"The Department Is Very Male, Very White, Very Old, and Very Conservative": The Functioning of the Hidden Curriculum in Graduate Sociology Departments

ERIC MARGOLIS
MARY ROMERO
Arizona State University

In this article, Eric Margolis and Mary Romero examine the effect of the "hidden curriculum" on women of color graduate students in sociology. They interview twenty-six women of color enrolled in Ph.D. programs in sociology to uncover how the graduate school curriculum not only produces professional sociologists, but also simultaneously reproduces gender, race, class, and other forms of inequality. In their analysis, Margolis and Romero identify two forms of the hidden curriculum at work: the "weak" form, which is the professionalization process essential to "becoming a sociologist," and the "strong" form, which acts to reproduce stratified and unequal social relations. The numerous quotations from the women graduate students interviewed reveal that many elements of the hidden curriculum — such as stereotyping and blaming the victim — were painfully obvious to them. As Margolis and Romero argue, the women's stories, the authors' analysis, and the publication of this article are forms of resistance to the hidden curriculum, constituting "a lifting of veils to make visible what was hidden."

The title of this article comes from an observation made by a woman of color, a graduate student in sociology. Like the exclamation "The emperor has no clothes!" this observation makes visible what students and faculty have tacitly agreed not to see. In this article, we examine graduate programs in sociology

Harvard Educational Review Vol. 68 No. 1 Spring 1998
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from the subjective position of women of color graduate students. In doing so, we uncover elements of the curriculum and professionalization processes that have long remained hidden. The students of color we interviewed for this study reveal in particular how the graduate school curriculum in sociology not only produces professional sociologists, but also simultaneously (re)produces gender, race, and other forms of inequality. No doubt there are women of color who obtained Ph.D.'s in sociology without these experiences, just as there are women who found the hidden curriculum so odious that they left graduate school. We interviewed women surviving graduate school who volunteered to discuss these issues in detail. They reported encounters that "stuck in their minds," which may not have been everyday occurrences but which left indelible marks. Taken together, they suggest patterns of interaction with intended and unintended consequences that make it particularly difficult for students of color, women, and students from working-class backgrounds to survive and thrive in graduate school. In revealing these aspects of the hidden curriculum, we hope to open a dialogue on graduate school socialization practices that go far beyond sociology departments.

Philip Jackson's (1968) concept of a "hidden curriculum" was developed through observations in K-12 public schools. He noticed that the peculiar disciplines and behavioral expectations that are found in classrooms and embedded in school practices do not necessarily further intellectual development. Jackson observed that grade schools give students credit for "trying," reward "neatness, punctuality and courteous conduct" (p. 33), and provide negative sanctions for the violation of institutional rules. At roughly the same time, Robert Dreeben (1968) looked at school culture and concluded that it taught students to "form transient social relationships, submerge much of their personal identity, and accept the legitimacy of categorical treatment" (p. 147). Building on the work of Elizabeth Vallance (1973–1974), Michael Apple and Nancy King (1977) analyzed how elements of the curriculum come to be "hidden" (pp. 33–34). Apple and King describe two aspects of the hidden curriculum that they term "weak" and "strong." The weak form consists of the connections to civil society that encompass the processes that transform children into social beings able to live and work together, form social institutions, and develop agreed-upon meanings. This is a Durkheimian concept of socialization essential to social life:

> It is nearly impossible to envision social life without some element of control, if only because institutions, as such, tend to respond to the *regularities* of human interaction. What strongly influenced early curriculum workers was a historically specific set of assumptions, common sense rules, about school meanings and control that incorporated not merely the idea that organized society must maintain itself through the preservation of some of its valued forms of interaction and meaning, which implied a quite general and wholly understandable "weak" sense of social control. (Apple & King, 1977, pp. 33–34)

The inseparable "strong" form of the hidden curriculum was part and parcel of the *Weltanschauung* (worldview) of these nineteenth-century curriculum developers:

> Deeply embedded in their ideological perspective was a "strong" sense of control wherein education in general and the everyday meanings of the curriculum in particular were seen as essential to the preserving of the existing social privilege, interests, and knowledge of one element of the population at the expense of less powerful groups. Most often this took the form of attempting to guarantee expert and scientific control in society, to eliminate or "socialize" unwanted racial or ethnic groups or characteristics or to produce an economically efficient group of citizens. (Apple & King, 1977, p. 34)

Critical theorists (Anyon, 1980; Apple, 1971, 1980; Giroux, 1981, 1983; Willis, 1977) instituted projects to make visible those overdetermined aspects of the hidden curriculum that operate to reproduce inequality. They conducted studies demonstrating how elements of the hidden curriculum (e.g., discipline) have not been applied uniformly, but are stratified according to social class, race, gender, and sexuality. Perhaps due to the influence of Marxism on critical pedagogy, most research on the hidden curriculum has focused on the public education system and on capitalism's reproduction of class stratification, rather than on gender, race, or other forms of inequality.[1]

The distinction between weak and strong forms provides a useful heuristic for analyzing the hidden curriculum in graduate programs because it differentiates the professionalization process essential to "becoming a sociologist" ("weak" form) from socialization processes that function to reproduce stratified social relations ("strong" form). The way in which these two aspects of the socialization processes in graduate schools play out in practice can be seen in the astute response of one woman in our study to the question, "Would you recommend this program to another woman of color?":

> If you're talking about a Black student who is interested in some level of discussion or something with other students, I couldn't recommend this program for her. If she were interested in the possibility that she might form some kind of mentoring relationship with the faculty, then I couldn't really recommend this program. . . . If she were looking for some satisfying level of social interaction with either faculty or students, I couldn't say that she would find it here. . . . If they just wanted to get a good education in sociology and learn a lot about theory, a generally good program, I'd say yeah, come to [this] university. But if they're looking for something else, a rounded-out good experience, not just the academic, but something that recognized racial/ethnic issues and offered some level of social interaction for minority students, then I couldn't say this would be the program.

In this quote, the weak form of socialization is aimed at providing "a good education in sociology"; the strong form reproduces inequality through the

[1] For instance, see Paul Willis's (1977) influential work, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs.*

exclusion of racial/ethnic issues from the curriculum and the absence of opportunities for "social interaction for minority students." After describing our study in the next section, we examine the weak form of the hidden curriculum and its function in the professionalization of women of color graduate students. Then we turn to the strong form and the reproduction of inequality.

The Study

To obtain detailed descriptions of the "extracurricular" interactions between graduate students and faculty, as well as between students, we conducted open-ended interviews with twenty-six women of color graduate students enrolled in Ph.D. programs in sociology.[2] The participants were a subset of a sample of sixty-six women graduate students of color who had completed a survey in 1989 that was conducted for the Social Issues Committee of Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), which had expressed concern that women of color graduate students and faculty were underrepresented in sociological associations, including SWS itself.[3] The initial aim of the study was to identify problems and barriers faced by these women, and to make recommendations to sociology departments, faculty, and professional associations. The original sample was constructed from the American Sociological Association's (ASA) list of minority fellows and augmented with additional names received in response to our inquiries to each of the graduate programs listed in the ASA's *Guide to Graduate Programs*. One hundred and sixty-five questionnaires were mailed out. A return rate of 40 percent resulted in a sample of sixty-six women graduate students of color. One item on the questionnaire asked respondents if they would be willing to be interviewed. We were able to locate twenty-six of these respondents, and interviewed them in 1991.[4]

[2] Qualitative methods are particularly appropriate for studying the operation of the hidden curriculum. As Elizabeth Vallance (1980) noted: "The state of mind required by inquiry into the hidden curriculum is by definition open to unknowns and attuned to the subtle and irregular qualities of schooling. Much the same can be said of qualitative inquiry methods" (p. 138).

[3] As one of two sociologists of color serving on the Social Issues Committee of SWS in 1989, Dr. Romero volunteered to conduct a survey of women of color graduate students. The survey on women of color faculty was never completed. Preliminary findings were presented at the 1990 SWS annual meeting. Findings were also presented at the meetings of the American Sociological Association, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and Research on Women in Education. The paper presented at Research on Women in Education, "Is That Sociology?: The Accounts of Women of Color Graduate Students in Ph.D. Programs," was later published in Dunlap and Schmuck (1995, pp. 71–85).

[4] This was not a random sample. Excerpts are provided here from interviews with a self-selected group of women of color graduate students of sociology. These are extremely articulate, thoughtful women who chose to study sociology, in many cases because of an interest in race, ethnicity, and gender, and a commitment to social justice and social change. They are reflecting on educational experiences that were painful and difficult. Are the incidents they discuss typical? Are there counter examples? There is no way to answer such questions.

This subset of twenty-six respondents, primarily shaped by their willingness to be interviewed, consisted of two Native Americans, eleven African Americans, five Asian Americans, and eight Latinas;[5] three of these also identified themselves as international students. These women were enrolled in graduate programs across the United States: ten were in graduate programs on the West Coast; ten on the East Coast; four in the South; and two in the Midwest. The women ranged in age from twenty-five to sixty-five, although half were between twenty-five and thirty-five. The women were in various stages of their graduate careers: three were still taking courses; seven were completing comprehensive exams; fourteen were in the dissertation process; and two had recently graduated. The sample included graduate students in both private and public institutions; however, the majority were enrolled in public institutions.[6]

Interviews were conducted by phone at the convenience of the respondents, and lasted from 45 to 90 minutes. The interview protocol was broad in scope, giving respondents space to define the issues they faced in graduate sociology programs. Interviews touched on a wide range of issues related to the graduate experience, including: formal and informal social structures of graduate programs; financial and mentoring support; relationships with faculty and other graduate students; research, publishing, and teaching opportunities; and other experiences that influenced decisions, choices, and career plans. They were transcribed and coded in general categories of mentoring, financial assistance, networking, reasons for selecting graduate programs, relationships with faculty and students, teaching and publishing opportunities, and the issues they identified as barriers to completing the Ph.D. Only after this process and an examination of emergent themes did it occur to us that the concept of "hidden curriculum" (Jackson, 1968) would provide a useful organizing principle. This concept allowed us to recognize the women's words as "thick descriptions" of, on the one hand, how graduate programs socialize students into the profession and the impact of the hidden curriculum, and, on the other hand, of students' resistance to and conflict with aspects of the professional role (Geertz, 1973). Clifford Geertz's term "thick description" refers both to the dense texture of accounts of social life and to the social scientist's interpretations and generalizations about life and culture. It is important to note that our investigation of sociology graduate students relies on the words of women specifically trained and interested in what C. W. Mills (1959) termed the relations between private troubles and public issues.

[5] The sample is fairly consistent with the national data on women of color receiving doctorate degrees in 1991–1992. Of the 1,550 women of color, 53 were Native American, 497 were Asian American, 647 were Black, and 353 were Hispanic (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1995, p. 40).

[6] In order to assure anonymity, a further breakdown of sample characteristics is not possible, since there are so few women of color graduate students in sociology. All names and places have been changed or omitted.

The following section explores professionalization in graduate education. We then identify distinct consequences of these processes for women of color, discuss the forms and structures of the hidden curriculum that women reported, and describe the socialization messages that emerge from various everyday practices in higher education. We conclude our analysis by focusing on resistance — not only the students' strategies for creating alternative professional identities and skills, but also the process by which resistance becomes an alternative socialization process.

Professionalization: The "Weak" Form of the Hidden Curriculum

When discussing graduate school, socialization is typically called professionalization, but as Jack Haas and William Shaffir (1982) note, the words mean the same thing. These scholars suggest one set of possible meanings:

> Sociologists have . . . examined the process by which neophytes are socialized into the profession. This process, referred to as professionalization, includes several dimensions: developing and identifying with and committing oneself to the profession and a professional career; developing greater loyalty to colleagues than to clients; acquiring a certain detachment and routinization toward one's work; gaining formal knowledge and skills in order to make competent judgments; and developing a *pretense* of competence even though one may be privately uncertain. (p. 132)

Like other institutions, academia produces socialization in extracurricular interactions between students and faculty. In one of the few studies addressing the operation of the hidden curriculum at the university level, G. Bergenhenegouwen (1987) observes:

> The hidden curriculum in university can be described as the whole of informal and implicit demands of study and study achievements that are to be met for someone to complete units of study. The teachers' informal demands are made partly consciously and partly unconsciously. (pp. 536–537)

Bergenhenegouwen provides four examples, all of which we consider weak forms:

> To show a business-like and detached attitude with respect to the subject of study. If feelings, intuition and interest are allowed to play a role, this expresses insufficient distance and lack of a clear and a balanced view . . .
>
> Students are supposed to work with theoretical constructions, use professional jargon and abstract concepts, etc. . . .
>
> Students are expected to "hold their own, by showing a confident attitude and giving little or no evidence of anxiety, nervousness or feelings of uncertainty in exams or interviews" . . .

> Students must learn to value "the satisfaction gained from achieving more and getting better results than others, which gives people also a sense of self esteem." (p. 537)

Self-reflective studies of graduate education in sociology have similarly emphasized aspects of the hidden curriculum that are related to the weak form. Although some researchers have contributed to the abstract body of literature called the "sociology of sociology" (Crothers, 1991; Egan, 1989; Plutzer, 1991), most of the studies have been "applied," focusing on the assessment/evaluation and improvement of graduate education and training.[7] In describing the socialization process in graduate programs, Charles Crothers (1991) argues that, as a group, students undergo "status degradation" as they are stripped of their past identities and treated as "baby sociologists."[8] The structure of graduate school acknowledges *only* academically gained and credentialed knowledge, thus privileging theory over practical social knowledge. Janet Malenchek Egan (1989) identifies the process as one of resocialization: "Currently lacking professional self-image and scholarly world view, it [professional socialization] alters the past rather than merely building on it" (p. 201).

While requiring a new professional identity of their students, graduate programs provide few formal mechanisms to help graduate students make the transition from being directed students (taking course work and passing qualifying exams) to being self-directed researchers who are developing professional or disciplinary identities.[9] In their study of professional self-concept among graduate students, Ronald Pavalko and John Holley (1974) note that research and teaching opportunities are important in insuring socialization towards professional identity. In another study of socialization in graduate and professional schools, Carin Weiss (1981) finds that, while informal interaction with faculty is significant in developing a high professional role commitment, graduate programs seldom make explicit that this is a component of the students' education, or that it is considered a faculty responsibility. In a study conducted by Julius A. Roth (1955), faculty advisors at the University of Chicago were asked about the conceptions of "good" and

[7] Several national and regional sociological associations have conducted studies on the status of women in the profession. The Committee on the Status of Women of the American Sociological Association (ASA) has written the following reports: "The Treatment of Gender in Sociology" (1985), "Equity Issues for Women Faculty in Sociology Departments" (1985), and "Recommendations on the Recruitment and Retention of Women Sociologists" (1986).The Pacific Sociology Association (PSA) also published several reports on the status of women (Araji & Ihinger-Tallman, 1988; Kulis & Miller, 1988; Nigg & Axelrod, 1981). Students of color, particularly women of color, have not received adequate attention (Blackwell, 1983; Exum, Menges, Watkins, & Berglund, 1984).

[8] Laura Rendón (1992) also comments on the devaluation of past experience and knowledge in education.

[9] See Bernard C. Rosen and Alan P. Bates (1967) for comments on the attempt to train students to be independent in an authoritarian social structure.

"poor" graduate students. Roth elicited descriptions of learning environments that "create a restricted culture in which students with certain characteristics will thrive, while others with negatively valued characteristics will run into repeated stumbling blocks" (p. 350).[10] For example, even if one measure of intellect was originality, "when a student's originality carried him outside the limits" of the dominant paradigm in sociology, she/he was more likely to be labeled "bizarre" than a potential sociologist. Roth's work suggests that women, working-class students, and students of color may be at a disadvantage if they lack the expected "cultural capital."[11]

A few studies address the impact of graduate school socialization on White women and working-class students, but not on students of color, particularly women of color.[12] In her study on self-concept and graduate school, Egan (1989) examines the same characteristics Roth (1955) identifies (assertiveness, confidence, independence, and being well-adjusted) and concludes:[13]

> In my definition, high self-esteem is contingent on a view of oneself as a competent, worthwhile person, deserving of acceptance and expecting to succeed. Individuals assess whether they possess these qualities according to the standards and the frame of reference provided by their culture. If this self-view is challenged by structural features of the socializing organization, the possibility exists for a lowering of individual self-esteem. (p. 201)

The actual locations and mechanics by which the hidden curriculum produces professional identity include: department culture, cliques or factions, group interactions in meetings or seminars, mentoring or apprenticeship relationships, the informal or formal allocation system for teaching and research assistantships, the selection of courses for teaching assistants to teach.

[10] In a more recent article, Eric Plutzer (1991) identifies how sociology faculty determine which students are "most likely to succeed" and which are potential failures. His findings suggest that sociologists administer graduate programs in an irrational fashion that counters the established sociological knowledge, and act on a belief in predestination — that is, "some graduate students are members of the elect and predestined for success" (p. 302).

[11] "Cultural capital" is a concept with a history in sociology dating back to nineteenth-century Weberian descriptions of the social world as composed of status groups. The concept was further developed in the conflict theories of Randall Collins (1975). George Farkas (1996) summarized the cultural capital perspective as the recognition that "educational and earnings stratification . . . [result] from credentialing systems wherein the cultural hegemony of middle- and upper-class groups operate through school and workplace reward systems that are only loosely, if at all, tied to actual productivity" (p. 10). In short, the cultural abilities and knowledge of poor, racial/ethnic, and female persons are less valued and rewarded by schools that function not only meritocratically, but also as gatekeepers to privileged status groups. An important study by Annette Lareau (1987) demonstrated how, even when schools seek parental input, the cultural expectations of middle-class teachers clash with cultural capital held by working-class and poor parents. Differences in cultural capital make it difficult or impossible for productive interaction to take place. For example, in his 1988 article "I Never Had a Mentor: Reflections of a Chicano Sociologist," Alfredo Mirande states, "I also had to develop verbal aggressiveness, since this was clearly a valued trait in graduate students" (p. 358).

[12] For instance, see Crothers (1991), Egan (1989), and Plutzer (1991).

[13] Egan's article is a theoretical view of the self. She writes, "My use of a structural focus leads to descriptions of universities and graduate departments that belong to an 'ideal type'" (p. 201).

For example, several female students reported that they were frequently assigned, or encouraged, to teach courses on the sociology of women, gender, or women's studies; students of color are assigned to teach courses on race relations or in ethnic studies programs.

In analyzing the transcripts of the sample of women of color in this study, other areas emerge: hiring and promotion practices, graduate student recruitment, allocation of department resources, required readings, and course offerings and requirements. The everyday practices surrounding these aspects of graduate student life serve to socialize students toward identifying with and committing themselves to professional careers as sociologists. Graduate programs socialize students to develop loyalty to and identify with the faculty and other sociologists while distancing themselves from undergraduate students and research subjects (Pavalko & Holley, 1974; Weiss, 1981). Students are expected to acquire a certain detachment, generally referred to as scientific objectivity, to conduct "value-free" sociology (Mirande, 1988). Formal and informal interactions between faculty and students — such as seminars, research assistantships, and office hours — assist students in gaining sociological knowledge and the skills to conduct research, teach, and write, and in becoming competent in the oral and written use of professional jargon.

The hidden curriculum receives powerful support from the premium placed on the concept of competition (Bergenhenegouwen, 1987; Egan, 1989; Kleinman, 1983) and isolation (Egan, 1989; Sherlock & Morris, 1967) that are so characteristic of graduate school. Even in its weak form, professionalization requires detachment and distance, the use of abstract concepts, assertive self-confidence, competition, independent work habits, and loyalty to colleagues — even at the expense of allegiance to one's community of origin. These things are taught in an informal and unregulated socialization process directed, in large part, by males from the majority culture who, until recently, have dominated the profession. For women and students of color, professionalization requires the adoption of attitudes and behavior patterns that are different from or antithetical to their culture of origin — requirements that make the path through school more problematic and perilous than it might be for a student who arrives equipped with the dominant forms of cultural capital.

Our interview subjects mentioned competition repeatedly. Graduate programs structure individualistic learning experiences that encourage competition for grades and scarce resources, including teaching and research assistantships. Access to resources frequently requires the sponsorship of a mentor, thereby making students compete for the attention of graduate faculty members. The following quote from one of the graduate students interviewed suggests the relationship between being mentored and access to resources:

> That's the kind of thing [the application process for a Research Assistant position] where it depends on who you know. Who you hook up with. What's around. I mean, there's no formal way to do it at all. And it's been a problem. I constantly hear "Oh, so and so is working on this project and that project" and I think "God, that's really interesting. I would love to do that but how did they find out about it?" And that's part of the informal process.

Recognizing competition as a primary characteristic of the professionalization process, students described ways in which the faculty discourage a cooperative or team approach to learning and how the structures of the graduate program place students in constant competition with each other:

> The relations [between students] are very stressed. And also students are very competitive in my department because there is this informal ranking system. Because they're allowing more and more students into the program, they have less and less money to give to students. And so students really have to compete for money and that competition takes the form of who gets the highest scores and who impresses a professor more. Things like that. And it can be quite nasty at times, but the department sort of encourages that because they rank students on a scale of one to ten. So each student has a rank. So it's just an ugly situation.

However, grades are not the only criteria for obtaining positive feedback from faculty. As Roth (1955) notes in his study, faculty advisors reward assertiveness, confidence, and independence because they perceive these personality traits as indicators of a "good" student. The following quotes illustrate the hidden structures of mentorship in graduate school and the students' self-perceptions that they seem to be lacking vital elements of cultural capital, such as aggressive networking and the expectation that professors are there to serve students — beyond teaching classes — by identifying opportunities to further students' careers: "Part of it may just be that I'm not the kind of person that asks a lot of other people"; "I didn't ask for it [guidance]. Although the couple times I asked for it [advice] the responses I got weren't very good. It was almost like — well, you're supposed to sort of just inherently know how to do this." Like other graduate students, these women of color consider the hidden structure of mentoring a problem, particularly in cases in which having a mentor is closely tied to obtaining teaching and research assistantships:

> It's just that there are people who have made very good connections with faculty and work with them and seem to get the benefits of having that connection.
>
> If you don't have a spokesperson or people that know your work and so forth there's no one there to stick up for you. Because you know the faculty meetings are closed. So you really need to develop a relationship with some of the people that you can work well with.

The absence of formal structures to assure that mentoring takes place leaves students to develop their own resources. This may have been appropriate when graduate education was essentially middle-class White males

teaching other middle-class White males. At that time a certain homogeneity of cultural capital could be assumed, and if a student could not marshal that capital to network, find a mentor, and compete vigorously for a position, one might conclude that the "bizarre" student would not make a good sociologist. The old model implied "reproduction" of sociologists and mainstream sociology. This message was embedded in the everyday experiences of the women we interviewed: the "ideal type" of sociologist is a European American, heterosexual, middle-class male. White males, fathers of the discipline, became established historically as the ideal type, and this is maintained through various practices, including the exclusion of others. Not surprisingly, women of color encounter difficulty fitting into programs designed for students from different racial, class, and cultural backgrounds, and gender because they have little, if any, of the cultural capital that White, middle-class, heterosexual males possess. One respondent, who acknowledged that she did not have the same undergraduate training as other first-year graduate students, describes the frustration of not fulfilling her advisor's expectations, and hence being unable to solicit her assistance: "She just doesn't know how to deal with people that don't come in already perfect. And no one does."

So, the diverse student body of today, including both undergraduate and graduate students, produces a paradox: How can the hidden curriculum "reproduce" what does not yet exist — that is, women of color sociologists? Only by making the functioning of this curriculum visible can we overcome the hidden assumptions, failures, and gaps that have made it unnecessarily difficult or impossible for some students to survive graduate school.

Reproducing Inequality: The "Strong" Form of the Hidden Curriculum

In addition to ignoring the differential implications that the weak form of the hidden curriculum has for a diverse student body, previous research has not examined the strong form. In Stanley Eitzen's (1989) proposal for a course entitled "Introduction to Graduate School," which was published in a special issue of *Teaching Sociology*, Eitzen discusses the status of women and minorities in the profession. However, he does not include guidelines or recommendations for dealing with racism and sexism, nor does he address ways to prepare White students to work and learn in a diverse university setting.[14] As yet, there are no detailed studies on the operation of hidden curricula in higher education or the (re)production of racial, ethnic, and gender hierarchies. The existing research has not taken a critical stance on

[14] Recently two sociological journals have devoted special issues to graduate education: *American Sociologist* (1989) and *Teaching Sociology* (1991).

"professional socialization," and as such the analyses do not recognize that, as in grade school, "professional socialization" takes place within a system of power and inequality and has strong aspects that have to do with the reproduction of inequality.

Analysis of the interview data in this study produces eight elements of the strong form of the hidden curriculum: stigmatization, blaming the victim, cooling out, stereotyping, absence, silence, exclusion, and tracking.[15] We will discuss each of these in turn, but two points must be made: first, all these elements of the curriculum may be hidden, but they are not *well* hidden. As Vallance (1980) observes, they may be visible to all, but lie "outside the confines of the explicit and formal curriculum" (p. 141). In the following sections, we illustrate the discussion with quotations from the interviewees, for whom much of what was intended to be hidden was painfully obvious. Second, as critical theorists note, the term "reproduction" does not capture the elements of resistance open to students (Apple, 1980; Giroux, 1981, 1983). This is especially true in sociology, where one of the core values being reproduced is critical inquiry. We shall return to these themes later.

Stigmatization

Women of color frequently get their first view of the strong reproduction of inequality when they are recruited and admitted into graduate programs. Many women reported that classmates, office staff, and faculty stigmatized them as "affirmative action" students rather than identifying them in terms of their specific interests in sociology. The affirmative action classification makes race and/or gender the determining factor in social interaction, and occasionally relegates students of color to positions of affirmative action "mascot":

> Coming in as a woman of color — there was always that stigma that you were an affirmative action student; that you got in because they LET you in, that you did not GET in . . . like this is OUR Indian student. And . . . even some of the secretaries and some of the other people would refer to me as OUR Indian student.
>
> I remember one guy coming up to me about my second year. He said, "Geez, so you must be the affirmative action case." I said, "What the hell do you mean?" I happen to have seen his transcript from Princeton, which was a C– or a C transcript.

[15] In general, we employed the "grounded theory" techniques of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) and Strauss (1987). Initially we performed a content analysis, coding the transcript using an open coding scheme. Next we examined the emerging categories and used axial coding to further develop the categories. However, we did not aim at a pure form of grounded theory research. The entire enterprise was informed by the fact that we, and apparently many of our research subjects, are conversant with much of the literature of sociology, including Marxism, feminism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. Together and separately, the authors have specialized in issues of race relations and gender, social class and the labor process, critical race theory, sociology of education, critical pedagogy, and the specific literatures on cultural capital and the hidden curriculum. Previous investigations in these areas helped make visible and highlighted the categorical nature of the examples and stories offered by the graduate students.

> My transcript was an A transcript. So I just said, "No. As a matter of fact, my transcript is better than some of yours [White students]."

Intense competition for admissions, assistantships, grants, and fellowships ignite a hostile environment for students of color when they compete for scarce resources with White students. When universities implement affirmative action programs and policies in a racially hostile environment, students of color constantly find their qualifications called into question. The following account illustrates how competition between students within a racially charged environment plays out by pitting White students against students of color who are perceived as less competent:

> One [White] student put a note in a professor's mailbox with an article written in the *New York Times* by a conservative. And the argument was, "Well, these minority students are just so ill prepared for universities. That's why there's so much racial conflict because the better prepared White students have to deal with these stupid Black students and then they come in and try to ask for equality and then you give them scholarships on top of that — that's what the whole problem is." So this student in our department thought those of us [students of color] who were sitting around "bitching" for equity fell into this category.

Anne Pruitt and Paul Isaac (1985) depict ways in which White faculty maintain hostile environments through social interaction with graduate students of color. They argue that the behavior of graduate faculty helps set the tone in the department and establishes norms and values governing student interactions, describing precisely an element of the operation of the hidden curriculum:

> Often the expectations and attitudes of white faculty lead minority students to feel stigmatized. Some students feel that they would not be enrolled except for affirmative action requirements. They feel that they must continue to prove themselves. Dissertation topics that focus on minority issues are not well received. White faculty commonly characterize such interests as unworthy, an attitude that, when added to the usual environmental pressures, makes graduate school intolerable. (Pruitt & Isaac, 1985, p. 534)

Blaming the Victim and "Cooling-Out"

Early researchers explored two elements of the hidden curriculum in higher education: blaming the victim and "cooling-out" (Hearn & Olzak, 1981; Ryan, 1976; Young, 1974). Blaming the victim refers to social interactions that socialize students to define themselves as the problem, rather than exploring the structural causes for their experiences within the institution. This ideology requires students to see their experiences as unique and particularistic, rather than linked to the culture and social structure of higher education.

"Cooling-out" refers to socialization messages that encourage students to lower their expectations and to identify situations they once protested as

"normal" and unchangeable (Young, 1974). Students who have been "cooled-out" can be redirected to appropriate tracks that reflect their social and economic backgrounds. Burton R. Clark (1960) drew attention to the importance of cooling-out in higher education as a way to address the problem created in a democratic society that is caught in the "inconsistency between encouragement to achieve and the realities of limited opportunity" (p. 139). Clark (1960) argues that cooling-out is the function of moving unpromising students toward more realistic alternatives rather than having them fail. However, when this cooling-out process is applied to a diverse or working-class student body, the nontraditional student served by an open admissions policy comes to be defined as the problem. By analyzing the formal and informal structures that discourage politically committed and active students from pursuing their original research agendas, T. R. Young (1974) developed an interpretation of the cooling-out process that is linked to the development of a distant and detached professional identity. Students we interviewed reported that they were discouraged from pursuing sociology of race, conducting research involving their racial or ethnic groups, and applied or action research. The advice an advisor gave to one graduate student was not unique: "If you're interested in communities or ethnic studies, then you're going to be ghettoized and you're going to be perceived in a certain way." The metaphor of the "ghetto" underlines the incompatibility of this kind of research and the development of a professional identity and academic career.

Blaming the victim and cooling-out functions offer significant insights into the reproduction of inequality in higher education. The hidden curriculum serves the cooling-out function by inculcating a certain detachment from racism and social injustice. For example, one student explains how she began the process of cooling-out by defining unequal learning conditions as acceptable and matching her expectations to those conditions: "I haven't expected very much and I haven't gotten very much. And I have just taken it as 'that's the way it is.'" Another way of developing detachment from racism is to define the observation and naming of racism as a personal weakness — that is, as being oversensitive to the issue. As one student concluded, "If you took issue with everything that happened, you would be filing a grievance every single day. And so I thought, 'Well, who cares, it's just that I was really taking it personally.'" Acquiring "professional distance" implies becoming blind to the personal experience of inequality, as well as to larger social issues. The process encourages women of color to stop identifying their community of orientation and shift loyalties to faculty and other graduate students in the profession. Acquiring "professional distance" and developing a "professional identity" is a function of graduate school generally. However, the process impacts women of color, particularly women of color from working-class or poor backgrounds, in different ways. As previously noted, professional identity incorporates White, male, heterosexual, and

middle-class attributes and values; thus, the fewer similarities the student shares with the ideal type, the more there is at stake for that student.

Cooling-out functions of the hidden curriculum are also apparent in the women's descriptions of the higher status of theoretical work, in comparison to applied research. One woman offered a description of the process and criticized the disadvantage experienced by students with a political commitment and agenda:

> Very often women of color are interested in doing the kind of research that has some real policy implications and that's really oriented toward problem-solving issues. And at the program in [this] university it's the kind of research that's almost disdained and it's almost looked down upon. They [students of color] thought they were jeopardized and placed in a whole different category because their work wasn't understood. Whenever it had to do with race or ethnicity, then it wasn't seen as valuable or as important. People [faculty in the department] have been very kind about my little research project here, but I know that it's not the kind of thing — I mean they place a much higher value and premium on things that are purely theoretical.

Her characterization of the tension involved in pursuing applied research within her graduate program is consistent with William Mayrl and Hans Mauksch's (1987) analysis of the ASA survey that concludes, "The bulk of graduate education involves talking about sociology rather than doing sociology" (p. 17). While the cooling-out functions are not exclusive to women of color, to students of color, or to women students, the point is that the less cultural capital a student brings to the graduate setting, the more impact the process has on that student's educational experience.

Stereotyping

Our use of the term "stereotyping" is twofold. First, it refers to the social construction of groups in terms of race, class, ethnicity, age, gender, etc., and to the attribution of simplistic, often inaccurate, gross generalizations of group behavior. These stereotypes may be positive, as when Asians are seen as a "model minority," or negative, as in the perception of Blacks as less intelligent. Inaccurate and misleading images such as these are constructed in popular prejudice, trafficked in the mass media, reproduced in school texts and curricula, and purveyed by social scientists employing dubious measures of central tendency to compare one group's aptitudes and achievements to another. Our second use of stereotyping is analogous to the ecological fallacy in which aggregate measures are applied to analysis at the individual level, applying gross generalizations of group behavior to individuals. On an individual level, these group characteristics become central elements in prejudging an individual's capacity or the meaning of her/his actions.

A number of works examining the experiences of discrimination in academia have critiqued notions of professionalism and the professional role as

constructs for the analysis of class, gender, race, sexuality, and age bias (e.g., Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Barnes, 1986; Granfield, 1992; James & Farmer, 1993; Padilla & Chávez, 1995; Trask, 1993; Williams, 1991). While not focused specifically on the hidden curriculum, these critiques pose significant questions about equity in the process of professional socialization. The literature on women of color identifies two conflicts with the professional role — internalization of negative stereotypes and internalization of a norm. In the first conflict, Latina and African American women encounter students and colleagues who have internalized negative stereotypes about Latinas and African Americans. A few students described relationships with European American faculty that never developed beyond stereotypes: "My main frustrations with her [mentor] is that she just really doesn't know who I am. I mean, for someone who worked with her for so many years, it's like she has no idea who I am." For instance, a student in our study described her interaction with her mentor as limited to an ethnic, racial group category rather than including individual characteristics. Michele Foster (1991), for example, demonstrates that African American teachers encounter the results of the negative portrayal of African American women in literature and the media by having their intelligence and competency under constant scrutiny. In an earlier report on African American women in academia, Yolanda Moses (1989) points out that stereotypes and racial biases intensify when Whites feel "threats to their own sense of economic entitlement" (p. 14). The second conflict stems from professional roles that assume a race norm that is White and frequently male. Thus, in her study of African American women professionals, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes (1982) finds that professional identity is shaped and supported by a "commitment to the norms and values of the dominant [White, middle-class] society" (p. 290). Deborah Carter et al. (1987–1988) similarly find that African American women faculty confront cultural conflicts embedded in expectations and standards established by White males:

> Their personal lives extract a loyalty to their culture that is central to acceptance by family and friends. At the same time, they must struggle with their own identity as women in a society where "thinking like a woman" is still considered a questionable activity. At times, they even experience pressure to choose between their racial identity and their womanhood. (p. 98)

Haunani-Kay Trask's (1993) account of racism at the University of Hawaii highlights a conflict with the chair of her department arising from her inclusion of "sections on racism and capitalism as basic American institutions and ideologies" instead of units on the family and Christianity:

> Intellectual, political, even stylistic differences became the source of heated conflict between us. Her belief that there existed a correct way — a culturally correct way — of speaking and behaving made it clear to me how white hegemony in Hawai'i and on the campus would mean a tight constraint on *my* cultural behaviors. I was

> to start acting, as we say in Hawaiian, as *ho'ohaole*, someone who behaves like a white person. I was shocked, bemused, furious, and depressed. Very depressed. (p. 213)

As these accounts demonstrate, the hidden criteria for constructing professionalism include stereotypical attitudes, values, and expectations that may require women of color to deny their culture and to fit into a male model of behavior. One woman recalled the Puerto Rican students' discomfort with the required reading materials assigned in a department seminar because they involved the denial of their culture and the distortion of the Latino experience to fit a cultural determinist model: "We [Puerto Rican students] are not comfortable with that course. We don't like to be insulted that way." Having been assigned readings on Puerto Rican communities based on Oscar Lewis's (1965) "culture of poverty" thesis, the student found little reference to the social, political, or historical factors contributing to current levels of poverty, high school dropout rates, and unemployment.

Absence

The hardships graduate students experience due to the competitive culture of graduate school and the lack of a cooperative learning environment are intensified for women of color who are frequently isolated as the only women of color in a program or in an entering cohort. This position forces them to become the "lone voice" speaking from their standpoint — a kind of loneliness and isolation that differs from that of the "lone scholar" (Becker, 1982; Hood, 1985) or of individualism (Kleinman, 1983). The paradoxical uniqueness of being both isolated and a spokesperson for one's group is captured in the following:

> I'm like the first black African American student I guess that they've had in the past eleven years now. They do get a lot of foreign students but not Americans. In fact, as far as American minority students go, as far as I can tell there are none other than me.
>
> The first time I walked into the campus, one of the secretaries — who turned out to be a really nice person in the long run — she just kind of had this startled look, "Can I help you?" In the kind of way when somebody thinks you're going to rob them and they figure they better help you before you help yourself. She kind of looked and saw this Black woman standing there and usually the only other Black person to come to the building is the woman who sweeps the floors. I thought, "Oh boy, this is a really a good start." The second thing that shocked me was, they have these wonderful pictures lining the stairwell of every graduate since 1901. The first Black woman I saw in that lineup graduated the year I got there. So I was Black woman number two or Black woman number three. I thought, "Good god, I didn't realize it was this bad."

Many of these women had experienced being in a seminar when the topic of race arose and all eyes turned to them, the one African American in the room. Being the only woman of color in a department, seminar, or social event often carries the expectation that they can represent the voice of their

community or, in fact, speak for all women of color. The most common example students gave of this was being asked to participate on panels in the department, university, and at professional conferences. In all of these cases, they were the only one representing a specific voice.

Being the only woman of color within her environment also means rarely being able to have one's norms and values validated through interaction with faculty or other graduate students. Without the opportunity to interact with other women of color graduate students, a student lacks access to a support group that might validate her experiences as a minority female graduate student in a predominately White male institution, as this student described:

> I never see them [other women graduate students of color] and I never talk to them. They're just not around at all. I think they had such a horrible experience that they just stay off campus and come in only when necessary.

Moreover, the absence of faculty of color in Ph.D. programs, coupled with the reluctance and difficulty that White faculty have in mentoring students of color, exacerbates the situation for these students. Women of color who attempt to establish mentoring relationships with faculty of different cultures, class backgrounds, and/or genders, often find unexpected complications. One respondent noted the difficulty students of color had interacting with a faculty member whom the White students considered supportive and progressive:

> This guy is an Anglo male and he cannot even relate to me. He's a very nice person. He has tried. He cannot even talk to me and not feel uncomfortable. Every time we sit and talk he's all jumpy. He can't deal with me being different. And the only explanation I can get, you know — I'm not White. That's the only reason why — because I don't see any other. We have the same interests. I like all the things he likes, I read, I know what his field is. But, when I approach him or anything he's so uncomfortable that it makes me feel uncomfortable. I don't want to be next to him. I see my friends who are Anglo, they get along [with him]. . . . I know he is not racist. I know that it's not that. He cannot deal with me. Culturally I don't know what he thinks I come from or, I don't know, it's weird. So I think that it helps in graduate school to be White.

Another student explained:

> It would be one thing if there were no women of color on the faculty and a woman of color could still get a mentor — that's sort of one problem. But neither of these things are happening. One, there's no one who is going to mentor us and two, there are no women of color on the faculty. So the two sort of compound one another.

The underrepresentation of faculty of color, particularly women, in Ph.D. programs underscores the racial "fit." The following "inventory" of a department makes the point:

> The department has between forty and forty-five graduate students and about ten to fifteen faculty persons. It's a very conservative department. All professors are

> White men, except for about two women. Only one tenured female faculty. One junior faculty that's Black. One minority woman who is on leave and she's a junior faculty. So the power structure of the department is very male and very White and very old and very conservative.

Since the faculty in Ph.D. programs are predominately European American and male, women of color graduate students are confronted with images and role models that are unattainably different, and they are constantly reminded of those differences. The following quote from a Latina student illustrates how conscious she is of the differences between who she is and the "ideal type" represented by the faculty in the department. It also highlights the range of differences that is created by the lack of diversity among the faculty in graduate programs:

> First, I think the professors kind of feel that we are different to them. It's true. I have different ideas. I have a different language. I was involved in political things and they were not. You know, I mean we are totally different. I am a woman. I have an accent. It's totally different.

Deafening Silences

Various policies and practices establishing graduate curricula produce and reproduce knowledge while simultaneously reproducing inequality. By not incorporating the writings of scholars of color or acknowledging the importance of the study of race relations, Ph.D. programs maintain an implicit hierarchy of knowledge. Consequences of this hierarchy materially affect academic careers by limiting access to prestigious and lucrative university or research positions, publishing opportunities, and professional recognition. Hidden curricula socialize students to norms that devalue certain kinds of research questions and approaches. The most common observation that arose in the interviews was a deafening silence — the absence of race and gender in the curriculum.[16] The following discussions of course offerings reflect a common description of graduate curricula given by the women interviewed:

> There are no courses [on gender]. There's one course on the family that a woman professor has taught. After that, the courses have not been offered since she left, which was about a year and a half ago. Courses for women in particular as far as either family, women in society or women and work, there have been no courses on that. So I would say for women there have been no courses particularly geared to

[16] Of course, the lack of integration in the curriculum exists throughout higher education and is *not* exclusive to the discipline of sociology. Describing her undergraduate experience at Barnard, June Jordan (1981) expresses the plight many students of color still find today in academia: "No one ever presented me with a single Black author, poet, historian, personage, or idea, for that matter. . . . Nothing that I learned, here, lessened my feeling of pain, and confusion and bitterness as related to my origins: my street, my family, my friends. Nothing showed me how I might try to alter the political and economic realities underlying our Black condition in white America" (p. 100).

> them. For minorities on the other hand, there have been a few courses on minorities, ethnic minorities, and social stratification . . . but there are really no courses that particularly deal with minority women.
>
> We're still pretty conservative and mainstream. The department does not pay much attention to race and ethnicity and I was very frustrated in terms of their curriculum. In order to take a course on race and ethnicity I had to go outside the department to study those things. It was always a residual category or a category that didn't have any critical place [in sociology].

Even though some women were enrolled in programs that identified race or gender as areas of concentration, not one of the women reported programs that required courses that focused on these topics. Regardless of a department's claimed specialization in these areas, students found that such courses were not always available at the graduate level or were offered on an irregular basis. As one student noted, "They have some courses listed in the catalog but they just don't offer them. So when you look at it you're sort of deceived. You have to actually look at what they have been offering." Another student summed up this aspect of what might be hidden in the curriculum: "The department looks a lot better on paper than it is in reality."

Maintaining traditional sociology as *the* graduate curriculum is accomplished by not requiring courses on the sociology of race and gender and limiting the number of graduate seminars in these areas. Required courses in theory and methods are similarly silent on race and gender and are restricted to narrow sociological traditions. Students commented on their instructors' inability to incorporate the experiences of groups of color and women in their sociological analysis. They noted as well the absence of authors of color in the required readings assigned to courses:

> For example, one class I took on gender focused on theoretical issues. The readings that we did — I think there were five or six required books — and none of these books, not any sections of these books, really focused on the black female experience although it was a class in gender. . . . Another example, an aging class that I took — very little focus on race. . . . If you are looking at comparative historical or theoretical stuff and the focus is on the major social thinkers, there's not even an opportunity to bring up issues that necessarily relate to racial minorities. So there's a lot of invisibleness in the overall program.

These practices constitute a hidden curriculum that socializes students to the norms and values surrounding traditional sociology and the academic structure. The success of this socialization is apparent in one student's comparison of nongender courses as "meatier" and higher status for students seeking teaching assistantships. In her article on Black women sociologists in academia, Gloria Jones-Johnson (1988) identifies the significant norms and values embedded in the curriculum:

> Unfortunately, sexist, racist, cultural-bound and middle-class assumptions held by faculty result in the omission of the perspective of women of color, biased teaching,

> limited learning and myopia in sociological pedagogy. Sociological knowledge has assumed both a masculine and white perspective. (p. 315)

Programs that offer neither regularly scheduled graduate courses in race relations nor an integrated curriculum socialize students to a traditional perspective. The silence of race and ethnicity in the curriculum inculcates students with significant beliefs and values of what constitutes legitimate knowledge and fields to study. That which can be spoken of and made visible is legitimate, that which is invisible and "dare not speak its name" is ipso facto illegitimate. The message is that U.S. sociology (that is, sociology from a White, male, middle-class, and heterosexual perspective) is *the* legitimate form of sociology — others are either illegitimate or less valuable forms of knowledge. As one student concludes:

> I mean it was like saying that all the thinking in the world comes from Europe. People in other parts of the world don't have ideas. Your experience as a person of color isn't really reflected in what you study and what you learn.

Breaking the silence is a violation of the unspoken rules of the hidden curriculum. Several women told us that professors and other students responded to requests for more seminars on race, an integrated curriculum, and the inclusion of readings by scholars of color as uncivil behavior:

> Even amongst graduate students, it was rude to bring up the topic of racial discrimination or what to do about race or what to do about the high attrition rate. I mean, it was just — it was really irrelevant.

> There is still, on an informal basis, this sense that you're sort of being rude if you bring up race, issues of race. You know, you shouldn't be talking about these things.

> First of all, I was sticking my neck out and telling people things they didn't want to hear. I mean, I think the whole topic of race is very, very touchy. And I was told a couple weeks after I'd given the talk, in a one-to-one conversation with a White male, that basically all the White males are afraid to say anything. . . . I felt frustrated even after the fact, because I felt like, you know, I'm glad you're coming and telling me this, but that's no solution either, for you all just to decide "We're going to pout and sulk and we're not going to say anything."

Faculty and graduate students frequently respond with deafening silence to comments about race in class or they tend to avoid students who bring the topic of race into public discussions. When faculty treat students' comments on race as rude behavior, students learn that requests for an inclusive curriculum or concern about race are viewed by faculty as importunate, not professional behavior.

Exclusion

If sociology were defined as the sum of what has been published, the discipline would probably be one of the most cosmopolitan and innovative fields

in the academic world. In fact, it is this openness that attracts many students. But from the perspective of the graduate student, sociology is defined in the local venue of individual sociology courses and departments where the hidden curriculum enforces local definitions. Students who are vocal about discussing issues of equity, racism, and sexism within the department, the university, and the discipline are sanctioned by exclusion or ostracism. For instance, in the most extreme case reported, an advanced doctoral student served on a conference panel on the status of women of color in the discipline. Her advisor was in the audience and took personally critical comments the student made about the culture and social structure of graduate education in sociology. The advisor felt this was an assault on her and the department and refused to work with the student for a year, delaying the student's progress on her dissertation. Students who persistently address issues of inequality risk being labeled activists, driven out of sociology, and, in some cases, pushed into interdisciplinary programs.

Similarly, students who express an interest in studying their own ethnic community are sometimes discouraged, ridiculed, or considered poor students. As one noted:

> We were all going around introducing ourselves and saying what we were doing. So when my turn came I said my name is such and such and my dissertation is going to be on the labor force participation of Latinas in [a certain] city. And the same professor just cracked up. He said "What? Latinas? Is that sociology?"

Numerous students reported being advised not to do research on their own communities:

> One of the things the faculty told us is don't get in that field, especially if you're a Chicana scholar. Don't get into issues that deal with gender and the family because you're ghettoizing yourself. You're not going to be marketable.

The recollections of this graduate student and others who were advised not to do research on their own communities suggest, rather than demonstrate, a chilling effect of the hidden curriculum. Similarly, some sociology faculty conveyed to some students the perception that African American studies, Chicana/o studies, and the other ethnic studies programs were beyond the pale, being either an intellectual ghetto outside of the mainstream of the discipline or an actual ghetto where one would damage one's "marketability" in sociology. These quotes intimate the impact that the hidden curriculum might have on future interactions with graduate faculty. Certainly a student does not have to heed a faculty member who advises against a certain line of research; nevertheless, going against the grain in this way makes it difficult to find members to sit on your committees, to garner letters of recommendation, and sometimes to receive recognition from the department. Students adhering to the advice of the hidden curriculum help to maintain traditional sociology and the narrow boundaries of the discipline.

Thus they move into the mainstream of sociology rather than staying at the margins, living their academic lives in the ghetto.

The interviewees noted that their interests in race and gender were discouraged or stigmatized, whereas the interests of other students often received favorable responses from the faculty. One woman, told by her advisor that she risked not being considered as a serious scholar if she continued research on race and gender, pointed to the different way faculty treated a White male student who pursued research on gender and race. Such research suddenly became a legitimate area of study. This woman clearly perceived that there was a lack of consistency in the way faculty dealt with the issue of researching one's own community. As in many social interactions, her perception was informed as much by what she did not hear as by what was made explicit.

> They [faculty] were telling me that it [the study of her ethnic group] was too subjective and I should learn and do more things, be more objective and cover a broader area, and write about other people in other groups rather than just my own. But I never once have heard one of the foreign students who were doing their own country ever told that. They were doing the same thing I was doing. So it was okay for them to do it. And I really felt a little prejudice there.

Unlike White students who conducted research on White populations and communities, women of color were more likely to be treated as unable to distance themselves and maintain the appropriate professional detachment necessary to study their own communities. Students of color pursuing topics directly tied to their ethnic communities must establish a delicate balance to avoid exclusion from mainstream sociology and "banishment" to ethnic studies. Issues of "professional distance" are raised in ways that White sociologists studying White communities never experience. One woman bitterly remembers the statement of one of her committee members at the start of her oral comprehensive examination:

> "You know I finally figured out what's wrong with you . . ." And I was kind of stunned. And I said, "Oh well, what?" And he said, "You are too much like an Indian and not enough like a sociologist." Well, my jaw dropped and I was speechless. And he went on to say, ". . . and if you don't straighten up you know what's going to happen? We're not going to allow you to teach sociology. We're going to put you down in Ethnic Studies and Native American Studies or something like that for the rest of your life." Isn't this interesting, that this is my exam in race relations and this is the first question or remark that I faced.

The message is clear: to be Native American is not compatible with being a sociologist.

The tendency of some faculty to place race relations outside the boundaries of sociology serves to reproduce mainstream sociology. The hidden curriculum that many of the women encounter in their graduate programs reclassifies and marginalizes the study of race (and in some cases gender) into

domains of ethnic studies and women studies. One student concluded, "My hunch would be that my work would be much more welcomed in, say, ethnic studies or women's studies than sociology."[17] Because interdisciplinary programs like ethnic and women's studies offer only a B.A. or a master's degree, the study of race and gender is further labeled as inferior to traditional sociology.

Tracking

Like the term hidden curriculum, tracking is another concept borrowed from education research that is usually applied to the analysis of K-12 public schooling. Sometimes called ability grouping, it refers to the common practice of using test scores, school performance, and sometimes input from counselors to classify students into groups such as honors, college preparatory, general, business, or vocational tracks. Tracking is thus a critical sorting and selecting mechanism that creates differential access to higher education. Track assignment tends to be correlated with social class, race/ethnicity, and, in the case of math and science, with gender (Mortenson, 1991; Oakes, 1985). Similarly, in graduate school, the strong form of the hidden curriculum not only socializes, but also functions as a kind of tracking system providing differential access to the best research opportunities, postdoctoral fellowships, and publishing opportunities, as well as to jobs in prestigious institutions. One student's interactions with her mentor made her feel that she was being directed toward lower status occupations within the discipline:

> Personally she [the mentor] makes a lot of assumptions about me that I find insulting, like maybe I'm destined to teach at a community college instead of a university. She always is the one that takes on a woman of color as an advisee and it doesn't matter what your interests are. Our joke is that basically we're her colonized people because I mean it's like she doesn't really know who we are. But she has us and it's sort of like little badges on her shoulders that she works with students of color.

Resistance and Alternatives

While it is important to recognize the powerful nature of the hidden elements of curriculum in reproducing race, class, and gender inequality, and in reproducing a particular structure of sociology as a discipline and academic department, it is equally important to recognize and give full weight to the ability of students to resist and refuse, both individually and collectively.

[17] Ph.D. programs in ethnic studies and women's studies did not exist in the institutions that many of these women attended. Therefore, the women remained enrolled in sociology programs. They also remained committed to becoming sociologists and transforming the discipline.

Resistance theory has become an important strand of critical pedagogy, developing in part to explain why working-class students and students of color leave the education system (Everhart, 1983; Willis, 1977), and in part to provide teachers a more hopeful subject position as "cultural workers" or "transformative intellectuals" (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1988). The women we interviewed had in many respects avoided the first form of resistance.[18] Though generally from working-class backgrounds, they had persevered and reached the lofty heights of graduate school. They spoke of a number of resistance strategies that they employed to survive and to transform what they perceived as an oppressive social order. These accounts are particularly interesting because they give us a glimpse into the furnace in which critical pedagogies are forged.

The women's resistance took a number of forms. They struggled to maintain ties to their communities of origin and to keep a focus on social action, despite the powerful socialization messages to adopt "value-neutral" or "objective" social science perspectives. They challenged sociological research on their own communities. They pointed out contradictions in sociological theory and practice. They adopted paradigms, theories, and concepts from the discipline both to criticize the discipline and to analyze their own situation as citizens, as graduate students, and as scholars of color. They employed their own perspectives to refute sociological findings, departmental practices, and individual faculty interactions with students. They simultaneously developed a number of proactive resistance strategies. The women described attempts to bring in guest speakers and visiting scholars to broaden the curriculum, and they went outside the department to take classes in ethnic and women's studies to remedy perceived deficiencies in the curriculum. They fought within the department for equity in the allocation of resources, and within individual seminars for more inclusive literature.

In his article, "I Never Had a Mentor: Reflections of a Chicano Sociologist," Alfredo Mirande (1988) reflects on the irony of the graduate socialization process that required him to be detached and distant from his research and teaching interests, as well as from the commitment and motivation that led him to sociology:

> My interest in sociology was first sparked by a sociology class which I took as a junior in high school, although I was to learn, subsequently, that, like many others, I had entered sociology for all of the "wrong" reasons. My initial conception of the discipline was that it entailed the study of society with the aim of alleviating societal ills, social inequality, and racism. In graduate school, however, I learned that what I thought was sociology was social work and/or political activism, not sociology.

[18] Of course, many students of color drop out of graduate school, or leave sociology for other programs, and it would be interesting to interview them. In the current study, however, we only interviewed those who had persisted and were succeeding in sociology.

> Sociology, according to my mentors, was the detached scientific study of society; objective, value neutral, and universal. (p. 356)

The women we interviewed articulated similar linkages between political and social commitments:

> The reason I chose sociology was that after I got out of high school I worked for some social welfare organizations. One of them I worked for was a federally funded program that was called "Model Cities." I became very excited about the idea of making social and structural changes that made a difference in people's lives.

The impetus behind these women's decisions to pursue a Ph.D. in sociology often accounts for their resistance to mainstream sociology. Students who entered graduate programs with specific interests in research topics related to their communities resisted adopting distant and aloof professional roles. They manifested their resistance by challenging research and theories about communities of color that they perceived as blaming the victim. As noted earlier, one student described the reaction of the Puerto Rican graduate students to a course using Lewis's "culture of poverty" paradigm to explain the Latino community as insulting. Unlike the detached sociologist, these students were powerfully motivated by community identity and loyalty. For example, one Black woman challenged the interpretation of Black residential patterns presented in a study discussed in the seminar. Her professor argued that the researcher's false assumptions were not grounds to discredit the study:

> That's the difference between him and me. He's White and accustomed to reading things like this that White people write about Black people all the time, and he buys into these mythologies. Well I don't buy that. Because as an African American I've decided I'm going to define myself and not going to be confined by White people's definitions any more. I said, "You don't have to take this article out but at least put a disclaimer on this." He tried to say he didn't know enough about urban sociology to say that was false. I said, "I don't know enough about urban sociology to disclaim the rest of the article, but I know enough about Black people to say that the premise is false."

When students compare the literature and rhetoric on diversity with the actual practices in their departments, they notice contradictions between theory and practice. These contradictions highlight what they perceive as their own contradictory position both in the department and in the discipline. Thus, though sociology departments universally claim a commitment to issues of diversity, when students arrive they frequently perceive that "diversity" means that their physiological presence in the institution is all that is important. Their individual perspectives, community backgrounds, and analyses that shed light on issues of diversity are less valued. In a dialectical reversal, instead of applying mainstream sociological knowledge to the analysis of their community, students turned their community backgrounds into perspectives from which to criticize department practices:

> I think that there's a real lack of living up to what we say we stand for. Like we're concerned about race and gender and social class. But the everyday operation of the program, what we teach, doesn't reflect that. I think the classes that we teach should bring out the perspective of people of different races and social classes and you don't find that. I think that in putting together the course readings it should be incumbent on teachers to find that research out there, no matter how sparse it might be, that brings in the minority perspective and brings in the class perspective. I don't see that done very much.

Another form of students' resistance was the application of a sociological analysis to their own everyday experiences in graduate school. As their sociological imaginations developed, students became more aware of the social dynamics in the hidden curriculum that reproduce social inequality. Developing a critical perspective helped students identify contradictions and avoid internalizing conflict as a personal failing. In the following discussion, a student of color reflects on the privileged position held by another member of her cohort:

> I'd go home and think, you know, is it just me? Is it just that I'm really competitive? Is it just that maybe I don't have anything to say? And it wasn't until my third year when I was doing a writing seminar where we would evaluate one another's work and I actually looked at this person's work and realized, no, I wasn't all wrong. You know, a lot of what he was saying was really fluff and it wasn't rigorous. But the fact that he'd been given the floor over and over and over again had [validated him]. . . . It really pissed me off because there was this incredible irony of being in sociology and having the professor and graduate students there ignore the social dynamics of the classroom and how they were affecting us. And I felt frustrated because people who I thought should have been up in arms about it just sort of, you know, blamed themselves or talked about, you know, their own fears about being in graduate school and they didn't look at the sociological implications of what was going on in the department.

Students recognized that the field is changing and research in the area of race and gender has had an impact on the discipline. In evaluating the kind of training they were offered in the program, students identified the limitations and tried to broaden narrow definitions of traditional sociology. For instance, one woman who had first-hand experience with sociology outside the United States noted the shortcomings of a department where the emphasis was solely on quantitative and positivistic approaches:

> It's very much numbers. No critical analysis. No critical thinking. No profound analysis of matters. It was basically this is variable A, variable B — make association among them and that's it. That's not the kind of sociology I like. I went to school in [another country] and I went to a Catholic university there. And it was much more critical. And much more European also. We did study Merton and all the functionalist North American sociology; but we also studied a lot of other schools of thought. Here it was like we rarely saw something different. It was very conservative quite frankly. Very, very conservative.

Students were aware of the growing interest in race and ethnicity in disciplines outside sociology. Resistance to the dominant paradigms frequently involved taking actions to change the curriculum. One strategy was to bring in outside speakers and organize colloquia. Sometimes it was necessary to protest the spending of funds to duplicate what was already offered in the curriculum.

A common resistance strategy was to seek out and enroll in classes outside of their department where they could find the new literature and approaches to the study of race and gender: "I was very frustrated in terms of their curriculum. In order to take a course on race and ethnicity I had to go outside the department." Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and International Studies were identified as important adjuncts to Ph.D. programs in sociology. Unlike their home departments, these interdisciplinary programs were more receptive to critical theory, alternative paradigms, and social action research. They were not perceived as undercutting students' interests in race and gender.

An interesting example of someone developing creative alternatives was a student who found that the competition in the department made access to grant information difficult. She developed her own data base and made it available to other students of color in the program:

> What I did in my third or fourth year was basically to get together with some of the other minority students who were interested in this and gave them all my [grant and fellowship] files. Basically I said to them, go copy as much as you need to copy, because they were starting from like below ground zero. So I shared my information with them and basically every conference we go to that has anything with grants, I put it in their boxes. So it's kind of a one-way flow from me to them. And I've been doing that now for about three years with them. I also clip and put things in my other colleagues' mailboxes. If I think it's a grant that's for women's issues [related to particular areas] I put it in their boxes.

Several of the women advocated taking more aggressive action in demanding equity in the department, particularly in the allocation of teaching and research assistantships. Others offered incoming women of color students advice on obtaining all the assistance needed to succeed in the competitive and hostile environment of the department: "Push for a better offer. Do not just accept a department's offer but try to get what you need to survive in graduate school."

Conclusion

The consequence of the hidden curriculum in graduate school is that it reproduces mainstream or traditional sociology. As Michael Apple (1980) wrote, the reproductive function "posit(s) a mirror image relationship between the norms and values taught in school and those 'required' in the

economy" (p. 47). Clearly, reproduction by itself is an inadequate concept that allows little room for change in the discipline and ignores the students' ability to resist. As we have seen, forces external to the discipline — that is, court-ordered integration and requirements for gender equity, affirmative action legislation, and open enrollments — have brought new students and new ideas into universities and sociology departments. These newcomers chafed under the hidden curriculum, found its demands discriminatory, and rejected much of its discipline when it did not clearly relate to furthering their intellectual development or practical skills. In bringing their sociological imaginations to bear on their own experience in graduate school and seeking alternatives, their resistance helped change sociology, not just in theory and methods, but in the functioning of the hidden curriculum. In a very real sense, the women's telling of their stories, as well as our analysis and publication of them, is part of this resistance. It is a lifting of veils to make visible what was hidden.

There is much more work to be done on these issues. While it is far beyond the scope of this article, we might assert that the creation of new academic departments, including Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies, and the development of academic theories and paradigms including elements of feminism, critical race theory, and critical pedagogy, were as much resistance to the hidden curriculum in mainstream departments as they were attempts to open the official curriculum to include women and people of color and those from working-class backgrounds.

Strategies for achieving educational equity in higher education require an understanding of the barriers and obstacles presented by the hidden curriculum. The graduate students we interviewed indicate that it is essential to closely examine informal structures of control, including the treatment of race in the curriculum, the validation of paradigms deemed "appropriate" or "mainstream," intellectual support for specific ideas and perspectives, the awarding of teaching and research assistantships, mentoring, the stigmatization of students of color as "affirmative action cases," the maintenance of double standards, and the privileging of certain cultural capital and perspectives at the expense of others. Perhaps even more than academic performance, these factors stratify educational opportunities for students of color and may force these students to leave the discipline or higher education.

Given the current attacks on affirmative action programs and the continuing underrepresentation of people of color on higher education faculties, faculty of all races and genders need to recognize and root out the strong elements of the hidden curriculum in college and graduate school. If we are to preserve a diverse student body, we must help individual students survive and thrive in school. To accomplish this task, it is important to divest graduate programs of the vestiges of the inappropriate and discriminatory practices that lie hidden in the curriculum and professionalization processes.

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