**

I described earlier the environment of competition in these departments and provided an example of how it is supported by department activities. In this section I discuss how competition is not only a marker of department culture, but a strong form of the hidden curriculum.

Graduate students received messages that they were in constant competition with other students. “In competition for what?” I wondered. When I probed this issue with the graduate student participants, they were not entirely certain. Nancy offered this description of the climate, “It is very competitive, even though we don’t know what we’re competing for.” The most scarce and amorphous “prize” seemed to be positive faculty attention.

Graduate students in this study were enrolled in two different universities, in large and small programs, in different areas of the country, with different research foci, resourced at significantly different levels, and unique program structures. Despite these



differences in the settings, the students at both universities reported competition as a primary characteristic of their graduate school experience. “We’re socialized in a way where competitiveness is important --strong independent sense of self, rather than cooperativeness.” As mentioned earlier, the department hosted research presentations. Graduate students presented their work and milestone requirements (e.g., the second year paper), less frequently faculty would present, and occasionally presentations would be given by visiting scholars or other guests. These presentation sessions occurred weekly and were open to all faculty and students. The students knew what these sessions were to accomplish in theory (a forum to present research, practice presenting, and receive feedback), but what they provided in practice illustrated a graduate school version of a boxing match. All of the students from one university provided examples of competition and abuse citing the presentation sessions as the source. Olivia, a graduate student, identified components of the strong hidden curriculum at work, “we have to act like what we’re doing is so precious and not everybody can get it or understand it. It frustrates me – and I can fake it really well.”

A one of the universities, the weekly presentation sessions were characterized by competition between faculty members. Students also competed for attention and accolades, but in these sessions, they witnessed how their faculty members were also in competition for attention. Faculty seemed consumed with criticizing each other, and often times this was done by criticizing a faculty member’s graduate student. Graduate students pointed out, and provided examples of how while the criticism may have been about the research presented, the tone of the exchanges were always heated, not entirely professional, and seemingly personal. These weekly, department sanctioned, verbal

jousting matches delivered competition as a strong form of the hidden curriculum, and students made meaning of this spectacle. Caleb, a graduate student, thought about competition and the lessons it imparts on how to be successful in academia, “I think good academics are really good at putting other people down in subtle ways. It sounds cruel but I find the strongest academics find ways to win arguments even if they’re not right.”

Speaking up in class provided opportunity to exercise this competition, and students felt pressure to participate, even when they were not interested or did not feel they had anything notable to contribute. One graduate student explained the benefits and consequences for engaging this type of competition, “I noticed in classes that professors took you seriously if you spoke up, and spoke a lot, and if you didn’t, you weren’t noticed or nobody cared.”

Competition, especially to the graduate student participants, seemed to be an accepted marker of academic life. Though several students found it unnecessary, cruel, and contrary to their nature, they recognized that there were consequences for opting out and/or choosing not to participate.

### **Strong hidden curriculum: Masking.**

Masking as a form of the strong hidden curriculum involved hiding one’s authentic self in favor of an alternate, seemingly department sanctioned persona. Graduate students as the targets of socialization learned to adopt this persona, and faculty members as the agents of socialization provided incentives and supports for the masking, and consequences for not adopting. Graduate students felt immense pressure to pretend. The pretending assumed a few forms: pretending to be knowledgeable, pretending to be

confident, and pretending to want a career like their advisors. Vanessa, a graduate student, noted that being fragile and vulnerable was not supported by her department. She offered this advice to incoming students, “Even if you’re falling apart, don’t look like you’re falling apart,” she paused and added, “but don’t mask it too much, get help if you need it.” Kirby, too, offered advice for masking, and he outlined the impact of this strategy:

Well, I think if you put on the mask of a super important super-star, it sort of liberates you to ask those [critical] questions. And then the faculty begin to see you ... [If you don’t,] one real disadvantage is possibly you might get less attention from your advisors.

Repeatedly, when I asked what advice the graduate student participants would give new students, they recommended that students should act confidently, independently, and “name drop,” even if this approach seemed inauthentic. All of the graduate student participants, save one, expressed that they were not comfortable with this pressure to mask your true self. They felt dishonest and were not comfortable with this approach, and some students were ashamed, but all of the graduate student participants felt strongly that this behavior was necessary to succeed in academia. Graduate students observed that there were benefits to masking, namely, faculty attention and kudos. For Lara, it was important that I understood how faculty endorsed a narrow and specific way of behaving and presenting one’s self. Displaying confidence, for example, required hiding fear and uncertainty, but it also involved besting your peers. Lara said, “faculty members really take to that.” She also witnessed fellow graduate students benefitting from being less than forthcoming, “the faculty think [another student’s work] is impressive, but they don’t know that the student coopted someone

else's idea, and then got help to do it." This was a theme throughout the students' description of how to be successful. Oren said,

I find that the people who are viewed as most successful in the program are the people who don't know what the hell they are talking about, but they speak as if they do. I think everyone knows it because I think everyone does it, but [this place] really socialized us to rip apart what you see. I notice when I go to other schools for my project, I have to really hold myself back because I realize that most people would consider me an asshole. Here, it's encouraged.

It bears mentioning that Oren said his friends gave him feedback that he was *too* confident, that people really did "consider [him] an asshole" –but Oren did not think this was a valid assessment, because he didn't *feel* confident. He described himself as insecure; but offered that he had figured out how to play the rhetorical game and that it got him faculty attention and respect. Masking was synonymous with confidence, and it involved *acting* confident, and required demonstrating that confidence by criticizing others.

Several graduate students felt silenced and damaged by this aggressive criticism style, the rip-it-apart game that Oren described, and the pressure to act confidently. Nancy shared, "it's been brutal to my self-confidence. There is something about this process that really tears you down." Graduate students said they felt apprehensive about acting in a different manner because of how they saw faculty acting. Talisa, too, felt silenced, and pointed out how role and power differentials supported the lesson of masking,

We have no power when it comes to our interactions with faculty. And it's clearly –at least here– it's hierarchical. [My peers and I are] not sure how to communicate with advisors. To be a little nervous about being forthright --we don't know what the consequences will be. It could be the same people that will write their letters one day. The same people that write your evaluations and whatever...and so [we have to take] a really diplomatic stance with them.

Confidence, and lack of confidence, was mentioned frequently by graduate students. It may appear self-evident that a professional training program, of sorts, would address individuals' weaknesses and promote learning and skill building –and that the charges, or targets of socialization, in such a program could initially feel less than confident. What is telling here is that as students progressed through the program and ostensibly gained skills, they did not necessarily gain confidence. The lesson that was imparted consistently is that there were consequences to not acting confident and not masking, and the incentive was tied to their success and future as academic professionals. So, while someone may be concerned that they have little confidence, they were also concerned that their professional career prospects would be threatened as a result.

Students also aligned their levels of confidence with their feelings of competence, and suggested that the White cisgender men in the program were the only students receiving direct messages from faculty as to their competence and value. One student, KayLynn, had a conversation about this theory with her advisor, and he confirmed to her that the feelings of incompetence were gendered, and resided in the individual student(s): “He said he had seen this several times, where women have kind of ascribed their feeling of incompetence to themselves as opposed to the demands of the program.” And Norman, another graduate student, also talked about how gender and confidence intersect in the program

Males seem to be getting more and more confident; females seem to be getting less and less confident in the program as time goes on. [These women are] brilliant people who are not sure about their ideas, research. I'm not sure what's going on there.

Graduate students and faculty in this study were aware of the masking lesson that required the portrayal of a confident identity –one that required hiding insecurities and

demonstration by tearing other people down. Some participants expressed regret that this lesson was a part of the graduate school (hidden) curriculum, but recognized how it contributed to making people “stars.” One faculty member, Tamara, hypothesized that African American and Latino/a students were less inclined to be critical of this type of performance and masking. She suggested that these students of color may have entered graduate school with different forms of cultural and social capital, with less familiarity with the confidence masking script, and as a result were more willing to believe that their peers’ confidence was deserved and built on competence. Tamara summarized, “[African American and Latino/a students are] the ones who are particularly snowed by the guy who waltzes in and says, “Well, I worked with [big name] so-and-so.” And in this culture of competition, African American and Latino/a students, comparing themselves to peers exhibiting confidence, felt they came up short; which in turn, fed the necessity to mask their (perceived) deficiencies.

Faculty in this study seemed unconcerned that graduate students were masking their true selves. On the contrary, they supported it in active ways. Kayla, a faculty member, confirmed the graduate students’ characterization of the persona they were required to adopt, and she linked the ability to mask traits at odds with the persona to being a successful academic. She stated, “You’ve got to be assertive and self-promoting, which I hate, but it’s true. You have to be confident.” Kayla, too, was masking her inclination to challenge this persona. And Tamara summarized, “[successful students] name drop and can be better at masking their insecurity. Sometimes I think it’s just a performance.” But masking as a strong form of the hidden curriculum required the performance. It mattered little to a student’s success whether or not they were actually

confident; what mattered was the extent to which they could adopt the professional persona (aggressive, critical, and self-promoting) and act confidently.

Early in their tenure, new graduate students were introduced to the type of competition expected of them. Participants in this study did not outline an educational environment that encouraged critical thinking and curiosity, but rather a system that encouraged and rewarded a particular performance and critical behavior. Participants felt pressure to criticize their peers and equated this type of performance with evaluations of being intelligent and worthy of faculty attention. A first year student, Kirby, shared,

I hate this: you have to ask picky questions that make you look smart, potentially at a cost to the person's idea and to the person who presented the research. I think that gets you more points [with faculty members] than anything. I just hate that critical labs can be nasty. A lot of it is just a show that people put on (...) I think that behavior is rewarded.

Kirby was not the only participant in this study who described this form of the strong hidden curriculum as “put[ting] on a mask.”

This pressure to put on a mask, to dole out criticisms and project confidence, required individuals, also, to minimize emotions associated with vulnerability.

Participants described the pressures to criticize others, but the targets of this criticism also had to mask their feelings of insult. Valeria, a graduate student, felt as if she was challenged, or attacked, regularly because of her research interests. She described bursting into tears after sharing her research at a weekly presentation session, “This is what makes me sick in this department. (...) I'll never let [faculty and other students] see me crushed. But you know, I was just crushed. And it's constantly, constantly like that.” Valeria also pointed out that whether or not you were successful at masking, the attempts came at a cost.

Students who could successfully mask their authentic selves felt that this skill taught them to “pass,” or conceal their sociocultural identity as much as possible so as to fit in with a dominant identity and/or ideology.<sup>6</sup> A graduate student, Talisa, shared,

All minorities have unique challenges here. I don't understand the White male thing so much. As a woman of lower social class, I feel like I didn't know the rules [in this department]. People don't talk about poverty here. It's not really pleasant, so I hide my status.

The components of masking and assuming a preferred professional identity extended also to sharing one's preferred career path. Graduate students in this study felt extreme pressure to act as if they wanted a career exactly like that of their advisor(s). The two universities in this study were classified as “research extensive” (or “Research I”). This is the preferred institutional type for the production of research doctorates and academic careers. While the students in this study chose these universities for their reputations and their prominence in research circles, a few of the graduate students were not interested in continuing their career at a Research I institution. Vance, a graduate student shared, “I'm afraid to tell people that I don't want to be at a Research I [institution as a faculty member], I know that that's not what they want to hear.” The graduate students described that there were consequences to not masking your preferred career path if it differed from that of their advisor(s). One faculty member confirmed that she knew students were anxious about exploring their own career paths, and she recounted a story when she discussed this issue with a colleague. Tamara shared,

The students said that “you never want to tell your advisor you're not interested in an academic career or that you want a teaching career because that's the kiss of death, because if [the faculty] know that they will no longer want to publish with you.” So, I thought, “no, people wouldn't really do that.” Would people be that

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<sup>6</sup> See this seminal text, a novel by Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929/1986). It explores the psychological, social, and political components of the idea of passing. It also investigates the costs to the individual of not having adequate social and political space for the expression of an authentic self.



narrow minded? So, I was talking with [some colleagues] and they were like, “Yeah, I’m not going to ask her to work with me on any papers if she’s not interested in this.” So, I was very naïve about that. It turns out that people are very much socialized for a particular career. And faculty seem much less interested in helping people think about other alternatives.

Prior to this discussion with her colleagues, Tamara was unaware that other faculty members in her department were socializing students to a particular career path, and that there were consequences for students if they did not conform and mask their true interests. Rebecca, a colleague of Tamara’s, corroborated the existence of sanctions for students who were considering non-academic careers.

One of the biggest reasons [some students aren’t successful] is, in fact, once they see what it’s like they’re not really interested in a career in academic psychology. But that’s a painful process for them to recognize that. Especially since, they think it’s the only thing in life that we value. So that we’re going to think they’re a total failure, if they decide to do something else. And there’s a grain of truth in that.

In addition to having to don the mask of a preferred professional persona, graduate students in this study explained situations when they were struggling to mask challenges they were facing emotionally, personally, and medically. Several students struggled with finding balance between their life as a graduate student, and life outside of graduate school. When challenges in their personal lives erupted, they tried to mask any pain; and in fact, they advised new students to remain silent about problems they were experiencing. Valeria, a graduate student, discussed the occasion upon which she learned the importance of pretending,

I talked with my advisor about how I was doing because things seemed weird. He said, “I would tell you if I thought you weren’t negotiating this context well.” I said, “I think it *looks* like I’m negotiating it well.” And he said, “Well, sorry to break it to you, but that’s all that matters. You look like you are, so you are.”

For Valeria, her advisor's comments provided evidence to support masking as a strong form of the hidden curriculum: it was of little consequence that Valeria was struggling; it was critical to her success that she appeared as if she was not. Other students received this same message, clearly, and were aware that they should appear as if they worked more than they did. Wallace summarized this masking component, "successful graduate students are able to convey that they don't [take time for their personal life]. It's the perception that you're extremely busy, not the reality that you're extremely busy." And Norman, another graduate student, agreed, "It's really important to show that you're being productive." He went on to explain that it was less important to be actually productive, but rather that it was important to perform as if you were being productive.

A final component of masking as a strong form of the hidden curriculum involved extending the preferred professional persona to some ethically questionable behaviors. When graduate students watched their advisors, they concluded that some strategies were critical to academic success. As mentioned earlier, Nathaniel and Norman said they learned from their advisors that in their academic careers, graduate students would be doing the majority of work for them. Talisa and Oren shared other lessons they learned in how to be successful by watching faculty, and by making assessments regarding how their faculty members came to their success. Talisa decided, "You have to be a bit exploitative, you know, fiddle with authorship and not give undergraduates credit." And Oren observed, "To be a faculty member, I think you have to manipulate people the way you need. Utilizing them in a very utilitarian fashion is necessary."

Masking as a strong form of the hidden curriculum perpetuated existing cultural markers by supporting conformity to a professional persona that was characterized by

exhibiting confidence, hiding weakness and personal challenges, and aggressively performing dominance. Masking an authentic self promoted conditions that alienated graduate students from themselves and others. In the next section of this chapter, I describe disconnection as a strong form of the hidden curriculum.

### **Strong hidden curriculum: Disconnection.**

The graduate educational environment nurtures the isolation of the individual from the collective. Others have argued that academic freedom and tenure protections support a culture of independence for faculty where there is little oversight for behavior that does not egregiously pervert law or ethics (see for example, Braxton, Proper, & Bayer, 2011; Olson, 2009). Faculty culture in these two departments supported a culture of rugged individualism. While the faculty who participated in this study had good things to say about their colleagues, they did not seem to be aware of how individual faculty members actually did the work of being a professor. Tamara said she was different from her colleagues because of the time she spent with her advisees, but she also said that there were “tons of different models here [of how faculty work with students]. I can’t even think of a predominant model.” Indeed, as Tamara pointed out, graduate students in this study were members of small labs, large labs, one-on-one no-lab, and multidisciplinary labs. Despite the differences in faculty-student engagement models, the graduate student participants’ experiences and their read on the culture of their departments were remarkably consistent.

In the weak hidden curriculum the lesson of disconnection can be framed formally as independence in research –an important component to furthering the production of

new knowledge in psychology. In the strong hidden curriculum, independence becomes isolation and disconnection. Graduate students felt as if they were encouraged by faculty members to be independent, and that initiating contact with faculty was done at the risk of appearing less than independent. Even graduate students who said they had a good relationship with their advisor were fearful of appearing needy or uncertain or insecure. And it appeared as if their concerns were valid. More than one faculty member in this study equated requests for assistance or clarification as “needy.” Faculty passed judgments on graduate students who wanted more guidance. Timothy, a faculty member, explained,

The needy students need a lot of direction and emotional support. [They] generally don’t do as well [here] because it’s not always given. It’s given by some faculty and not others. So I think professional autonomy is communicated to the students, but it’s also expected.

***Professional disconnections.***

Disconnection as a form of the strong hidden curriculum required students to separate themselves from the research. The cultures of these departments reinforced the myth that research is not and should not be personal in any way. Graduate students whose research interests focused on topics or subject groups outside of the White, heteronormative, dominant narrative, were encouraged to develop other interests. One graduate student of color was told he needed to stop being “a voyeur,” and several other students were discouraged because the department subject pool was not racially diverse enough to support investigating their research topics. Furthermore, if students wanted to explore topics that had personal meaning to them, they risked criticism from the faculty. None of the White graduate student participants in this study shared that their research

interests had been criticized by faculty as being “too personal.” As I mentioned earlier, one faculty member said that he counseled his advisees against “doing ME-search” so that they would be more marketable to mainstream psychology research communities; these advisees were mostly students of color. Students also described the presumed detached and distanced relationship one should have with research. Vance said he learned that to be successful “you really have to be interested in research for its own sake, not the application.”

In addition to the general lesson of disconnection, students of color received additional messages: they needed to disconnect their feelings from the realities of the racism they experienced; and they needed to disconnect their experiences from the business of the department. For example, when graduate students experienced discrimination or ignorant treatment on the part of their peers, or faculty, they were advised, as one faculty member offered, to “get a tough skin, because the challenges don’t end.” Graduate students of color in this study all made note of how their experiences in graduate school differed from that of their White peers; and all of these graduate students offered examples of how race and racism impacted their engagement in their departments. At the same time, the White students in this study were largely unaware that the lessons of disconnection affected students of color differently. There were only two White graduate student participants who thought that students of color had more negative experiences than they had had.

### *Social disconnections.*

The lessons of disconnection in the strong hidden curriculum, in concert with other forms of the strong hidden curriculum (competition and masking), encouraged individuals to disconnect from each other, and prevented a cohesive community from developing. Several graduate students mentioned how isolated they felt. Thomas remarked, “I found graduate school to be a very lonely experience.” Denise, too, felt isolated and disconnected, “All the White girls hang out together. I guess it’s good. They don’t see me as competition.”

As suggested by Denise, above, graduate students of color experienced a more complicated form of social disconnection as compared to their White peers. They assessed how few students of color there were in their departments, and how their experiences in graduate school were predicated on their ability to survive the White majority department, rife with prejudice and discrimination. It bears mentioning that both of the universities from which participants hailed were regarded by the profession as supportive of diversity and equity.

The strong hidden curriculum in these departments provided lessons not only to disconnect individuals from each other, but also to disconnect individuals from realities of social life in- and outside of their departments. The lesson’s message might be summarized like this: “whether or not racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism, exist in this country, or city, these sociocultural forces have no impact on graduate education or professional academic psychology.” As such, the majority of White faculty and graduate students in this study did not think that students of color had additional obstacles or even different experiences as compared to the white graduate students. Nancy, a White

graduate student, described the environment in the department as the same for all graduate students; she said, of the department, “It’s just people,” and pointed out that there was an African American student in her area –as evidence of how “we are vigilant about not replicating racist practices.” Another White student, Thomas, maintained that the department would be experienced no differently for a student of color and stated, “We won an award for being the most diverse department in the country.” And while Thomas’s statement is not entirely true (no such award exists), it provides evidence of the dominant narrative in his department: the department is disconnected from racism (and other sociocultural forces) present in the United States; and the individuals are disconnected from any recourse or ability to address racism, because it is not acknowledged explicitly.

Race and racism affected the connections available to graduate students of color. Denise was describing how students of color have very different experiences as compared to white students and she remarked, “There’s just not that many of us, and, depending on the area, there are no faculty [of color].” She suggested that new students of color would be served well to have low expectations for support, because “you can’t go in [to the department] expecting your White classmates to understand.” Students of color and White students alike received lessons in social disconnection and race. And, in fact, the White students in this study affirmed Denise’s assessment: all but one of the White men were certain that their experiences in their departments were the same as the students of color. These comments from two of the White men were representative: Nathaniel said, “I don’t think what minority students face is going to be any different from what I face,” and Caleb said,

The system in this department is already set up to make it really comfortable and productive for students of color, almost this safe haven. This is an absolutely fantastic place to be and [students of color] are going to be greeted and supported in all ways.

White students were disconnected from their peers who were people of color, and they were disconnected from the sociocultural realities of the department. So while Nathaniel maintained that the department was experienced similarly by all students, he also said, “I actually have very little contact with the minority students, so I haven’t heard a lot from them or about their work.”

In sharp contrast, all of the graduate students of color were adamant that they had had experiences that differed significantly from their White peers, and they provided myriad examples to support how racism impacted their lives. As Norman, an African American graduate student, summarized, “There is a whole different set of issues for the students of color, especially women.” Additionally, and in general, the graduate students of color in this study were more likely to share, as compared to their faculty, how the social forces of race and gender intersect; and how students who were not read as cisgender male, White, and heterosexual, had to work harder to be heard, taken seriously, evaluated fairly, and mentored.

As part of the hidden curriculum of disconnection, graduate students of color were saddled with extra interpersonal burdens as compared to their White peers. They felt the marginalization of being in a numerical minority, the aforementioned social isolation; and simultaneously they had the responsibility of having to correct inaccuracies and defend themselves against the ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination of others. Edith spoke directly to the racial dynamics of her department,



I stand out here [as compared to my home community]. [White people in the department] won't let you not think about it all the time. (...) The race issue has really bothered me. It's lonely here. It's really difficult not to get exhausted. You have to educate everybody, always setting people straight.

Students of color in this study felt very alone in their everyday battles, Lacey offered, "I'm the only Black woman in [my area], and I feel a responsibility to explain why I felt someone's comment was racist. Faculty don't get involved."

Except, sometimes the faculty members were actively involved in promoting social disconnections and supporting racial prejudice. Graduate students of color felt the responsibility to hold their peers accountable for racial ignorance, and some faculty further differentiated students of color from the larger academic collective: in classes, students of color were singled out, and called on to speak for their racial group. Vanessa shared, "In class, I had a professor who started talking about interdependent societies and referenced me –because I'm [Latina] I should know about all this literature in this area." And faculty referenced students in less explicit ways: an African American student shared, her professor looked at her directly when he announced, "we're studying race today." With verbal and nonverbal cues, Lacey felt as if her professor was signaling her disconnection from the remainder of the class, and that studying race for one day was appropriate.

The structure of graduate education in these psychology departments fabricated processes and structures to disconnect people from each other (e.g., students from faculty, students from students, and faculty from faculty). One such process or artifact is the yearly status letter. In a context characterized by sharp distinctions in amount and kind of feedback, and interaction afforded students by faculty, the letter occupies both a temporally specific event (i.e., official progress assessment) and a general marker of

department norms and boundaries. Students felt as if the letters signaled a distance between graduate students and faculty, and that the graduate students did not merit individual conversations to discuss their progress. A graduate student, Nellie, remarked, “We get letters. [I’m in] a small area and they’re writing to us like we’re total strangers. I find it ridiculous.” And Talisa added, “[the letters] feel juvenile. It’s embarrassing to be talked to in a letter. We’re adults; we should talk face-to-face.”

Because the weak forms of the hidden curriculum hold value to produce professional academic psychologists it was difficult for participants to link them to the strong forms of the hidden curriculum that served to reproduce inequality. The consistency of graduate student experiences, and the lack of alignment between graduate student perspectives and that of their faculty members, suggests that further investigation of departmental norms is necessary. In the next chapter I discuss how the five components of the strong hidden curriculum (confusion, submission and conformity, competition, masking, and disconnection) contribute to the reproduction of privilege and power in these departments, and I explore the reproduction of racism by way of example.

## CHAPTER VI

### **Results: Exploring the Reproductive Functions of the Hidden Curriculum**

The processes of socialization embedded in graduate education in these departments of psychology were marked by a strong hidden curriculum that rewarded and encouraged conformity and competition. Faculty members and graduate students endeavored to produce academic work in an environment of scarce and amorphous rewards. There was immense pressure on the graduate students to emulate their faculty members –in career, and in behavior– and become “stars” of the field. In this environment, and as I discussed in the previous chapter, the norms and values of the departments were consistently reified and rarely challenged. While the reproduction of these environments depended on the active participation of the individual members, not one individual, alone, would have the capabilities to interrupt the processes of reproduction or disrupt the cycle of inequality. By definition, norms are standards for appropriate behavior that reflect dominant ideologies and values for a group; simultaneously they “are external to, and coercive of, actors,” and internalized, becoming “part of the actors’ ‘consciences’” (Ritzer, 1996, p. 75-76, 242; referencing the work of Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons). Individual deviation or challenge is insufficient to produce significant change in norms or structures. The individual members of the departments were active participants in perpetuating a culture that was so all encompassing that it was rendered amorphous and impenetrable.

In this environment, the scope of individual (graduate student, faculty member) agency was narrow and involved the extent to which an individual could address their individual, basic needs (e.g., safety, health). To be sure, the five forms of the strong hidden curriculum (confusion, submission and conformity, competition, masking, and disconnection) alienated people from their true selves, perpetuated dysfunctional norms, and created a culture so wide-reaching and implicit that it was reproduced without challenge.

There were practices in place that ensured reproduction of the norms and processes of socialization; and these practices were seen as legitimate and necessary for producing academics. For example, the most salient pathways of reproduction involved the legacy of training: faculty members were trained as graduate students in ways similar to the ways in which their faculty advisors were trained; and the faculty members in this study affirmed that they were training graduate students similarly to how they were trained.

There were other practices that supported the norms and socialization processes operating in these departments that limited individual agency and supported reproduction: graduate students were screened for fit (and disposition) prior to entering the programs; faculty were screened through promotion and tenure processes; particular research agendas were protected by the pressures to maintain national reputational status; and national associations acted parallel to funding sources to ensure seemingly apolitical criteria for judging research and scholarship merit. All of these processes and procedures survived changes in the members of the community, fluctuations in funding, and

changing enrollment trends; and they protected established distributions of power. All individuals involved in reproducing socialization in graduate education were replaceable.

Some of the graduate students in this study were keenly aware that they were replaceable, and felt as if neither their presence nor their contributions mattered. All of the strong forms of the hidden curriculum endorsed the relative value of the individual; they mattered to the maintenance of the department culture only to the extent to which they could reflect the homogenized collective –and this disconnection took a psychological toll. In efforts to exercise personal agency and reclaim some personal authenticity, graduate students attempted to devise their own coping strategies, and strategies that would enable them to finish the program. Several students described employing avoidance strategies. Some students avoided the computer lab because they saw it as a breeding ground for confidence jousting and competence comparisons. Some avoided the weekly research presentations; some avoided their advisors, and others avoided their departments entirely. Most of the graduate students thought that there were consequences to disengaging or opting out; it was difficult to curry faculty favor and attention if they were not physically present. But these graduate students also thought that their department would not miss them, and that their peers might appreciate a reduction in the competition. But, as I described earlier, there were consequences to challenging the strong hidden curriculum. Rebecca, a faculty member, shared that she knew of students who were “uninvited” to work with some faculty, or they were not invited back to a lab after a summer break, or within a lab, Tamara knew that students would not be invited to work on “the interesting” projects.

How do we explain the dissonance between the efforts of well-meaning faculty and the perpetuation of the strong hidden curriculum? How do we explain the dissonance between faculty perceptions and graduate student experiences? Natalie, a faculty member, was earnest and intentional when she spoke about how students receive guidance and professional development. She said, “We work hard to build a culture of love, support, and collegueship,” but one of her advisees spoke of the hostile attacks she endured by other faculty. Faculty sang the praises of the first-year, professional seminars as vehicles for providing guidance and insight into the field, and students experienced them as “a waste of time.” Graduate students were eager to prove themselves successful, but were confused and agitated by a culture that relied on opacity; as Rebecca remarked, “[expectations] are not explicit. They’re not communicated because they’re not that clear.”

Some of this dissonance could be explained by personality differences, and the chemistry of certain pairings of advisors and advisees. I spoke with graduate student advisees who shared the same advisor; one student had such a horrible experience that s/he went to the chair of the department to file a complaint; and the other student had praise for the same advisor for his mentorship style. I suggest that most of this dissonance could be explained by the persistence of the strong hidden curriculum. With faculty and graduate students alike engaging in imitation, emulation, and repetition as strategies for developing professionally, the dominant socialization messages and mechanisms did not only survive but they were reproduced. The products of socialization include people, in this case, professional academics, but they also include narratives –stories and myths and boundaries that support the reproduction of the status quo. Like most narratives of

success in the United States, the narratives to which I am referring can be defended in theory, but fall apart in practice. For example, the emphasis on individual hard work as a requisite for success is, on the surface, sensible. But it gains myth status when it obscures the reality that a) there are other characteristics and sociocultural forces that may account for a greater part of the variability in individual success; or b) hard work is necessary, but insufficient to account for increases in success; or c) definitions of hard work are subjective, symbolic, and variable; or d) hard work is not necessary for success.

Some participants in this study recognized the strong forms of the hidden curriculum, completion and masking in particular, but most were hard pressed to describe the purposes that they served. A few participants shared perspectives on socialization that I would loosely label a nascent critical consciousness. *Critical consciousness* captures a perspective on and knowledge about the social, economic, and political world such that relationships with systems of power and the structures that support inequity are known to the individual agent so that action can be taken to dismantle oppressive elements (Freire, 1970/1993). A few participants were able to reflect on the enduring and stable nature of some strong forms of the hidden curriculum, but they did not identify this durability as a necessary component of the reproduction of inequity.

In Chapter V I explained briefly how racism, and confusion about racism, mediated and amplified socialization messages and the impact of some forms of the strong hidden curriculum. In this chapter I investigate how the socialization lessons of the strong hidden curriculum serve to reproduce inequity in these departments of psychology; and by way of example, and because this dominant ideology was raised by the participants, I focus specifically on racism.

### **Acknowledging the Durability of Department Norms: “We’re all too middle class.”**

The strong forms of the hidden curriculum (confusion, submission and conformity, competition, masking, and disconnection) served individually and collectively to dictate and sanction particular perspectives and behaviors, or norms.

Valeria, a graduate student, reflected on the culture of her department and hypothesized about how the norms are reproduced, “I think whatever the dominant norms... the old school people in a context, [they] dictate the norms and then people emulate those norms...either implicitly or explicitly.” Valeria attributed power and influence to the faculty members as the agents of socialization, and compliance to the targets of the socialization. Nash, a faculty member, also pointed to the faculty as responsible for the perpetuation of norms, but he also concluded that faculty members were perpetuating inequity:

We want to roam around and have a gorilla in the room and never name the gorilla. I personally like to name the gorilla, because [this university talks about] how we’re fighting oppression and we’re fighting injustice. But we’re the ones doing the oppressing and creating the injustice. We ain’t fighting it and we can’t have it both ways. And when it’s this murky area, nobody wants to get their hands dirty. The problem here is that sometimes people need to get smacked with a fish [to call out the bad behavior]. Nobody wants to do that because we’re all so middle-class. So, therefore, there are faculty members that can terrorize students. And students leave people’s offices with tears just streaming down their faces because they were treated so terribly.

With the exception of seafood assaults, Nash struggled to find an entry point to disrupt the systems and phenomena that reproduced what he referred later to as “the toxic environment.”



The sociocultural structures and environments provided a rich and fertile context for reifying a particular habitus. Habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) included the standards for appropriate behavior, norms that govern interactions, boundaries that dictate possibilities and systems of rewards and sanctions necessary for perpetuating a particular context's maintenance of the status quo. While both faculty agents and graduate student targets could identify certain norms and components of the strong hidden curriculum, they at once characterized the context as unchanging and "just the way it is." Participants in this study reported reflecting on the culture of their departments: they made attempts to challenge particular norms in conversations with peers and colleagues; and Caleb, a graduate student, talked about how he and his friends dissected graduate education, at the pub, for entertainment in "armchair" analyses; but individual study participants were quick to point out that they had no illusions that the culture of their department would change. Nellie, a graduate student, addressed how powerless she was to challenge department norms,

[When my advisor was on sabbatical,] I had two faculty members that were really hostile to my work and my ideas [regarding my second year research project]. And I just had to suck it up and do it. That's just the way it worked.

Oren, also a graduate student, identified what he saw as passive forces at play in socialization to faculty careers, and he did not think that graduate students had sufficient agency to challenge the department norms or the operationalization of those norms on the part of the faculty. Oren said, "Academic socialization is: you become them. You find yourself accepting it, and I'm not necessarily sure that it's an active process in which you make a choice." Kirby concurred and described the process in this way,

[The culture of the department] really struck me because I didn't expect that when I got here. And it's like, you know you get those subtle cues and then your

behavior starts to change over time. And then, disappointingly I turned into that kind of person I didn't want to turn into.

Most of the graduate students in this study resisted the explicit notion that they were supposed to replicate their advisors, and they seemed disappointed and sad when they reflected on how they had changed as a result of their graduate school experiences.

Graduate students seemed conflicted and confused by the socialization messages they received and the department norms that supported conformity. They had some insight to the fact that some faculty members' favor was dependent on the extent to which they could emulate them, but they seemed unprepared for addressing the strong forms of the hidden curriculum that defined the department culture.

Several faculty members, on the other hand, regarded this replication as part of the fabric of graduate education. Carl stated it explicitly. Reflecting on the end of his career, he said,

Selfishly, [my regret] is that I've never really been able to replicate who I am. I'm a famous psychologist (...) I thought by [my age], I would have, maybe, a modest number of people behind me (...) if you told me [forty years ago] that I would retire and not replicate myself, I probably would've thought that was crazy.

The reproduction of graduate education relies at least in part, on the premise that faculty roles require delivering socialization messages to train students as they were trained, while at the same time the faculty operate fairly independently and without any official interference or oversight regarding the training curriculum or pedagogy.

Reproduction occurs by the combination of the durable norms (e.g., habitus) and strong forms of the hidden curriculum dictating and controlling possible actions and behaviors, with corresponding rewards and sanctions, in a specific insulated field that operates to protect these same norms and curriculum. The value of the norms is recognized by the

actors in large part as self-evident, and individual actors regard the normative systems as natural. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) addressed this process of reproduction and the concept of symbolic power in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. For example,

In any given social formation, the *PA* [pedagogical action] which the power relations between the groups or classes making up that social formation put into the dominant position within the system of PAs is the one which most fully, though always indirectly, corresponds to the objective interests (material, symbolic and, in the respect considered here, pedagogic) of the dominant groups or classes, both by its mode of imposition and by its delimitation of what and on whom, it imposes (p. 7).

The culture of the two departments in this study, and in academia generally in the United States, prized individual freedom to work and do the work with very little interference from outside sources or forces (Braxton, Prosper, & Bayer, 2011; Olson, 2009). And while this independence affords a general lack of accountability for teaching and mentoring, among other things, it also provides a field for the protection of the interests of the dominant group(s). The potentials for an individual actor disrupting a reproductive system like this are few. Timothy, a faculty member, offered this illustrative story,

We had a few graduate students that were unhappy about the mentoring they received and brought it to the attention of the department chair. Initially the students wanted a kind of anonymous survey that identified faculty that weren't doing very good at providing mentorship. We didn't like that and thought that was more punitive and less constructive. So [after more than two years], we developed a recommended set of questions for faculty and grad students to talk about in the first semester of graduate school. (...) The frustrating part is that the faculty that are good mentors don't need it, and the faculty that are poor at mentoring may not use it, or may not use it appropriately. So, it's not clear that it's going to change the mentoring.

In the situation that Timothy described, at issue was the improvement of mentoring. The durable norms proscribed a particular course of action to address this issue, protected existing power relations, and at the same time, ensured that there would not be substantive changes in mentoring.

In another example of how the durability of department norms and the strong forms of the hidden curriculum inhabited a seemingly immovable field, Nash described the climate of his department:

You've heard about how messed up the climate is? That's not a myth. It's true. And these are all grown ass adults. There's a pervasive toxic-ness that students are aware of, it comes out in meetings, it comes out at defenses, when people go after each other through the student; it comes out in [weekly research presentations] (...) and that toxicity doesn't go away. It just makes it a really poisonous work environment and the students become aware of that, and that's part of the reason some students don't want to be around.

While Nash spoke of the static nature of the toxic environment, his colleague, Natalie, had a very different assessment of the climate. She described an environment characterized by care with myriad structures of support for graduate students, and remarked, "my faculty share my mentoring philosophy." It is difficult to explain the differences in perspectives between Nash and Natalie without considering the influential norms and the characteristics of the field.

The culture of academic departments is more than the sum of the individuals, and while it is analytically appropriate to extract component parts and structures (e.g., individual agency, norms), in reality, these components simultaneously are embedded in, and exercising influence upon other components (see Archer, 1988). And because culture is not very malleable, opportunities for disrupting the reproduction of the academic culture from generation to generation are difficult to identify. Nash remarked on this

phenomenon: “Even with impending retirements, my concern is that the toxicity never really goes away because it becomes the environment. It becomes the status quo.”

It would be easy to conclude that faculty members are responsible for the dysfunction and toxicity of these psychology departments. I have provided examples where a cursory read could identify the need for simple changes in an individual faculty member’s behavior in order to infuse some flexibility and care into existing socialization processes. For example, when students were having challenges with faculty, their recourse was to seek out another faculty advisor, but, as discussed earlier, this “solution” was itself proscribed by existing norms and fraught with risk. Several faculty members in this study thought that the behavior(s) of their peers should change.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the lack of oversight and standards for faculty behavior troubled some of the faculty participants in this study. One faculty member, Rebecca, thought that a greater emphasis needed to be placed on ethics and that faculty and students together should be discussing openly ethical dilemmas.

One of the big tensions [in graduate school] I think, is, how much you can get away with? Ethical issues. These issues are not talked about in our coursework. A matter of, I think, quite a lot of concern. Sometimes, the student will think that the faculty member is too close to the edge. They’ll have done the analysis and say, “there’s nothing here.” And the faculty member will say, “let’s throw out all the people who were born in January and then try it again.” So what does the student do in that case? So, there’s an issue of, where do you go for stuff like that?

In attempts to address this type of unethical behavior, Rebecca and a colleague held a discussion for the department where they framed the issues as skills building for graduate students, “because some faculty were being sort of abusive. We pretended [that the session] was for the graduate students, but we wanted the advisors to hear.” Rebecca and

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<sup>7</sup> In compliance with the dominant norms, none of the faculty members in this study shared that they thought their own behavior warranted examination or change.

her colleague read the faculty norms of independence and under the guise of graduate student socialization, attempted to delivered messages to their faculty colleagues.

The culture of individualism inhibited creating common, intentional training and socialization models. Timothy described graduate students having had challenges with finding a faculty mentor, focusing a research topic, or needing improvements in their writing, and remarked that the student's advisor is really the only "in" to helping a student, "we don't address these challenges very well as a program." The durable norms allowed for few solutions to addressing poor behavior, or improving mentoring of graduate students. Timothy offered,

The variability is one problem that's hard for us to correct. It's very hard to take a current faculty member and either reprimand them for poor mentoring or teach them to be a better mentor. So, we have some faculty who are notoriously poor at mentoring and they run into problems with students every year. And we sort of know it, but it's hard to prevent. We can't warn the students and we can't sanction the faculty. So, some of these problems with poor mentoring are going to be very difficult to solve. And I think that's probably why departments are reluctant to put in formal procedures for evaluation. It's just a very difficult issue.

In theory, graduate education as a system, concerned with the production of new knowledge and social change, should be supportive of a range of research interests and open to a broad manner of perspectives and people. Faculty could have different ways of approaching graduate student development and faculty relations, and graduate students could have increased choice for research interests, approaches, mentoring philosophies, and expressions of their authentic selves. But without exposing the durable norms and the strong forms of the hidden curriculum, there is little hope for disrupting the reproduction of the existing system. There were specific dispositions and behaviors required for academic success (discussed in Chapter V), and the hidden curriculum of the departments

protected the existing field (and power relationships) such that the reproduction of even dysfunctional components seems permanent.

For an individual actor, graduate student or faculty member, the universe of possible actions is very narrow and has little flexibility, and deviation from the norms has consequences. So, in practice, graduate students experienced a narrow vision of “how we do psychology here,” embedded within and supportive of systems of inequity, with little promise for change. For example, confusion as a strong form of the hidden curriculum obscured alternate definitions of “success” and alternate paths for achieving success. When there are no standards for judging success, the agents with the least capital are the most vulnerable for failure. The system is reproduced by faculty and graduate students alike. It is attractive, if not seductive, to place responsibility for change firmly in the lap of faculty members. From the perspective of the graduate students, if they were not fortunate enough to find a supportive mentor, they were afforded few opportunities for career success. From the perspective of some faculty members, their colleagues who were flouting or brushing up against standards of ethics in research, suffered no consequences, and were poisoning their departments. But relying on the actions of individual actors to disrupt reproduction, without critical examination of the norms and values (how they are maintained and reproduced), and the hidden curriculum, will not yield lasting change.

In the following sections, I will describe the processes of reproduction at work in these departments and focus on how racism, in particular, is reproduced.

## Processes of Reproduction

“It’s an old boys’ network. You usually aren’t taught much at all [about becoming a faculty member]. You look around at other people. It hasn’t changed that much since I was in graduate school” (Rebecca, faculty member).

Reproduction of and in graduate education was largely unexamined by the faculty participants in this study. While all the participants discussed the training components of their programs, few addressed how inequities were being reproduced. A few of the faculty participants in this study shared that it was the first time they had ever thought about how graduate students become socialized to faculty careers, and their reflections were provided on the spot. Kirk thought that he was unique, and a political radical, because he was not concerned with the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers; he was concerned exclusively with scholarship.

How are students socialized? I don’t know. The mentoring issue is not something I think a lot about. (...) We do a lot here for students, but my feeling is that it is misdirected—in the form of trying to reproduce people to become professors. There’s a lot of imitation and less deep understanding.

It would certainly be difficult, in this case, to envision different ways of socializing graduate students, if one had never thought about how graduate students are experiencing the department and advisor-advisee relationships. Leaving socialization unexamined, of course, did not mean that socialization ceased to occur. And Kirk’s admission that he did not know how students learned to be successful academics, did not mean that he played no part in socializing graduate students or in enacting department norms.

The reproduction of a professional academic subculture depended on the extent to which new entrants assimilated the proper norms and values. The transmission of the



strong hidden curriculum assisted in this process. Graduate students recognized conformity and masking as critical to their success, and they engaged in the performance to the best of their abilities. Caleb described a process that he recognized in retrospect; he described this process with a sadness and regret: “words now that you’re incorporating make no sense to the rest of the world but you’re using them almost as a performance. And, then at some point I’ve, sort of, internalized all of it.” While this type of performance (representations that may not have aligned with what the person was feeling or with what they believed) may be considered a typical part of human behavior, here the scope and pervasive nature of this part of the strong hidden curriculum served to quash challenges to the status quo and reproduce inequity.

### **The legacy of training.**

Kirk saw himself as countercultural and he referred to the training he received in the 1970s:

It’s pretty interactive and dialogical. I prefer to interact with students by challenging both their assumptions and the assumptions in the field. ... My mentor was a fabulous thinker. I spent a large part of my career trying to keep him from being forgotten.

Kirk did not believe that he participated in reproducing norms and protecting dominant ideologies, because he thought the training he received was unique. He later said, “I’m trying to reproduce how [my advisor] trained me.”

. I asked all the faculty members in this study to reflect on their own graduate school experiences in an attempt to uncover how they were socialized to the profession. While they were sharing their stories, they also offered reflections on how their

experiences influenced how they interacted with graduate students in the present day. In this section I highlight the thoughts of two faculty members, Edgar and Timothy, as they processed how their training influenced their present day practice.

During the interviews, several of the faculty member participants appeared to develop some insight into how norms are maintained and ideologies perpetuated. Edgar took our time together very seriously, and he was not the only faculty member who told me that our conversation felt like therapy. Edgar said,

I don't think I realized how much who I am and who I see myself as and how I react and how I respond is an outgrowth of these things that were laid out years ago. Sometimes quite specifically but very often it's just an accumulation. So, that a lot of this [socialization] takes place in subtle ways.

The norms of independence and autonomy shaped the faculty members' view of themselves in addition to shaping how they worked with graduate students. Most of them saw themselves as lone wolves who succeed without privilege, independent of any support, and as a result of their own merit only. But for some, during the interviews, that story revealed itself to contain more myth than reality. Some faculty members maintained that they never received any guidance in graduate school regarding how to be successful, but these same faculty members provided anecdotes that contradicted this assessment. They referenced how in graduate school they were trained to give presentations at conferences; how they worked out research ideas and commiserated with their peers about dysfunctional faculty; and how their advisors would make phone calls on their behalf and get them jobs. One of these faculty, Edgar, remarked that he had had a secure career path owing to having attended a reputable institution and the

“old boys' network.” (...) that was just, the way it worked for me. I'm White, male, my father [was a professional] so he could afford to send me to [a great

school]. I'm well aware of the privilege aspect of this. Which is pretty amazing to look back on now. And I was totally unaware of it.

Rebecca also characterized graduate education of the 1960's and 1970's in the same way; she called it an old boy's network, but added, "it's not too different today." Throughout my interview with Edgar, he seemed increasingly willing to accept that he was not as autonomous and independent as he had imagined.

My self-myth is that I didn't have any mentoring and I didn't have any social support in graduate school. And yet as I actually get into chapter and verse, it's so clear that I did. Thus persists the White male's myth of the autonomous virile, dealing by himself, slaying all the dragons himself.

Norms of the profession were transmitted over several generations because most faculty members thought that the way they were trained was the best way, and there was value attached to conforming to particular behaviors and perspectives. Several faculty members described how the ways in which they interacted with and treated their graduate students were influenced by how they were treated when they were in graduate school; and they provided evidence that indicated that they chose to work with students in a particular way, because that was the only way they knew. Philip shared,

I think [my advisor], he seemed like just, very fundamental, classic, social psychological way of thinking about things. And so I think I'm a beneficiary of kind of that history and his expertise and who **he** trained with. So, I guess I like to have good personal relations with my students as well. (emphasis added)

And Timothy summarized,

My mentor was independent and didn't give me a lot of handholding or advice. I was sort of an independent kind of investigator. (...) [And now] I prefer to work one-on-one with students, rather than in a team, because that was the way I was nurtured and grew into the profession.

Moreover, as I described in Chapter V, Timothy was also averse to students he deemed “needy,” and was certain that autonomy and independence were necessary norms for success.

I began the interviews with the faculty members with questions about their experiences in graduate school. Much later on I asked them how they prefer to work with students. I did not ask them if they were reproducing the structures and behaviors that they experienced as graduate students, but they offered the connections. Throughout the interviews, they referenced their own experiences with their advisors. Edgar offered,

I have an implicit mentoring philosophy. I tend not to spend a lot of time articulating it. Similar to [my advisor in graduate school], I like students who have an independent [disposition]. (...) And now I keep thinking, am I just reenacting my mentor?

Timothy was able to identify the consequences of this model of socialization, for other people, when he described faculty in his department who he felt employed dysfunctional mentorship models,

[There is] a minority of the faculty who are unconcerned about mentoring or unreflective about it. There are still a few that were products of universities where students were primarily workers. And when those faculty have graduate students and they see them as lab workers and research assistants, then, I think there’s a tendency to abuse them in terms of exceptional work loads and lack of support.

It was easier for some to identify the reproduction of “bad behaviors” in others, and much more difficult for them to identify how they participated in perpetuating norms that supported the strong forms of the hidden curriculum.

Finally, regarding the legacy of training, a few faculty members resisted the training they experienced, at least in part. When they were in graduate school, their advisors exhibited some behaviors that they did not appreciate. Tamara and Phillip said

that they intentionally did things a bit differently than their advisors in graduate school in order to counteract how they were trained. Philip for example, said he tried to be intentional and transparent when negotiating authorship with his graduate students, owing to the experiences he had had with his advisor. Philip dispassionately shared stories of his advisor giving him questionable advice for reporting research results and stealing his ideas.<sup>8</sup> While these examples might hint at a way to interrupt reproduction, there is little that individual actions can accomplish concerning the perpetuation of structures and dominant norms.

### **Disconnection and the absence of evidence.**

The norms of individualism and autonomy in these departments of psychology created challenges to creating or maintaining a supportive environment. Faculty members were independent of each other and graduate students felt strong competition within cohorts and programs (discussed earlier in Chapter V). There were few examples of faculty collaborations within departments and, by and large, advisors maintained their own “shops.” Areas and departments might unite faculty under the flag of psychology, but each faculty member maintained their own sovereign territory. This kind of systemic disconnection made it almost impossible for faculty members to see possibilities for examining and confronting existing norms. Even when faculty members identified (usually in others) or witnessed dysfunction, they seemed uninterested in or unwilling to address it themselves. Or they shifted the responsibility for addressing departmental challenges to the graduate students. Nash shared, “We have faculty who just terrorize

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<sup>8</sup> As if he was fearful that he had shared too much, Philip quickly summarized and stammered, “you know, it’s where you really don’t know or you lose track of the genesis of an idea.” I gave him a knowing look and said that I had not heard it described in that way before. “Yeah,” he replied, and laughed nervously.

students. And students suffer in silence because they're so powerless. You know they don't realize that collectively they have a lot more power than they realize, but that's never told to them." The combination of the norms of independence, the rewards for maintaining the status quo, and the field characterized by little interference or oversight, seems to have produced what social psychologists have referred to as the diffusion of responsibility –when in the presence of others a bystander will feel as if their responsibility to intervene in a crisis is lessened. This phenomenon, identified in 1968, was used to explain the “bystander effect,” wherein bystander inaction was attributed to the “bystander’s response to others, rather than his indifference to the victim” (Darley & Latané, 1968, p.221). The perspective of Kayla, a faculty member, provided some insight as to the applicability of the bystander effect in graduate school:

Close personal contact with a faculty member is what's going to protect a student from getting lost and not making progress. If that doesn't happen in the first year, there are likely to be problems. A student needs to be assertive. If a student doesn't come up and say 'tell me what to do' **everyone will assume there is someone else taking care of the student.** (emphasis added)

As Kayla summarized above, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, a default position on the part of the faculty was to assume that graduate students were doing well.

While not the focus of this study, this phenomenon (the diffusion of responsibility) might warrant further investigation for its potentials to address inaction in academic subcultures.

In this system, graduate students, as the targets of socialization processes, had few opportunities to refuse or challenge the hidden curriculum. And, students, in positions of considerably less power relative to faculty, were expected to “be assertive” and resolve

without assistance any challenges they were having with faculty members, but they had to take care not to appear needy or insubordinate.

Faculty members in this study were disconnected from the contradictions students experienced in their departments. The hidden curriculum lessons of confusion and disconnection prohibited graduate students from forging authentic relationships and the lack of awareness on the part of the faculty socialization agents supported these lessons. All of the faculty participants in this study stressed the importance of a student finding a good mentor match, but they did not seem aware of, or concerned with, the challenges students faced in their attempts to get the mentoring they wanted. Graduate students were encourage to work with multiple faculty members, but they experienced negative consequences when they tried to switch advisors, and they had to manage strained relationships and conflict when they were working with faculty members who did not get along with each other. At the heart of this disconnection was the faculty confusion around how they mentored graduate students, and how their colleagues mentored graduate students. For example, while Tamara observed that there were many different mentoring models in place in her department, her colleague, Kayla, said “My mentoring is not that different from my colleagues,” and she felt there was consistency across the department in how faculty had relationships with students. Faculty members were able to point out specific colleagues who they felt were poor mentors, but simultaneously they concluded that there existed a common faculty approach to mentoring graduate students. Frank concurred and remarked, “As a faculty whole, we are all very engaged [with graduate students] (...) I don’t see myself as being different (from my colleagues.” And Timothy

concluded, “I’d say the majority [of my faculty colleagues] have views that are similar to mine, in terms of nurturance, in terms of socialization of the students.”

As Frank affirmed the existence of a common approach to mentoring graduate students, above, he later concluded that it was largely dependent on the individual faculty members. He said “to give you an honest answer, I’m not sure we do enough to [teach graduate students how to be successful]. We don’t have a coherent format in which we make sure that happens.” Most of the faculty members in this study made note of how they were different from their peers, even while they affirmed the existence of a common commitment and approach to graduate student development. Tamara said she spent more time with her advisees than did her faculty colleagues. Nash said he gave the most extensive feedback in writing of anyone in his department and always walked the halls to talk with people. Kirk was a lone wolf in his quest to have students think critically. Carl said he was uniquely skilled in working with students who needed extra help or attention. Natalie said she was explicit in her interactions with students and unlike her peers, she set up a structure to guide students. Rebecca saw herself as very different from her faculty colleagues, “I actually think graduate training is the most important, and in some ways, the most interesting part of what I do. So I’m not going to be typical here. [My orientation to working with students] It’s fairly rare.” Because of disconnection, and in the absence of any evidence, faculty members were able to distinguish themselves from their peers and thought that their unique contributions provided opportunities for their graduate students to be successful. In these ways they perpetuated the norms of autonomy and independence.



If the reality of these departments was that faculty members employed a diversity of mentoring models, none recognized this structure as contributing to the reproduction of inequity or dysfunctional behaviors. One faculty member was conflicted about how to talk about mentorship and advising on a departmental level. He assessed that there was a lot of diversity in how faculty preferred to work with students, and was fearful that if a “lock-step” process was instituted, the dysfunctional models could unduly influence other models. Edgar, a faculty member, shared,

I worry about, “There’s one right way to do things.” I think there are [a couple of faculty members], they are very eminent people, but boy, they have a vision of “this is the way to do psychology. And our good students are like us and go to tier one universities and everybody else who doesn’t want to do that or can’t do that, we don’t have the time of day for.” And I think this promotes a very, toxic environment and is very harmful to even their good students.

In Edgar’s perspective, the diversity of mentoring models signaled opportunities for graduate students to avoid toxic faculty members; he did not believe that supporting a system where faculty were largely independent with little accountability, enabled the toxic faculty to flourish.

Faculty members were disconnected from each other and from the realities of graduate student experiences. This disconnection supported the reproduction of the status quo and allowed discrimination and other antisocial behaviors to exist unexamined and unchallenged. After describing a story where a student was bullied and used as a pawn by her advisor (who had “interpersonal challenges”), Nash said,

This is a prime example of somebody viewing the world much different than it actually is. I think that most of our faculty think they do an excellent job mentoring their students. Do they? I would say many don’t, and they don’t know that they don’t.

## The Reproduction of Racism

All of the participants in this study referred to the advisor-advisee relationship as the most important vehicle for transmitting socialization messages; that is, students learned from their mentors how to be successful. While occupying the same place and time with faculty, graduate students also learned limits and boundaries for acceptable behavior, communication, and presentation. The extent to which faculty members willingly and uncritically engaged the norms and supported the strong forms of the hidden curriculum, and dictated appropriate behaviors, reified racially prejudicial and discriminatory behaviors. Valeria, a graduate student, described the ways in which department norms reproduced prejudice:

White students in my area are being socialized by White advisors who have this idea of how you do things, and students who don't have the [faculty of color] advisors that I do, they imitate *their* advisors. It's just this awful, awful, awful cycle and you can't tell them "don't listen to your advisors," because they think their advisors are gods in the same way that I think mine are.

Race and racism simultaneously interacted with and influenced how norms were operationalized in everyday practice. The strong forms of the hidden curriculum uniquely disconnected students of color from the collective research community, and it limited the identity expressions available for the African American and Latino/a students in particular. Valeria, provided an example: when she was preparing an application for an award for women graduate students, a White male peer questioned her suitability for the award and said that she should be applying only to the awards for African Americans. She summarized the anecdote thusly, "I don't feel that women of color are allowed to be women. You're only a member of your racial group."

Several graduate student of color, and two White students who identified as gay or lesbian, shared that their research interests were criticized by White faculty members as too narrow, or personal. None of the students in this study who identified as having membership in sociocultural majority groups (e.g., cisgender male, white, heterosexual) shared having had similar experiences.

How did these casual, everyday microaggressions survive in such a learned environment? Firstly, almost half of the graduate students in this study did not think racism was a problem in their department. It would have proved difficult for these students to be able to investigate the ways in which norms and structures interacted in a particular field to produce a practice that reproduced racism, when they did not accept that racism existed. Secondly, for the other half of the students who believed racism existed, the strong forms of the hidden curriculum allowed for limited recourse. In order to investigate how the norms were operationalized to support systems of inequity, I identified four ways in which participants in this study responded to racism. They

1. Denied the realities of prejudice and discrimination, or
2. Acknowledged prejudice and discrimination and ignored it, or
3. Acknowledged prejudice and discrimination and supported the targets, or
4. They focused on self-care and disengaging.

None of these strategies provided a challenge to the strong hidden curriculum; all of them served to perpetuate the extent to which the norms contributed to reproducing racism.

### **Responding to racism: Deny realities of prejudice and discrimination.**

The strong forms of the hidden curriculum, confusion, conformity, and disconnection in particular, supported the norm that directed agents to ignore any evidence of prejudice or discrimination in the department. It might have been commonly accepted that racism exists in the United States, but the overwhelming majority of White participants in this study were either, a) certain that their department was free of racial prejudice and discrimination, or b) they did not know if there was racial prejudice and discrimination in their department. Wendy, a graduate student, commented, “I don’t know what it’s like for students of color here. From my point of view, it seems really good.” Regardless of how these participants described their departments, several made it clear that it was the responsibility of the person of color to cope with race related challenges, if they existed. Kayla, a faculty member who had an international reputation and engaged communities of color in her research, was disappointed that African American graduate students did not seek her out:

I don’t know [if students of color had experiences that differed from their White peers] since I’m not one. We now have enough faculty of color that that may be less true than was true in the past. I’ve worked with relatively few students of color. I wish more had gotten interested in our projects. But I also know that the faculty of color need students to work with and there’s probably a closer match there and I wish that was less true. We have a study right now and I wish I had more. I wish more of the African American students would get interested in it.

Kayla was clear during her interview that “the problem” of students of color not getting involved in her projects rested in the students of color who would not take up the departmental norms in color-blind fashion; and she was uncritical regarding her role. The strong hidden curriculum dictated that the norms applied equally to everyone, and because they served to maintain dominate ideologies and privilege, they perpetuated a

disproportionate burden on people of color. When students of color sought out faculty of color, a few White faculty, like Kayla, above, saw this as a mistake. Timothy commented on this mistake that he saw students making, “I think that’s another problem, actually. Graduate students sometimes latch on to a single advisor by race or gender.”

Graduate students also called out the behavior of their peers who were people of color. Kiernan, a White graduate student, affirmed that his department was equitable, and put the blame and responsibility for any “complications” squarely on the shoulders of students of color, “There seems more potential for misunderstandings with race and culture. Some of the race stuff becomes a little complicated because even though the department is reasonably open, there are issues of self-segregation.” Kiernan did not see his disconnection from or interpretations of the realities of the department culture as inconsistent, and he was satisfied that the problem involved the choices made by the students of color, not in the conditions that influenced the individual actions of the students of color.

Lacey, a graduate student, was consistently disappointed that her faculty did not respond or address racist comments made in- and outside of the classroom. Graduate students in this study felt anxious over this double burden: they felt responsible for dealing with aggressions they assessed as personal, and they felt responsible for dealing with the cumulative effects of how these aggressions sustained the dysfunctional norms of the department. Additionally, if they challenged the norms of the department, they became objectified as the problem (the “troublemaker”) for acting in non-sanctioned ways. Olivia, another graduate student, observed,

I’ve heard comments about how “some people get funded because they’re a person of color, like that’s why they’re here,” and that’s unacceptable to say

things like that. People should know that's not acceptable, but I don't see people getting called out. And when you dare say something, you're the problem.

The strategy to ignore the realities of racism absolved the department from having to engage or take any action. To confront racism in the department would involve challenging or disrupting the hidden curriculum; and the hidden curriculum existed to protect dominant ideologies and those who benefited from them. Norman, a graduate student, spoke about the intersections he saw between confidence and gender, and he wondered aloud why women seemed to be getting less confident, and men more confident, as time progressed. But he also observed that there were concrete strategies at work to undercut the confidence of his peers who were women. Norman observed,

Because there are fewer men [graduate students] here, they are really valued. What you have to say is more important. For example, the program is majority women. There were [several] teaching positions, a lot of people applied, and all the people who got it were men. It's just too much to be a coincidence. It's so weird.

The strategy of ignoring inequity supported the lessons of the strong hidden curriculum and the department actively operationalized these lessons and maintained the status quo.

### **Responding to racism: Acknowledge and ignore.**

Racism was reproduced, in part, owing to some graduate students and faculty adopting an approach of acknowledgment and inaction. These participants acknowledged that racism was a reality for some, but chose to ignore it. A few faculty members shared that they advised students to not let racial prejudice or discrimination derail them, that they should "get a thick skin." One faculty member shared that he was supportive of students of color, but that he did not want students to let it affect them or their work.

Nash said,

[I tell students, ‘don’t] let the racism that’s inherent in the system wear you down.’ I think that’s one of the harder things because you know this program [purports to be diverse], but at the end of the day, our minority students are still being bombarded with racism and people saying inappropriate things. And you think you’re supposed to be in a safe environment. And for the most part people are safe, but there is no such thing as a completely safe environment.

Two faculty members who were African American advocated this “thick skin” approach; and suggested that based on their personal experiences, they were advocating the only sensible response to experiencing prejudice and discrimination. They acknowledged that racism was present in society as well as in the field and their departments. They did not propose coping strategies to their advisees beyond getting a thick skin, nor did they suggest or engage strategies to address the prejudice or discrimination present in their departments. These faculty members adhered to the masking, submission, and disconnection strong forms of the hidden curriculum, and provided clear socialization messages to graduate students that aligned the strategy of inaction with achieving success. For example, one African American student, Valeria, was disappointed in her advisor’s response to her concerns about the department, and characterized his advice as “fricking male,”

He’s like, “if we didn’t live in a racist, sexist society we wouldn’t live in a racist, sexist society.” Quote. And he’s like, “but we do. Unfortunately you can’t just go into a classroom and have people respect you based upon your credentials. It would be nice and maybe some people will, but you can’t expect that. You’re either going to become bitter or sad, either way you’re going to be unproductive. So you really, really have to figure out a way to deal with that. You either need to get out of the game or stay in and learn how to deal with it.”

Ignoring the realities of racism also enabled graduate students and faculty to minimize their effects. Rebecca, a White faculty member, expressed that she knew that African American and Latino/a students had different experiences as compared to their White peers. She described situations where White graduate students would assume that

students of color were in the program owing to affirmative action, that they were unfairly considered for awards, and that undergraduate students expressed prejudices when they had teaching assistants who were people of color. In spite of these persistent microaggressions, Rebecca minimized their importance and accepted their existence. She said that racism was a “day-to-day problem,” but concluded that “[for graduate students of color] it’s just an extra set of burdens, not huge.”

In this vein, there were faculty participants who acknowledged inequalities in US society, and affirmed that graduate students of color faced challenges and barriers due to these sociocultural inequalities, but they delivered this problem to the students themselves. Another example that illustrates this “acknowledge and ignore” strategy of reproduction was provided by Frank. When I asked if the *experiences* of students of color differed from their White peers, he recounted the ways in which the *students* of color differed from the White students (they had more family responsibilities, they did not have as much money, etc.). Even with Frank’s non-answer to my question, he hinted at the departmental norms that affirmed dominant power structures: White students of privilege were used as the standard against which the talents, abilities, and responsibilities of students of color were judged.

Other faculty members suggested that they offered “support” to students of color because they were concerned with students of color pursuing issues that pertained directly to an identity characteristic they held. To these graduate students, the faculty members encouraged disconnection and suggested that their academic success would suffer if they failed to do so. Philip, a White faculty member, shared:

I don’t have any clear evidence for this, I have impressions. I think at times [students of color] follow or pursue research more [related to race]. Minority



students do that more than non-minority students. And I think that that's unfortunate. So sometimes I worry about that for them. But at the same time I don't think it's my place to say anything, but I think it could be a little limiting. But, I'm a mentor, what should I be stressing?

There was one White, male graduate student in this study who recognized that students of color had different, and worse, experiences in the department than he did. Oren noticed that students of color had to prove themselves in ways that he did not have to: they have to "be really put together and be careful of the image that they're conveying. They have to express that [they're] very serious about [their] career." Oren acknowledged the prejudice implicit in department culture, and while he spoke occasionally with one of his advisors about it, this prejudice was something he said he had the "privilege to ignore." This insight did nothing to challenge departmental norms or interrupt their reproduction. In fact, Oren also noticed that he benefitted from the White male culture of the department. He said, "people listen to me, and I take advantage of that."

At these universities, some graduate students of color sought out faculty of color. Faculty of color were praised by students for supporting them, "keeping it real," and usually, engaging in research that aligned with the interests of the students. But about half of the faculty in this study lamented the fact that most students of color were eager to have same race, or same gender, advisor-advisee pairings. These same faculty members, some in subtle ways, thought that the students of color should be less preoccupied with issues of race or gender identity. There existed, in both of the departments, a kindly, passive acknowledgment of racism and sexism, though none of the faculty offered strategies for change; and none of the faculty members communicated if or how they were trying to address discrimination and prejudice in their departments.

According to the faculty members and graduate student participants, neither of the universities had significant populations of Latino/as in their psychology programs. The avoidance and silence around racism was especially evident to and for Latino/a students. One African American professor described the environment in her department in this way,

Latino students, I think, are having a harder time [as compared to white students and other students of color], because of a lack of Latino faculty. And there's been kind of a silence, you know, just a lack of discussion about it. And, now, some of students are saying, 'this is weird how come we never have any discussion about Latino students?'

Reflecting the complex interactions of department norms, the strong hidden curriculum, and dominant ideologies, Edgar shared, "I've always wondered whether a student of color that we've admitted, what if they really weren't interested in studying [people of color as a] research topic? How would they do?" Consistent with the differential burden placed on student of color, ignoring racial prejudice and discrimination enabled departmental norms to actively affirm Whites and dominant (White) ideologies: none of the faculty in this study expressed concern that White students were not as interested as they should be in issues of race (or any other identity characteristic), nor did they express concern that White students were overly interested in studying topics traditionally dominated by White scholars.

### **Responding to racism: Acknowledge and support.**

A few faculty members shared that they were aware of the particular struggles students of color faced and that they made conscious efforts to academically support students. This engagement mirrors one of Bonilla-Silva's (2009) ideological frames used to interpret race relations and inequalities: "abstract liberalism involves using ideas associated with political and economic liberalism in an abstract matter to explain racial

matters” (p. 28). These faculty members did not ignore racial discrimination and prejudice, but neither did they assess the situation as meriting, specific intervention or departmental action. Their individual, one-on-one interactions did little to challenge departmental norms, and little to improve the experiences that students of color were having. One faculty member, who identified as a person of color, was intentional about supporting students of color and felt a responsibility to assist them in meeting milestones. She identified this as the only way in which she differed from her colleagues,

I think that we have a different kind of connection. So we more freely talk about what it’s like for them as students of color. And I feel more of a need to keep in closer contact and make sure that they’re staying on track and that kind of thing. I suspect that most of my colleagues are not thinking that way.

Another faculty member shared that she had a strategy for shaping the culture of her department in regards to racism: Natalie said that she tried to use her influence during the admissions process to screen applicants who demonstrated conservative political perspectives. She summarized, “[Students of color] deal with racist crap around funding and community issues (...) So, we do not want students who are not interested in a progressive community.”

Both of these faculty members’ individual practice was influenced by their knowledge of how racism affected the experiences of students of color, but their human relations approach provided a band aid solution to an open heart surgery problem. Racism did not reside only in individuals, but in the norms, practices, and cultures of their departments.

### **Navigating racism: Self-care and disengaging.**

Most of the graduate students of color who participated in this study, spoke of toxic environments in their area, and difficult relationships with their peers, and they shared with me their coping strategies. These self-care strategies included: therapy and medical attention, disengaging from social settings, and avoidance of the physical departmental spaces. Students of color implemented the disconnection lesson of the hidden curriculum literally, and in unique ways as compared to their White peers.

The experiences and perspectives of the graduate students of color illustrated how the lessons of the hidden curriculum were complicated by sociocultural forces. The students of color in this study recounted how competition, masking, and disconnection, contributed to and supported the hostile environments that they experienced, and how these environments had the added dimensions of racial prejudice and discrimination – dimensions that the majority of their White peers discounted, disbelieved, and did not experience. Simultaneous to experiencing these environments, the students of color in this study felt pressure to address these injustices. The norms of the department and the strong forms of the hidden curriculum left graduate students with little recourse or redress for the accumulation of microaggressions. After experiencing disappointments and fatigue with the environment, they made intentional decisions to remove themselves. Graduate students of color spoke of avoiding spaces like the computer labs and weekly research presentations, avoiding certain faculty, and in general, avoiding their departments whenever possible. Valeria shared,

It's just not a very healthy environment for me. It's just an oppressive environment. I've totally disengaged from my area, which I know might comeback to bite me later. (...) [but] we have so little control over 90% of what happens in our life. Like, if I can control not being around the BS, I will.

And another student, Olivia, who characterized the department as toxic, said, “I really try not to be in the department a lot.”

These efforts in self-care benefitted the individual students’ mental health in the short term; but the accumulation of students of color having to remove themselves from the department supported the reproduction of racism in several different ways. Majority White departments were more easily able to continue exclusive practices and enact unexamined norms without challenge; students of color became further disconnected from a physical and theoretical space where visibility was rewarded; and when the students’ behavior was noticed, it was rationalized by White graduate students and faculty as “self-segregation.”

### **Interrupting Reproduction and Challenging the Hidden Curriculum**

Three of the faculty participants (agents of socialization) actively constructed advocacy strategies in attempts to challenge the reproduction of the strong hidden curriculum. While none of these faculty members spoke of ways in which they engaged dysfunction or tried to change the department, they used their positions to influence the graduate students with whom they worked. They employed two different but related strategies: mentoring differently than how they were mentored, and addressing the inappropriate behaviors and dysfunctional norms they saw in the department. There were two avenues by which these faculty members arrived at their change strategies: 1) their experiences in graduate school motivated them to mentor differently than they had been mentored, and 2) they witnessed behaviors in the department that they did not want their graduate students to replicate.

### **Mentoring differently.**

A few faculty members used their experiences with their mentors to decide how *not* to behave as professors. Carl spoke of his graduate school training and lamented the extent to which he felt he was left alone by his mentors, “I think that’s why today when I mentor, I make sure that the kids I work with get at least, they get involved in my work and publish.” He also reflected on how his personal experiences as a person of color influenced how he approached recognizing the potential in graduate students, and how he was different from his faculty colleagues.

As a member of a minority, I just have long memories for when people would lose patience with us, but not tell us, they would just fade out on us. I probably do it a little bit too much, like, mother a little too much, but, I’ve been rewarded for it.

As a result of his experiences, in- and outside of academe, Carl prided himself on how he was attracted to students (his “projects”) who had not benefitted from privilege and who needed extra attention. Frank, too, talked about how his experiences as a graduate student influenced how he interacted with students in his department,

You know, [in the 1970s] graduate students were not particularly encouraged to speak up and it was almost, as if, “you should know that you don’t know anything.” It is actually very different from this culture where we try to treat students as being professionals.

And, Tamara talked at length about how her two very different mentors influenced how she now mentors her graduate students. She intentionally borrowed from both, reflected on her experiences, and implemented a hybrid model. Despite her positive experiences as a graduate student, she talked about how she is much more intentional in giving feedback, praise and criticism, as compared to how she was mentored. She experienced her faculty

mentors being implicit in their expectations and not talking directly to students about successes or failures. They spoke in metaphors or did not speak at all, she said, and as a result, Tamara chose to mentor her students differently.

### **Addressing negative behaviors.**

One faculty member routinely instructed his students in ways that counteracted the strong hidden curriculum. He acknowledged the competition and masking lessons of the hidden curriculum and attempted to provide his graduate students with other options, lessons, and expectations for how to be successful. This faculty member actively encouraged students to not emulate or replicate the common behaviors of the department. To offset the masking lessons discussed earlier, he held sessions for students to train them how to give feedback. This faculty member communicated that there was no need to “crush” someone, but that the goal should be one of assistance to help someone improve their work.

This same faculty member also instructed students to be mindful of their research agenda and talked about responsibility in publishing. He understood that graduate students felt pressure to obtain authorship, and that the emphasis in the department was on quantity. He communicated to students that they should be intentional about what they “put their name on,” and that students should not be jockeying to get their name on “just anything.”

While not confronting departmental norms outside of their interactions with their own graduate students, these examples provide small insight into possible opportunities

for reconsidering the strong forms of the hidden curriculum that socialized graduate students to faculty careers and reproduced inequalities. The power of these examples lies not so much in the strategies themselves, but in the extent to which they implicitly and explicitly uncover dysfunctional norms. Potentials for disrupting the reproduction of inequality require acknowledging the durability of norms, identifying the ways in which the norms are transmitted to and supported by agents, confronting the disassociation of responsibility, and challenging the strong forms of the hidden curriculum.



## **CHAPTER VII**

### **Considering the Implications of Graduate Student Socialization and the Reproduction of Inequality**

While completion rates in doctoral programs vary widely by discipline (Council of Graduate Schools [CGS], 2007; Nettles & Millet, 2006), a generally accepted average identifies a 50% PhD completion rate across all disciplines. In the humanities and social sciences the ten-year completion rate is 53% (CGS, 2008). Overall, completion rates by race/ethnicity vary: for African Americans the ten-year completion rate is 47%; for Asian Americans it is 50%; for Hispanic/Latino/as it is 51%; and for Whites it is 55%. In the social sciences, these differences are amplified: there is a 10 percentage point difference between the completion rate of African Americans and that of Whites (47 and 57 percent, respectively; CGS, 2008). Golde (2000) suggested that socialization plays a part in doctoral student attrition. These disparities, and the persistent underrepresentation of African Americans and Latino/as in faculty ranks, require continued investigation of the contexts and subcultures of disciplines to uncover the roles that dominant ideologies and norms play in perpetuating inequality.

In Chapter V, I discussed the messages that graduate students receive about being successful and becoming professorial, and the mechanisms by which those messages were delivered. As I began this study, I expected to identify and locate department structures and practices that were taken up differentially by graduate student targets

owing to particular social identity characteristics. I thought that graduate students' experiences and perspectives would vary significantly because of different program contexts, and because of the sheer number of participants. I was surprised to find that this was not the case. There was remarkable consistency between the two sites: graduate students and faculty members alike were confused as to what was required to be successful in graduate school and they recognized the tensions that this confusion created. The socialization of graduate students to faculty careers was facilitated by the lessons of the hidden curriculum.

Socialization messages, regulated by the hidden curriculum and supported by departmental norms, were received by graduate students in several ways: by watching faculty, having interactions with faculty and peers, receiving department communications – and messages were also communicated in the absence of interaction and feedback. Participants reported having used high levels of inference to interpret the lessons imparted in all of these mechanisms.

The socialization messages that graduate students received regarding what was required to become successful academics were delivered by the weak and strong forms of the hidden curriculum. In this study, the weak forms of the hidden curriculum I discovered, those components commonly regarded as professional skills and attributes, included research, teaching, networking, commitment, public speaking, navigating politics, and flexibility. Factoring much more prominently into the lives of this study's participants, were the strong forms of the hidden curriculum: those lessons comprised messages and mechanisms that served to perpetuate inequality, stifle individuality, and enable conformity to a set of norms regulated by dominant ideologies. Being successful

in graduate school had little to do with satisfying the codified milestones (completing coursework, the second year paper, candidacy), but rather success was dependent on navigating implicit norms and the strong forms of the hidden curriculum (confusion, submission and conformity, competition, masking, and disconnection). These strong forms were not only supportive of local, department specific, inequality, but also of dominant national ideologies and structures of prejudice.

In Chapter VI I presented the ways in which inequality is reproduced. Participants identified an unchanging culture where agency was difficult to capture. While the reproduction of these environments depended on the active participation of the individual members, not one individual, alone, would have the capabilities to interrupt the processes of reproduction or disrupt the cycle of inequality; and individual deviation or challenge would be insufficient to produce significant change in norms or structures. The individual members of the departments were active participants in perpetuating a culture that was so all encompassing that it was rendered amorphous and impenetrable. Reproduction of and in graduate education was largely unexamined by the faculty participants in this study, but evident to many graduate students. While all the participants discussed the training components of their programs, few addressed how inequities were being reproduced. A few of the faculty participants in this study shared that it was the first time they had ever thought about how graduate students become socialized to faculty careers. This inattention to reproduction and departmental norms by the primary agents of socialization allowed for the maintenance of the status quo and provided no challenge to dominant ideologies. Race and racism, for example, simultaneously interacted with and influenced how norms were operationalized in everyday practice. As discussed in Chapter VI, the

strong forms of the hidden curriculum uniquely disconnected students of color from the collective research community, and they limited the identity expressions available for the African American and Latino/a students in particular. In consideration of graduate education, the combination of the norms of independence, the rewards for maintaining the status quo, and the field characterized by little interference or oversight, seems to have produced what social psychologists have referred to as the diffusion of responsibility –when in the presence of others a bystander will feel as if their responsibility to intervene in a crisis is lessened. I suggest that the persistent underrepresentation of African American and Latino/a faculty constitutes a crisis in higher education for which little responsibility is being assumed.

### **Implications for Theory**

I investigated socialization to faculty careers as a social phenomenon; and suggest that any similar investigation requires attention to the ways in which inequality is reproduced. Any social phenomenon (a condition that transmits, frames, limits, and gives value to particular actions) necessarily has norms, structures, and regulatory functions embedded within. In order, then, to uncover these norms and regulatory functions, the study of a social phenomenon requires an analytic approach that accounts for individual agents' preferences and choices concurrent to the examination of the engagement of dominant ideologies in/on these preferences and choices. In these ways, Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977) is helpful for investigating the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers, and for analyzing how academic subcultures are reproduced. Considering a constant state of replication, two forms of inequality, supported by

dominant ideologies, are also reproduced: 1) inequalities that exist within the academic subculture (e.g., arbitrarily and symbolically privileging certain behaviors, identities, perspectives, and epistemological traditions), and 2) inequalities that exist in the larger US society (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism).

Gopaul (2011) explained how Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus, field, and practice (1977, 1986) can be used as tools to investigate the socialization of doctoral students. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field are particularly useful for explicating and investigating the interactions of individuals with social structures and the functions of norms. Habitus includes the constellation of attitudes and values that frame action, and "acts as both a generative and restrictive mechanism to action such that some actions are deemed more appropriate in certain contexts based on an individual's class status and experiences. This then assists in determining what is valued and acceptable" (Gopaul, 2011, p.14). The conceptual interactions between capital and habitus are afforded value in a particular field—a context that defines and dictates appropriate actions with implicit rules, to create and recreate practice. Using the concept of dominant habitus, I analyzed the attitudes, values, and dispositions supported and perpetuated by the dominant class and their effect on and interactions with education (other researchers adopting this approach include Lehmann, 2007; Sullivan, 2002)—habitus resides within individuals but we can also theorize common habitus for groups or classes. Similar to the work of Gopaul (2011), I used these concepts as tools to influence an analytical framework that required me to view individuals as embedded within specific social contexts—contexts that influenced, regulated, and enabled agency. And I identified how habitus and field

interact by creating and reifying a system of norms supported by strong forms of the hidden curriculum.

In addition to applying the work of Bourdieu to the study of socialization, I used critical race theory to inform my approach to data collection and analysis. This lens required consideration of how seemingly race-neutral conditions and practices could further disenfranchise persons from underrepresented racial groups. The voices and experiences of people of color in this study provided a powerful entrée into examining dominant narratives and the dynamics of role/positional authority. And, consistent with the assumptions of CRT, White participants, as members of dominant power classes, were unable to discuss how systems of privilege affected themselves, or their colleagues. Microaggressions went unnoticed or minimized by White graduate students and faculty members.

Using CRT, I was able to analyze how the strong forms of the hidden curriculum impacted people of color in ways different from their White peers and colleagues. The lessons of confusion, submission and conformity, competition, masking, and disconnection served to further disenfranchise graduate students of color, while supporting dominant ideologies, "in particular objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity [masking] the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 472).

I used Bourdieu's theory of practice in education and critical race theory (CRT) to inform a particular approach to studying the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers. In so doing, the applications of these theories to the study of a social phenomenon suggest the necessity of a hybrid theory: a critical race theory of

reproduction (CRTR). Informed by the work of Ladson-Billings (1998), Solórzano and Yosso (2001), and Bourdieu (1977, 1986), this theory would operate under the following assumptions:

1. Specific inequalities, such as racism, affect individuals, relationships, and structures so as to advantage and disadvantage particular classes of people.
2. Specific inequalities are related to and supported by the intersectionality of societal power systems that shape and regulate norms and roles.
3. Individual agency is framed and shaped by faulty ideology and dominant narratives (for example, myths of a meritocracy or colorblind systems) that serve to maintain the status quo.
4. The experiences, narratives, and perspectives of oppressed people are legitimate and critical to discovering how the dominant habitus interacts with cultural capital in particular social contexts to reify norms and reproduce inequality.
5. Attention to social phenomena should make explicit a focus on social justice and challenge oppressive systems.

CRTR would provide explanatory power for uncovering the relationships between individuals and structures, and provide insight into how norms and regulatory functions perpetuate inequality. For example, CRTR could be used to explain the apparent dissonance between the rhetoric regarding the empowering mission of higher education and the realities of racism and discrimination found within higher education; a situation that Chang (2000) summarized in this way, “while virtually all colleges and universities are attentive to improved racial dynamics, they often fail to examine how their racial endeavors are affected by or affect other institutional assumptions, values, ideals, expectations, or practices despite very frequent competition with other presumably opposing institutional interests” (p. 153).

Future considerations for the study of graduate student socialization to faculty careers should explore the utility of the CRTR to illuminate the ways in which dominant ideologies and norms contribute to student attrition and the reproduction of inequality.

### **Implications for Research: Scholarship and Methods**

The literature that addresses graduate education has focused in large part on examining the experiences of individuals. Research questions have privileged an exploratory and a descriptive approach, asking for example “how do students experience graduate school?” (see for example, Austin, 2002; Balderrama, Texeira, & Valdez, 2004; Nelson & Lovitts, 2001; Stage & Maple, 1997). Focusing on individuals in the study of graduate education and socialization obscures the embedded nature of dominant ideologies and (logically) provides solutions that focus on the individual, but to the exclusion of addressing structural or organizational change. Some of the aforementioned treatments have studied the experiences of graduate students and offered programmatic solutions to improving socialization (for example, enhancements in mentoring, or more professional development opportunities). These programmatic solutions do not engage or interrogate norms or dominant ideologies, and provide few opportunities for disrupting the reproduction of inequality.

Consistent with the results of my study, I recommend that the problem of underrepresentation in graduate education and the professoriate, and attrition in graduate schools, be addressed with an analytical approach that centers the extent to which norms and structures reflect the goals of graduate education, and reproduce inequity. This is in contrast to the majority of literature and models that focuses on graduate student preparation and achievement, and describes experiences of graduate students and pre-tenure faculty. Research of this kind does not provide adequate insight into how departments can or should change in order to disrupt the reproduction of inequality.



Further study of the norms in graduate education, the mechanisms that support the operationalization of the norms, and the purposes of the norms, is warranted.

Identifying prejudicial and discriminatory practices in higher education is valuable. But I contend that this strategy alone is insufficient to address the reproduction of inequality. In an ethnographic study of six women faculty at a community college, Lester (2011) discovered that faculty supported sexist ideologies by undermining, harassing, and marginalizing women who did not conform. She called on universities to “consider the ways in which discourses, policies, and practices interact to create specific definitions of gender performance that create regulatory powers” (p. 163); and she suggested that women faculty could educate their colleagues regarding gender norms. The results I presented here suggest that the strong forms of the hidden curriculum serve to support norms (for example, autonomy, competition) that differentially affect persons from underrepresented groups. Linkages between the socialization of graduate students to faculty careers and the ideologies required to perpetuate inequality provide us an analytical lens by which we can identify norms and the mechanisms by which they regulate, support, and reproduce this same inequality.

There has been little direct investigation of the norms of graduate education and the hidden curriculum that enacts the norms. Existing research fails to consider how inequality is reproduced through a hidden curriculum that affects and enlists all members of an academic community. In general, when norms have been considered, they have been taken up for the purpose of investigating the experiences of individuals, not for the extent to which they shape a particular culture or organization (e.g., Gardner, 2008; Hatt, Quach, Brown & Anderson, 2009; Weidman & Stein, 2003). For example, Weidman and

Stein (2003) labeled “research” and “scholarship” as academic norms, and investigated how graduate students perceived their departments in light of these norms. They were interested in determining the socialization factors necessary to support these norms, but the value of these norms were taken as self-evident and left unexamined. And, in support of assimilationist socialization models, Hall and Burns (2009) argued that faculty mentors should be mindful of identity formation in order to support academic norms and “successfully socialize more diverse groups of researchers” (p. 67).

In contrast, Sallee (2011) interviewed male graduate students and faculty members to study the performance of masculinity in a graduate engineering program so as to discover the ways in which “gendered values are equated with success” (p. 188). Addressing norms directly, and the way in which they regulate and value behaviors, provides necessary insight into possibilities for disrupting the replication of repressive, dominant ideologies. Similar to Sallee, I investigated the ways in which graduate students learned to be faculty members, and uncovered the strong forms of the hidden curriculum that were engaged in the reproduction of norms that had the effect of perpetuating inequality. In order to expand our understanding of how graduate students learn to be faculty members, and in attempts to address graduate student attrition, more research focused on the dominant habitus and norms of graduate education is necessary.

I am advocating here a multilevel approach to investigating graduate education that concurrently includes both the capturing of individuals’ experiences in light of a particular phenomenon, but also the analysis of how those experiences uncover the values, dispositions, and perceptions of subcultures, and the reproduction of dominant ideologies. For example, in Chapter V, I discussed the messages of socialization, the

mechanisms by which those messages were delivered, and how socialization was enacted by the weak and strong forms of the hidden curriculum. But these descriptions required further analysis to situate them contextually and illuminate their value. In Chapter VI, I provided the explanation of and application for how the strong forms of the hidden curriculum serve to reproduce inequality. I attempted here to model a presentation of results that systematically, and empirically, responded not only to the research questions (the *what* and *how* questions of graduate student socialization) but also the significance and implications of those results in a structure framed by dominant ideologies. Put another way, by empirically analyzing the Chapter V results in light of the phenomenon under study and as required by the framing theories (Bourdieu [1977, 1986] and critical race theory), it was necessary for me to address the specific implications of how the strong forms of the hidden curriculum serve to reproduce inequality.

I interviewed faculty and graduate students to uncover the phenomenon of graduate student socialization to faculty careers, and how messages of what it takes to be successful in academia are transmitted. This method was appropriate for answering these *how* questions and exploring the real-life phenomenon of socialization in a particular context. Using this method, and in consideration of critical theories, I found that the phenomenon under study was characterized by the interaction of academic norms and the hidden curriculum. There was little consensus regarding the quality or quantity of academic products or skills required to be successful. There were no common metrics outside of completing program milestones (e.g., second year paper, coursework, candidacy). More salient to the successful graduate students (the described “stars”) and

the faculty members was the adherence and performance of departmental norms, delivered through the lessons of the strong forms of the hidden curriculum.

While I investigated the phenomenon of graduate student socialization at two universities in a single discipline and found remarkable consistency in the perspectives and observations of study participants, further inquiry is needed to be able to confirm hypotheses related to the embedded and pervasive nature of the hidden curriculum in graduate education. For example, additional critical research is needed to investigate multiple disciplinary contexts.

Any critical approach should interrogate the hegemony of traditional research methods. For example, Yin (1994) suggested that a case study method is indicated when the research has little or no possibility in controlling the events or phenomenon under investigation. I challenge the extent to which this objective observer position is possible, and contend that any interaction with research participants has the possible effect of intervention. In constructing this exploratory-explanatory study, I was aware of the extent to which my engagement with the research participants shaped or interrupted how they participated in graduate student socialization. For some participants, graduate students and faculty alike, our interviews provided a rare opportunity to reflect how they were experiencing their roles and academic life. While providing me with their feelings and observations, they were also processing their experiences and making meaning of them. For example, faculty members shared that they had not thought about socialization prior to our interview, and that our discussion of their work and professional journeys felt like therapy. Graduate students were synthesizing the accumulation of microaggressions, and reflecting on the interactions between mentoring and department cultures. These

opportunities for insight enabled possibilities for developing a critical consciousness, and this critical consciousness could be used to perceive or engage differently with socialization processes.

I chose to limit my contact with the research participants and conduct one interview with each because of the potentials for my engagement to effect intervention. Additionally, to secure their point-in-time reflections and observations, I elected not to conduct member checking in the analysis phase. I supported these decisions by adjusting my interview technique and data analysis: during the interviews I mirrored participant's conclusions so as to affirm that I was receiving meaning as the participant intended; throughout the analysis, I employed a low level of inference regarding participants' contributions; and, in communicating the results, I identified the ways in which individual participant contributions confirmed or departed from those of other participants.

Lastly, this study confronts the problematic categorization of "me-search" and the hegemonic legitimization of research. Me-search has been used to describe research that seemingly and overtly addresses the interests or lived experiences of the researcher (Webber, 2008). Me-search was used as a pejorative by study participants and others elsewhere to signal superfluous, self-indulgent, and superficial inquiries (Golub, 2008). On its face, this study (and my involvement) could be criticized as falling into this non-research category. However, I took several methodological steps to avoid this so-called pitfall. As a graduate student, I experienced the phenomenon under study, and, insofar as any social science researcher can be alienated from the research (Rossman & Rallis,

1998), I situated the inquiry outside of my experiences in the following ways (M. J. Mayhew, personal communication, August 20, 2014):

1. I engaged the phenomenon of graduate student socialization in a disciplinary context (psychology) within which I was not a member, nor was I familiar (for example, I have never taken a course in psychology).
2. I interviewed faculty members in addition to graduate students.
3. I chose multiple geographic locations for investigating graduate student socialization and I did not have any engagement with these departments prior to the study.
4. I maximized the potentials for confirmation by interviewing many people, 37 in total.
5. I employed a low level of inference in the analysis of the data. I reported and used rich interview excerpts; I did not ascribe feelings or motivations to the participants if they did not offer such contributions.
6. I used and synthesized prior research and theories from multiple disciplines to inform each stage of this study.

Consistent with the aims of critical race theory discussed earlier, and because of these aforementioned decisions, I was able to leverage my role, position, and experiences, to design and execute a critical inquiry into the phenomenon of graduate student socialization.

### **Implications for Practice**

There are no easy fixes for attending to the ways in which inequality is reproduced in graduate education. In responding to concerns that graduate students expressed in a journal issue addressing graduate education in anthropology, one professor, Susan Philips (2008) commented, “Each of the explicit issues raised—particularly racism—poses a significant challenge to our field. To seriously address them in a disciplinary-wide way would require considerable effort,” but she went on to suggest that individual departments could create their own models by which to improve graduate

education, and that dissemination of these models could go far to change the discipline. Indeed, attending to the effects of academic hegemony in hopes of stemming the tide of attrition requires considerable effort. I will outline here a few possible strategies for disrupting the reproduction of inequality in graduate education. They include empowering individuals and organizations to act; and engaging in critical self-study.

The high attrition rates in doctoral programs signal a crisis in higher education (CGS, 2008; WWNFF, 2005). As mentioned earlier, the combination of the norms of autonomy, the rewards for maintaining the status quo, and the field characterized by little interference or oversight, seems to thwart the agency of individuals interested in challenging “the system.” One approach to confronting high attrition rates is to structure ways by which this bystander inaction is lessened. This might begin with an acknowledgement by individuals (deans, faculty members) and organizations (departments, schools, publication editorial boards, professional associations, and accrediting boards) that the existence of a hidden curriculum, supported by academic norms, contributes to the reproduction of inequality, evidenced for example, in differential attrition rates by race, underrepresentation of African American and Latino/a faculty, dysfunctional mentoring models, and categorizations of “legitimate” research. And that this acknowledgment requires action on the part of all community members, collectively and individually. Attending to the disruption of reproduction necessitates a vulnerability to consider at the most basic level, “maybe I could do things differently, better.”

Departments, universities, and organizations could incentivize this vulnerability and reframe accountability. All members of academia are simultaneously shaped by and

shaping dominant norms; some might be resistant to considering that they were trained to support hegemonic and alienating norms and that despite their best intentions, they contribute to reproducing inequality. It would be an interesting organizational change strategy to begin with that assumption: we all contribute to reproducing inequality; everyone is equally culpable, but also equally empowered to change and affect change. Incentives for addressing hegemonic academic norms could include research grants, release time, promotion and tenure considerations, and student funding, for example; and could be used as rewards for individuals who actively confront oppressive norms and disable the strong forms of the hidden curriculum.

Critical self-study could be undertaken by departments, universities, and professional associations so as to accomplish two aims: 1) uncover the dominant norms, the hidden curriculum; and identify the ways in which oppressive ideologies are reproduced; and, 2) make explicit the goals and outcomes of graduate education; and, then, in consideration of the mechanisms of reproduction, determine effective educational opportunities for accomplishing the outcomes. A critical self-study should complicated the ways in which tradition academic program reviews are administered by focusing particular attention on how people from traditionally marginalized groups experience graduate education, and employ a method that addresses the utility of dominant norms to accomplish desired outcomes. Using the theory I proposed above, for example, departments could apply a critical race theory of reproduction to creating self-study inquiry questions like, “how does autonomy support and thwart productive mentoring models and relationships?” or “how do implicit rewards systems in academe devalue the contributions of people from underrepresented groups?”



Stating explicitly the goals and desired outcomes of graduate education enables us to look critically at the methods we employ for accomplishing those outcomes (see for example, Banta, Jones, & Black, 2009; Bresciani, 2006). By considering the totality of graduate education experiences under the umbrellas of curriculum and pedagogy, self-studies should focus on the responsibility of those in power to enable the creation of new and better methods for interrupting the reproduction of inequality. It requires, of course, acknowledging “the dark side” of privilege and autonomy, and the ways in which the dominant norms serve to legitimize bad behaviors (Braxton, Prosper, & Bayer, 2011). This assessment-focused activity could confront directly those lessons of the hidden curriculum that require masking, or disconnection, for example. Or, more specifically, for each curricular and pedagogical function, an assessment-focused self-study could ask, “given that a desired outcome of graduate education is the production of new knowledge, are we employing the best methods to accomplish that outcome?”

Part of a self-study should involve mining existing research for insights into doctoral student attrition and identifying the differential effects of dominant academic norms (or the dissonance between intent and impact, faculty perspectives and graduate student experiences). In consideration of the high proportions of graduate students who do not complete the doctorate, several researchers have studied the non-completers in efforts to get insight as to the causes of the problem. At one university, Gardner (2009) investigated the causes that faculty and graduate students attributed to graduate student attrition in six disciplines. Gardner found that faculty members were most likely to attribute attrition to deficiencies in the non-completers:

That the student was lacking in ability, drive, focus, motivation, or initiative was cited most often by the faculty in this study as the reason for doctoral student

departure in their departments, and accounted for about half of the total reasons given by faculty (p. 104).

Graduate students, on the other hand, were about equally as likely to attribute attrition to personal problems (specifically marriage, children, and family responsibilities) or departmental issues. The most common departmental issue identified by graduate students was “bad advising” (p. 106); and most of the graduate students who responded in this way were found in the department of psychology. Gardner’s study is particularly useful for two reasons: 1) it identified some criteria that faculty members use to assess quality; and 2) it uncovered dissonance between faculty members’ and graduate students’ attributions about attrition. Results of this type could be used to investigate further the alignment between “necessary” skills and success metrics, or the alignment of program outcomes and educationally appropriate activities. Furthermore, Gardner’s approach could be adapted for a critical self-study of attrition at other universities.

The outcomes of any self-study should be used to critique structures, environments, and interactions for the (re)formation of organizations, not for the improved acculturation of individual entrants to existing norms. As I discussed earlier, there has been considerable attention paid to the experiences of individuals (for example, graduate students of color, faculty of color) and the interventions necessary to improve those experiences. One notable attempt to address graduate student attrition comes from the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and is titled the “Ph.D. Completion Project.” CGS has issued four reports that span seven years of research into doctoral education and degree completion. In their latest report, *Ph.D. Completion Project: Policies and Practices to Promote Student Success* (2010), they provided recommendations that attended to supporting graduate students in hopes of increasing degree completion. They

addressed these functions and processes: admissions; mentoring and advising; financial support; research mode of the field; administrative processes; and program environment. All of the CGS recommendations focus on one of two types of outcomes: 1) awareness of academic requirements; or 2) forging connections between students; and none of the recommendations suggest that academic or organizational cultures require transformation. The results of my study and others (Braxton, Prosper, & Bayer, 2011; Gardner, 2009) suggest that inattention to the dominant habitus, or the norms and the hidden curriculum that operationalizes the norms, will not produce credible disruptions or result in significant challenges to current attrition rates. As it stands, graduate education is structured to reproduce inequality.

The graduate student and faculty participants in my study provided insight into the ways in which strong forms of the hidden curriculum operate to further disenfranchise people from marginalized groups, and reproduce inequality. The opportunities for disrupting this reproduction require concerted and strategic efforts, as well as individual and collective humility and vulnerability—a huge project to be sure, but negligence has consequences. Philips (2008) identified a cost of this situation and commented, “graduate students are consciously worried about and personally witness and experience an impoverishment—a personally draining impoverishment, and one that can threaten the intellectual vitality and coherence of [the] discipline” (p. 20). The United States is home to most of the best universities in the world (see for reference *Times Higher Education [UK]*, *Academic Ranking of World Universities [Shanghai]*, or *QS World University Rankings*), and resources are available to improve graduate education and stem inequality

should attention be committed. At risk is continued graduate student attrition, continued underrepresentation of African Americans and Latino/as in the faculty ranks, and the promise of knowledge creation and “intellectual vitality.”

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interview Protocol: Doctoral Students**

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. Why did you choose to go to graduate school? Who, if anyone, influenced or helped you with your decision? What are you interested in studying?
3. Have you had any research experience either as an undergraduate student or as a Master's student, or in a professional capacity?
4. Can you tell me why you think you are well-suited for graduate school?
5. Why did you choose to attend (this school)? [If the student mentions a particular faculty member, inquire as to the kind of relationship the student thinks she/he will have with her/him.] What did people tell you to expect? What do you think about the advice you were given?
6. How is graduate school going? What do you think of your time thus far?
7. Tell me about an average week. How do you spend your time? Meetings? Socializing? Studying with friends? Working with a faculty member?
8. What has been the biggest surprise about graduate school? Is graduate school what you expected? Why or why not? In what ways?
9. What do you need to do to be considered a good student? What do you need to do to be considered a successful faculty member? How did you come to know or learn these things?

10. What type of skills or attitudes are needed to be a good graduate student? What types of skills or attitudes are needed to be a faculty member?
11. Is your experience here similar to that of your peers? How? Why?
12. Have you ever experienced any discomfort in your graduate studies because of your race and/or gender?
13. Tell me about your relationship with your advisor. How often do you talk with or meet with her/him? What do you talk with your advisor about? Are there any other faculty, besides your advisor, with whom you talk? What sorts of things do you talk about?
14. What do you want to do after you finish your degree?
15. Have any faculty members actively encouraged you to pursue a career in academe?
16. What would you like faculty and/or administrators to know about your experience in graduate school?
17. How do you think your race, gender or other personal ascribed characteristic, impact your experiences in graduate school, if at all?
18. What advice would you offer incoming students regarding how to be successful here?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Interview Protocol: Faculty**

1. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and how you came to be a professor of psychology here?
2. How did you learn about what it takes to be a professor?
3. How are students supposed to progress through the department in pursuit of the doctorate?
4. How would you describe a successful graduate student? Are there dispositions, values, interests, orientations, etc. that successful students possess?
5. When you think of students who weren't successful in this department... why do you think they weren't successful?
6. How do students get the messages of what it takes to be successful? What do you think are the explicit messages as well as the more implicit ones?
7. Could you describe to me the differences between new students and more senior students in this department?
8. What do you think could be done that isn't already being done to assist graduate students?
9. Is there anything else you'd like to let me know about how students learn how to be successful graduate students and budding professors of psychology?



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