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DEDICATION

To My Mom

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER	
I. Minority Status and Privilege in the Academy: The Importance of Race, Gender, and Socialization Practices For Undergraduates, Graduate Students, and Faculty.....	1
The Academy as the Total Institution.....	3
Hidden Curriculum.....	6
Standpoint Theory and Outsiders Within.....	10
Identity and the Role of Exemplars.....	12
Sense of Fit.....	14
Majority/Minority Group Status and the Intersections of Identities.....	17
Why Diversity Matters in the Academy.....	19
References.....	24
II. “Thinking She Could Be the Next President”: Why Identifying With the Curriculum Matters... ..	31
Selective Knowledge and Implicit Learning.....	32
Identifying With the Curriculum.....	34
Women’s Studies and Gender Curriculum.....	36
Hypotheses.....	38
Method.....	39
Results.....	46
Discussion.....	50
References.....	61

III. Fitting In and Going With the Flow: Motives For Graduate Study and Completion of the Doctorate.....	66
Diversity in the Academy.....	67
Privileged Status in the Academy.....	69
Legitimacy via the PhD.....	71
Gendered Attributions of Success: Serendipity vs. Agency...	71
Hypotheses.....	72
Method.....	75
Results.....	86
Discussion.....	89
References.....	102
IV. Race and Gender in Science and Engineering Fields: The Experiences of Faculty Outsiders-Within.....	108
Underrepresented Groups in the STEM Fields.....	109
Outsiders-Within.....	112
The Culture of Science.....	115
Standpoint Theory and Legitimacy.....	116
Some Consequences of Stereotypes and Model Minority Myth....	119
Intersections of Social Identities.....	120
Research Questions.....	122
Method.....	123
Results.....	133
Discussion.....	136
References.....	155
V. Discussion and Conclusion.....	163
From the Margins to the Center.....	164
Diversity in Motives and Why An Expected Fit is Not Enough.....	166
Faculty Outsiders-Within: Shifting Locations of Privilege and Marginality.....	169
Future Directions.....	172

Conclusion.....	175
References.....	177

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Logistic Regression Predicting Students in the Gender-Inclusive Sections Writing About Women More Often Than Students in the Traditional Curriculum Sections.....	57
Table 2	Chi-Square Comparisons For Attrition Rates For Gender, Race, and Gender Within Race.....	94
Table 3	Chi-Square Comparisons For Gender and motives.....	95
Table 4	Chi-Square Comparisons of Students of Color and White Students For Motives.....	96
Table 5	Chi-Square Comparisons For Intersection of Gender and Race For Motives.....	97
Table 6	Logistic Regression Predicting Attrition With Gender and Race as Controls.....	98
Table 7	Chi-Square Comparisons of Three Race/Ethnic Groups: Underrepresented Minority Faculty, Asian/Asian American Faculty, and White Faculty For All Themes.....	147
Table 8	Chi-Square Gender Comparisons For All Themes.....	148
Table 9	Chi-Square Comparisons For White Men and All Other Faculty (URM Women, URM Men and White Women) for Insider Standpoint Themes.....	149
Table 10	Table 10 Chi-Square Comparisons For URM Women and All Other Faculty (URM Men, White Women, and White Men) for Outsider-Within Standpoint Themes.....	150

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines socialization practices in the academy in three separate studies. The first study considers the general absence of women in mainstream undergraduate curriculum and examines the influence of introducing women exemplars into an undergraduate political psychology course that is not identified as “Women’s Studies.” The findings of this study have broader implications for curriculum development because of its potential to encourage people to pursue careers where they have been historically underrepresented, including positions in the academy as professors or scientists. The second study examines doctoral students’ motives for going to graduate school and how these motives are related to completing their program of study. Considering how different types of motives for pursuing a PhD contribute to students’ identity development as emerging experts in their fields as well as their perception of fit within the academy sheds light on the issue of majority/minority status and role models. The third study examines the experiences of different groups of faculty in STEM fields. Faculty members represent those most invested in the future of the institution, and those who will socialize subsequent generations of students and faculty members. This study includes both white faculty and faculty of color who are all recognized as having outstanding research records. However, even holding credentials that characterize them as legitimate members of the science community, content analysis of interviews revealed differences in the standpoints held by different groups of scientists. The cumulative findings from these three studies suggest that diversity is indeed a work in progress.

However, progress made across several decades is also evident in who is participating at the various levels in the academy, as well as the opportunities and spaces available to implement initiatives for creating more inclusive environments for undergraduates, graduate students and faculty.