

MAKING THE “GOOD” PROFESSOR: DOES GRADUATE MENTORING  
PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN ACADEMIA?

by

Anita Harker Armstrong

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Approved:

---

Christy M. Glass  
Major Professor

---

John C. Allen  
Committee Member

---

Susan E. Mannon  
Committee Member

---

Peggy Petrzela  
Committee Member

---

Ronda R. Callister  
Committee Member

---

Mark R. McLellan  
Vice President of Research and  
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

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## ABSTRACT

Making the “Good” Professor: Does Graduate Mentoring  
Promote Gender Equality in Academia?

by

Anita Harker Armstrong, Doctor of Philosophy

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Major Professor: Dr. Christy M. Glass  
Program: Sociology

Mentorship is a critical component of a graduate education and facilitates the process of socialization into the role of professorship. Numerous studies continue to support the idea that mentorship, particularly woman-to-woman mentoring, is essential for overcoming barriers to women’s mobility within male-dominated fields. This study critically examines this assumption through the analysis of 59 qualitative interviews with faculty mentors and graduate students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics conducted at one Canadian and one American institution. Initially, I explore how mothers in academe are socialized from differing levels to fit into narrowly defined roles as “good” professors. This expands our conceptualization of a motherhood penalty to include more subtle discrimination and illuminates the complexity within which motherhood is embedded in work organizations and reproduced through interaction (including mentorship). By following a comparison of the relational dynamics of women graduate students in same-gender and cross-gender

mentorships, the overwhelming conclusion is that *both* men and women as faculty mentors are capable of socializing their students in ways that have potential to transform the academic institution regarding gender equity. Still, many examples of how mentoring alternately functions to perpetuate inequities exist. Finally, a cross-national analysis allowed exploration of institutional contexts and how they influence the ways in which mentors model balance. In contexts where family leave is institutionalized (i.e. Canada), conflict between work and family life *should* be lessened. Given this assumption, we should see a distinct separation of experiences between Canadian and American academics. In reality, these boundaries are more blurred. This finding implies that despite differences in levels of support formally offered to families through policy initiatives, professional barriers experienced by academics prevent the type of substantive benefits they are meant to afford. In practice, faculty mentors remain wedded to ideal worker models rooted in the masculine work ethics of their professions regardless of institutionalized family policies, thereby perpetuating inequality through mentorship. This, in turn, prevents institutional change. In summary, this study contributes to theoretical models of gendered institutions; advances understanding of the tenacity of gender inequality in academia; and informs university policies related to mentoring practices and work-family policies.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“The results indicate mentoring was very beneficial, showing that mentees were more likely to stay in the university, received more grant income and higher level of promotion, and had better perceptions of themselves as academics” (Gardiner et al. 2007).

“I have another collaborative project with two men and me and then our students . . . there’s some interesting personality conflicts between one of my graduate students who’s a woman and one of the guy’s graduate students who’s a man. And I think a lot of it just has to do with how she asserted herself, or didn’t assert herself. And at that age it’s really hard for a female scientist to learn to project herself in a way that a man can understand, ‘cause I think sometimes men are a little . . . a little dense [laughter].” *Emily, Associate Professor in Science*<sup>1</sup>

The accounts above offer two distinct windows into the function of mentoring in academia. The first account, as cited in a recently published longitudinal study of Australian universities, clearly demonstrates the benefits of mentoring in advancing the academic career. The second account, taken from the present research study, suggests more subtle and ambiguous influences of mentoring relationships. As a mentor to a woman graduate student, Emily had the opportunity to encourage her student to challenge gender norms and men’s dominance in the academic workplace, that is, to challenge the ‘male model’ of work and self-expression. She chose not to. Instead, she excused the male graduate student’s actions and implied that it was *her* graduate student who was expected to adapt.

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<sup>1</sup> This example is drawn from a paper I currently have under review, “Instituting Change Within the Institution: Gender & the Blindness of Neutrality.”

What should we take from these two perspectives on mentoring? Does mentoring make the academic workplace more equal and friendlier to women academics? Or does mentoring simply teach women academics how to fit into the male model of work? And how do either of these possibilities advance or constrain the careers of women academics? Mentoring has historically been an integral part of the socialization process within academia. It is through extensive mentorship that graduate students learn to be professors, and this mentorship continues throughout one's career. Mentoring has also been seen as a key mechanism to advance women's position in the workplace (Gardiner et al. 2007; Hansen et al. 1995; Kram 1985). But exactly how does mentoring help women become "good" professors? And what function does mentorship actually have in an academic career? Emily's comments indicate that, in some cases, mentoring relationships are perhaps more likely to perpetuate norms within institutions than challenge them. Yet numerous studies continue to support the idea of mentorship, particularly the idea of women mentoring women.

This study will take a more nuanced approach to the value and function of mentoring by examining empirically the conditions under which mentoring transforms the gendered institution of academia or perpetuates inequalities within a decidedly masculine institution. In the following paragraphs I will outline the ways in which academe functions as a gendered institution; how mentoring can either subvert or perpetuate gender norms and inequalities within this institution; and finally, how we might examine mentoring empirically by exploring the implicit gender messages that are transmitted by mentors to mentees.

## ACADEME AS A GENDERED INSTITUTION

*“[D]espite its high aspirations and ivory towers, academe is just another workplace”*  
(Williams 2004)

Just like any other institution in society, academe reflects existing gender differences and gender inequalities, and is likewise responsible for the reproduction of them. While women are making inroads in academic life, the inequalities within academic institutions remain striking (Valian 1999; West and Curtis 2006; Williams 2003). For instance, despite an increasing number of women earning PhDs in all fields (45% in 2006), only 28% were tenured in 2006 within the disciplines of science and engineering ([nsf.gov/statistics/infbrief/nsf08308](http://nsf.gov/statistics/infbrief/nsf08308)). In addition, numerous studies have documented the wage gap between male and female faculty members, demonstrated to be as high as 14%. When controlling for education, level of experience, academic discipline, level of productivity, individual characteristics and human capital, women academics still earn less money than their male counterparts. On average, women in academia earn \$3200 less than men (Umbach 2008; see Barbazet, 1991; Barbezat, 2002; Bellas, 1993, 1994, 1997; Perna, 2001; Toutkoushian, 1998a, 1998b; Toutkoushian and Conley, 2005). Not only are women generally paid less, they typically progress through tenure at a slower rate, are employed at institutions of lower prestige, and make up the bulk of contingent positions in the university (Valian 1999; Williams 2004).

Numerous studies have grappled with the reasons behind women’s failure to achieve equality in academics (Valian 1999; Williams 2003). Scholars have argued that the American university is, in fact, based on masculine conceptualizations of work (Benschop & Brouns 2003). For example, the promotion and tenure process were

established by men and clearly advantage an ideal worker model, which many women (and men) fail to fit (Bain and Cummings 2000; Martin 1982; Williams 2001). The ideal worker model assumes that workers are supported by a partner, usually a woman, who is responsible for all domestic duties. This gendered arrangement allows workers, usually men, to devote countless hours to scholarship and pursuing tenure (Benschop and Brouns 2003). Because of its structure, tenure can be conceived of as a disciplining tool that forces men and women to submit to a hegemonic conceptualization of an ideal worker. Furthermore, as Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) point out, “biological and tenure clocks have the unfortunate tendency to tick loudly, clearly, and at the same time.”

Even off the tenure track, women are forced to negotiate a masculine work culture and structure. A recent trend in universities has been the increasing reliance upon contingent workers, a large percentage of whom are women. Michelle Webber (2008) outlines the ways in which women adjunct workers are disciplined by the corporatization of the academy. She argues that the new managerialism that dominates in this setting can be thought of as “a new form of organizational masculinity for feminist educators to negotiate” (Webber 2008, 47). As universities adopt a business model, students increasingly hold power. For example, students directly influence hiring decisions via course evaluations (Webber 2008). This arguably creates an atmosphere in which faculty – particularly faculty with less palatable messages (i.e. feminist messages) – are disproportionately vulnerable. Essentially, feminist pedagogy, scholarship, and power are undercut by the commodification of education. This unfortunately translates into a dilution of the feminist message within the increasingly corporate, and masculine, culture

of the university. This is another mechanism by which the masculinity of academe is secured.

Current research has focused on departmental climates, culture, and atmosphere to explain persistent gender inequalities in academia (Bailyn 2003; Callister 2006; Kanter 1993; Katila and Merilainen 1999; Martin 2003, 2006). For example, in a study of six women employed at multinational corporations, Patricia Yancey Martin explores how masculinities are mobilized and conflated with actual work in the workplace on a routine basis (2001). Although men are often only liminally aware of their gendered actions, the resulting consequences for women's success, well-being, and essentially, equality, are real. Women also experience a relative lack of information due to limited access to informal networks, which, over time, translates into fewer publications and feelings of isolation (Bailyn 2003; Gardiner et al. 2007). Because of this shift towards identifying some of the more interpersonal and relational aspects of organizational life that potentially contribute to gender inequality, it is understandable that mentoring might be viewed as a solution for empowering women in this context.

#### MENTORING: TRANSFORMING THE INSTITUTION?

The benefits of mentoring with respect to career trajectories are well documented (Chao 1992; Noe 1988; Ragins & Cotton 1991, 1999; Ragins et al. 2000; Viator 1999). In her mentor role theory, Kram (1985) identified two distinct overarching categories of mentor functions – psychosocial aspects and career development. Psychosocial functions include (1) acceptance and confirmation of protégés' professional identities; (2) counseling; (3) friendship; and (4) role modeling (Kram 1985). Career development

functions include: (1) sponsorship; (2) coaching; (3) extending challenging assignments; (4) protection; and (5) exposure. Potential benefits of the psychosocial set of functions may extend beyond the workplace due to the complexity and interconnectedness of life spheres. The career development aspects of mentoring are beneficial both to individual career development and to the institution insofar as individuals who experience positive results become more productive and successful in meeting institutional goals.

Mentoring in academic institutions has been shown to increase access to information, provide both personal and career satisfaction and growth, and reduce levels of stress. It has also been linked to higher rates of promotion and retention for women in academia (Chesler and Chesler 2002; Gardiner et al. 2007). Women mentoring women has been especially lauded, with the assumption that senior women are more likely to have similar experiences, understanding, and pertinent knowledge for their female protégés (Chesler and Chesler 2002; Gardiner et al. 2007; Kram 1985). This information leads to the following research expectation:

*Graduate mentoring has transformative potential because it helps students navigate masculine territories successfully; it increases the likelihood of success in academia; and allows women and other minorities the opportunity to make alliances and form crucial support groups.*

#### MENTORING: REPRODUCING INSTITUTIONAL NORMS?

The difficulties of mentoring within academia include, but are not limited to, “power struggles, exploitative relationships, professional stagnations, sexual harassment, and dependency problems” (Chandler 1996). Relationships between professors and their graduate students are complex and multifaceted. In one sense, the mentee is both an apprentice and a junior colleague. In another sense, the mentee is a low wage laborer in

support of the faculty's career. In addition to these labor issues, scholars have pointed out that minority women may in fact be limited by minority mentors, given their own limited networks and status (Chandler 1996). The burden of having to mentor based upon demographics may also be a disservice to minority mentors who are seeking their own advancement and battling their own inequities. One might argue that assuming women should mentor other women is an essentialist take on mentoring, and ignores the variation of experiences, talents, goals, and personalities of individuals. Moreover, who is to say that women who have succeeded in a highly masculine institution have the incentive, awareness, or desire to mentor in ways that might challenge the institutional norms from which they have benefitted?

In a study of 62 highly productive professor "mentors" whose current positions were generally in institutions of prestige, results revealed that by and large, mentors "overwhelmingly see their most successful protégés as those whose careers were essentially identical to their own" (Blackburn, Chapman, and Cameron 1981). The implications of this are numerous. If protégés are most successful when they emulate the career pathway of their graduate supervisor, the messages that graduate supervisors send regarding family planning, time management, and use of work-family policies will likely have great impact upon their student protégés. For example, mentors that choose not to utilize family friendly policies – or to not have families at all – may have an effect on their mentees decision to do the same, knowing that their "success" depends upon their ability to mirror their mentor's career. In this case and others, mentoring may not be transformative and may, instead, perpetuate inequalities in the academic workplace. If these conditions hold, the following research expectation will be supported:

*Graduate mentoring reproduces fairly rigid norms and rules, which in turn, perpetuates the status quo and solidifies inequalities in the academy. Graduate mentoring essentially guarantees that students, especially female students, will accommodate the masculine system and submit to it.*

In an effort to test these research expectations, I intend to explore three comparisons. First, I will compare the effects of parental status upon individuals within academe and the impact that mentoring has in terms of communicating whether parenthood fits within the realm of “good” professorship. This will be followed by a comparison of cross-gender or same-gender mentorships. Lastly, I intend to explore a cross-national comparison of university contexts in order to understand the utilization of work-family policies and how this implicates the transformative potential of mentoring.

#### OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER ONE

It is well understood in reference to gender inequalities that not only does a glass ceiling persist in the workplace (Williams 1992), but that a maternal wall (Crosby, Williams, and Biernat 2004) operates to create disparities between mothers and non-mothers (Glass 2004). Studies have documented that the pay gap between mothers and non-mothers under the age of 35 is “now larger than the wage gap between young men and women” (Crittenden 2001, 94). Significant motherhood penalties have been shown to exist not only in the United States, but in countries around the world (Benard & Correll 2010; Budig & England 2001; Correl, Benard, and Paik 2007; Glass & Fodor 2011; Harkness and Waldfogel 1999; Misra, Budig, and Moller 2007; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Williams 2001). Despite this growing area of research, very few studies have focused on motherhood penalties that operate at the more subjective level. How do



workers, in the academy in particular, learn that motherhood is incompatible with work? And how does this reproduce gender inequalities in the workplace?

This analysis seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which the motherhood penalty is understood and interpreted by women and men in the academy. Through in-depth interviews with both faculty and graduate students I seek to reveal examine how conceptualizations of the “good” professor are not only gendered, but also assume greater availability and time commitments – commodities that are in short supply for academics with children, particularly women who continue to perform the bulk of childcare and household labor (Hochschild 1989; Sutor, Mecom, and Feld 2001; Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2004). The resulting disconnect between characteristics considered necessary in order to be a “good” professor and the constraints upon academic mothers results in a motherhood penalty. This analysis does not seek to establish motherhood penalties in terms of wage gaps, but instead seeks to uncover relational, emotional, and experiential penalties experienced by mothers in academe. The negative perceptions and experiences of mothers in academia are transmitted to graduate students, such that an overarching narrative emerges about the incompatibility of motherhood and academia.

Most research on the gendered organization focuses on the institutional level, theorizing how norms are constructed and reproduced from a structural perspective (Acker 1990; Britton 2000). Likewise, the ‘leaky pipeline’ literature (see Atkin, Green, and McLaughlin 2002; Blickenstaff 2005) focuses on aggregate results. Finally, the ‘motherhood penalty’ literature (see Benard and Correll 2010) focuses on wage and hiring disparities, again at the aggregate level. None of these literatures probe the

*meaning* of motherhood in academics and the perceptions of workers as they negotiate work-family decisions and experiences. In an effort to create a more holistic picture of the experience of motherhood in academia, my approach explores the construction of gendered career norms at three distinct levels – at the peer evaluation level, at the individual subjective level, and at the graduate student level. How do peer evaluations and perceptions among colleagues help shape ideas of the (in)compatibility of parenthood and academic life? How are these evaluations internalized at the individual level? And how do these messages get conveyed to and interpreted by graduate students? In answering these questions, I hope to show how academic mothers discipline themselves to fit the disembodied, masculine norms dominant in academia and how they role model this discipline to graduate students who are being socialized into the academic culture.

## OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER TWO

“Young female managers are more ambivalent and confused about whether to, and how to, emulate senior male managers. *They frequently wish for a senior female manager who has confronted similar experiences unique to women at work, since a senior male manager acts in ways that may be inappropriate or ineffective for the female manager*” (emphasis added, Kram 1985, 34).

Implicit in this statement is the idea that ‘senior female managers’ are naturally equipped to mentor young women given their understanding of the unique experiences women at work face. But are senior female managers naturally poised to help young women navigate the gendered workplace? And do they help young women merely by teaching young women how to fit into a male model of work, thereby perpetuating the gendered workplace? These questions are applicable to cross-gender mentoring relationships, as well. But they are particularly relevant to the mentoring of young

women by senior women, who may or may not be challenging institutional norms that favor a male model of work.

In general, women appear to seek mentoring relationships with other women (Burke and McKeen 1995; Kram 1985). Many studies have documented the reasons behind same gender preferences for mentoring relationships, such as women's fears of intimacy developing with male mentors, or rumors developing of such intimacy (Kram 1985). In addition, studies have revealed that cross-gender alliances are much less likely to develop on an informal basis (Ragins and Cotton 1999; Ragins and Scandura 1994). This is problematic for women given that informal mentoring relationships are known to be considerably more beneficial. Informal mentoring relationships ultimately provide more career and psychosocial benefits to protégés than their more formal counterparts where the organization assigns a mentor (Chao 1992; Ragins and Cotton 1991, 1999; Ragins et al. 2000; Viator 1999). In formal mentoring situations the relationship rarely develops to the point that psychosocial benefits are realized and general career information is transferred. With few high-ranked women in academic science and engineering fields (Valian 1999) and few senior men willing to develop these relationships (Kram 1985), young women are much less likely to enjoy the benefits of informal mentoring.

Current literature would have us believe that if more women were in positions to serve as mentors to help younger women navigate their way to the top, the numbers of women in science would increase. But do young women really benefit from the mentoring of senior women? It is possible that women mentors might actually be detrimental to one's career. Some scholars have suggested that because women in

masculine institutions occupy a more marginalized position, the guidance and influence they provide to mentees may be limited (Chandler 1996). In addition, senior women may fail to problematize their experience as a woman in a workplace based upon a masculine model and therefore fail to role model how women might confront gender inequalities in the workplace in a transformative manner. Given these findings, one might alternately assume that because women mentors have succeeded in a masculine framework they are unlikely to mentor graduate students in ways that might challenge institutional norms. In this chapter, I compare the same-gender and cross-gender mentoring relationships to see how they compare in this regard.

#### OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER THREE

Noteworthy politicians, numerous scholars, and a large portion of the general population have looked to the adoption of work-family policies as the key to easing the tensions between responsibilities in public and private spheres (Gottfried and Reese 2004; Williams 2001; Wisensale 2004). Such policies are seen as integral in providing support to women with children as they enter and remain attached to the paid workforce at increasing rates (Wisensale 2004). In particular, the adoption and implementation of work-family policies are commonly assumed to be a vital solution for neutralizing the gender-ratio problem within academe's higher ranks (Williams 2004). Especially in the traditionally male-dominated fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), it is assumed that women will advance on par with men once work-family policies are adopted and promoted at the institutional level. Social scientist and law scholar Joan Williams (2001, 2003, 2006) has written extensively about these policies as

they relate to the academy. Among these policies are the adoption of part-time tenure track alternatives, extended paid parental leaves, flexible benefit plans, and the creation of mentoring and networking opportunities (see [www.worklifelaw.org](http://www.worklifelaw.org)).

Whether and how these policies matter, however, is dependent upon how they are translated and interpreted by individuals in the position to take advantage of them. While formal policies may be initially helpful in terms of recruitment, the heart of the question lies in whether they make substantive differences in the everyday lives of workers. Moreover, the ways in which policies are filtered and translated through faculty mentoring of graduate students will have lasting impacts upon the recruitment and training of a new generation of scholars. Role modeling as a function of graduate mentoring may be particularly important in this context.

Many doctoral students believe their relationship with their faculty supervisor to be the most important aspect of their graduate school experience (Kurtz-Costes et al. 2006; see Wilde and Schau 1991). Interestingly, a study of 62 highly productive professors whose current positions were generally in institutions of prestige revealed that faculty mentors, “overwhelmingly see their most successful protégés as those whose careers were essentially identical to their own” (Blackburn, Chapman, and Cameron 1981). The implications of this finding are numerous. If protégés are most successful when they emulate the career pathway of their graduate supervisor, the messages that graduate supervisors send regarding family planning, time management, and use of work-family policies will likely have great impact upon their student protégés. Specifically, students who foresee having children will look towards their faculty mentors for guidance in terms of the timing of such events and the acceptability of using work-family policies

available. Students will either be encouraged or dissuaded to use work-family policies depending on the perceived impacts of these decisions.

In addition to exploring how work-family policies are interpreted and conveyed by faculty mentors to graduate students, this study will analyze whether the policy context influences these interpretations. In contexts where family policies are institutionalized (as in Canada), one might expect that faculty mentors experience more flexibility in work/family arrangements, thereby providing alternative models of work to graduate students and consequently, increasing gender equality. Far behind its industrialized neighbors globally, the Family Leave and Medical Act (FMLA) was not adopted in the United States until 1993. The policy has significant differences from similar policies in other countries, most notably its lack of remuneration (Wisensale 2004). Canadians are eligible for a much more generous leave (up to a year) in which their wages are subsidized, generally through a combination of the federal government and their specific place of work. In these two distinct policy contexts, how do faculty mentors balance work and family issues? How is this balancing act communicated to students in the two countries? And what effect does this have on student's work-family aspirations? This research will explore whether mentors adopt different messages about work-family balance when policies aimed towards increasing work and family balance are institutionalized.

## METHOD

### *Data Collection*

Qualitative data is uniquely capable of offering increased insight into the nuances of relationships and interactions. Given the nature of my research questions, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews in order to illustrate the more subtle relational dynamics that occur between professor mentors and their graduate students. This method also provided the flexibility to probe for deeper understanding of personal values and experiences as needed.

Forty interviews with graduate students (20 women/20 men) and 19 interviews with tenured or tenure-track faculty (10 women/9 men) from two research institutions were conducted. While the two institutions included were based on a convenience sample, their comparison is theoretically appropriate in reference to the aims of the study. Both institutions boast research-intensive programs and student bodies greater than 25,000, indicating an active graduate student presence. Adding to the variety of experiences and perspectives, one institution was located in a large metropolitan area in Canada, the other in a relatively geographically isolated college town in the United States. They will be referred to as Canadian Public University (CPU) and American Public University (APU) throughout the study. Sampling from more than one institution allows for a greater range of experiences and increases the reliability and consistency of findings. Because a faculty sponsor was required in order to obtain approval for the study at CPU, a copy of the e-mail sent to solicit sponsorship is included in Appendix C.

Departments included in the sample were those that traditionally fit within the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics as these disciplines are

generally male-dominated and theoretically offer a more stark example of the dominance of masculine norms of work within the academy. Moreover, these departments typify the ‘gendered organization.’ Departments were matched by university and dropped out of the sample if a given department did not exist in both institutions (see Appendix E for a complete list of departments included in the study). From these departments, a sample of both students and faculty members was drawn using a random sampling procedure stratified by gender in order to achieve an equal representation of both sexes.

From April to September in 2010, potential participants were contacted via e-mail addresses obtained from university departmental pages (see Appendix C). The e-mails requested a confidential interview regarding graduate student mentoring. Follow-up e-mails were sent to non-respondents after one week. If the individual failed to respond within a reasonable time, they were dropped from the sample. The response rates are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below as they correspond to each group and each institution.

TABLE 1. Response Rates for American Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	10	4	1	56%
Men Faculty	11	5	1	50%
Women Graduate Students	17	4	3	71%
Men Graduate Students	22	8	4	56%



TABLE 2. Response Rates for Canadian Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	26	19	2	26%
Men Faculty	37	27	6	13%
Women Graduate Students	19	9	0	53%
Men Graduate Students	26	14	2	42%

To qualify as “not applicable” an individual must have either moved and considered themselves to no longer be associated with the university, were not currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship, or were travelling or conducting field work during the duration of the study. Response rates were therefore calculated from the number of individuals contacted that were deemed eligible for interviews (i.e., were currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship and were physically available for an interview). Noteworthy are the lower response rates for participants at the Canadian institution. This may be partially accounted for by the timing of the research. Interviews were solely conducted during summer months in Canada, while they were conducted at the end of spring semester and beginning of fall semester in the United States. Additionally, men at both institutions had a lower response rate in relation to women, perhaps revealing differential time management practices and prioritization of work.

In an effort to maximize confidentiality, when possible interviews were conducted in private offices. Four interviews took place in public settings and another four were

conducted over the phone in an effort to accommodate the participant. Interviews ranged from 20-90 minutes in length, with faculty interviews typically taking longer.

After completing a short demographic questionnaire, faculty interviewees were asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, their strategies for work and family life balance, whether they would consider an academic position to be family friendly, current relationships with students they advise, and to describe characteristics of their most successful students. Students were likewise asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, how they approach balance in their lives, whether their advisor has been a positive role model, when they feel is the most strategic time to start a family, and so forth (see Appendix A & B for complete list of questions included). As needed, notes including personal reflections and ideas as they emerged from the interview process were taken following interviews.

### *Data Analysis*

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and pseudonyms have been used to ensure confidentiality. Each transcript was read through a minimum of three times in an effort to increase reliability and consistency. The first reading helped establish initial general themes and a framework from which to guide subsequent readings. This exercise of open coding was followed by axial coding, which is defined by Strauss and Corbin as “[t]he process of relating categories to their subcategories” (1998, 123). Themes and subthemes were discussed and honed in relation to theoretical implications with others familiar with the project, primarily my own major professor. During the analysis stage we met weekly to discuss themes emerging from the data and possible avenues for

organization and theoretical development. Quotations were included based on their ability to capture both unique insights and illustrations of more general themes. Thick description in the form of respondent's own words and experiences were used to explore this topic and add authenticity to the work (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

This research and analysis is an attempt to understand both men and women's behavior from the standpoint of women (Harding 1991, 2004; Smith 1987). Like Martin (2001), I do not suppose that my interpretations of the ways in which interviewees speak of their experiences are necessarily the interpretations they would personally give them. They are influenced by my own position, experiences, and biases as a woman in academics. Additionally, power differentials may impede frankness in interviews with faculty members, given my identity as a graduate student, and a *female graduate student studying gender* at that. Analysis was completed largely by myself, but was also informed through conversations with other students and faculty. Our combined subjective understandings provides a removed but feminist perspective on the interactions of both men and women involved (Martin 2001; see Harding 1991).

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite the support for mentoring, there is reason to question its role as a means for increasing gender equality in the academy and in the STEM fields. It is my intent to explore the messages about work-family life that are conveyed by faculty mentors to their graduate students in order to understand how graduate students are being socialized into a particular academic work culture. Specifically, I will examine perceptions of the compatibility of motherhood and academic life, the institutional norms that are conveyed

through mentoring, and the ways in which work-family balance are modeled by faculty mentors. Using in-depth interviews with both faculty mentors and graduate students to shed light on these questions, this study will contribute to our understanding of why gender inequalities persist in academia; how universities might improve mentoring practices; how work-family policies might be better designed; and lastly, our understanding of both gender as an institution, and the institution as being gendered.

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## CHAPTER II

### CHAPTER ONE - HOW ACADEMIC MOTHERS NEGOTIATE

#### *THE TWO-BODY PROBLEM*

##### INTRODUCTION

It is well understood in reference to gender inequalities that not only does a glass ceiling persist in the workplace (Williams 1992), but a maternal wall (Crosby, Williams, and Biernat 2004) operates to increase this disparity further, specifically between mothers and non-mothers (Glass 2004). Studies have documented that the pay gap between mothers and non-mothers under the age of 35 is, “now larger than the wage gap between young men and women” (Crittenden 2001, 94). Significant motherhood penalties have been shown to exist not only in the United States, but in countries around the world (Benard and Correll 2010; Budig and England 2001; Correl, Benard, and Paik 2007; Glass and Fodor 2011; Harkness and Waldfogel 1999; Misra, Budig, and Moller 2007; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Williams 2001). Despite this growing area of research, very few studies have focused on motherhood penalties that operate at the more subjective level. How do workers learn that motherhood is incompatible with work? And how does this reproduce gender inequalities in the workplace?

This analysis seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which mothers experience bias, specifically in the academic workplace. Through in-depth interviews with both faculty and graduate students I seek to examine how conceptualizations of the “good” professor are not simply gendered, but based on greater availability and time commitments – commodities that are in short supply for academics

with children, particularly women who continue to perform the bulk of childcare and household labor (Hochschild 1989; Sutor, Mecom, and Feld 2001; Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2004). The resulting disconnect between characteristics considered necessary in order to be a “good” professor and the constraints upon academic mothers results in a motherhood penalty that is more subjective in nature.

This analysis does not seek to establish motherhood penalties in the traditional sense of the term in which gaps in wage are highlighted, but instead seeks to uncover subjective experiences of dissonance between what it means to be a good professor and a good mother. These subjective experiences, I will argue, may contribute to women’s career mobility. I explore how mentoring relationships between faculty and graduate students; interactions with colleagues; and cultural expectations internalized by subjects influence larger gender scripts that paint the “good” professor in masculine terms and on terms incompatible with motherhood.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Joan Acker (1990) is widely acknowledged as having pioneered the study of gendered organizations. It was her insight that gender is not simply a variable to be added to the study of otherwise ‘gender-neutral’ organizations, but that it in fact was a “constitutive element of social structure” (Britton 2000, 418) that sparked a decade of research in this area. The nature and definition of gendered organizations is still hotly debated among gender and organizational scholars alike (see Britton 2000; Martin and Collinson 2002). Although no reigning definition exists, what does seem to be agreed upon is the fact that organizations and the degree to which they are gendered has

profound impacts upon the experiences and mobility of men and women within them. As Cynthia Cockburn (1988, 38) argued early on, “People have a gender, which rubs off on the jobs they do. The jobs in turn have a gender character that rubs off on the people that do them.” Which comes first is not agreed upon, but it is assumed that the interaction that occurs in an organizational context between a gendered individual and a job that is likewise gendered, serves to reproduce differential patterns of experience and mobility for men and women.

Academic institutions - particularly the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) that are housed within academic institutions - provide an excellent example of gendered organizations in which inequalities are (re)produced through “images of science, scientific practice and the ideal scientist” (Brink and Stobbe 2009, 451). These particular images are, “usually associated with men and masculinity” (Brink and Stobbe 2009; see Benschop and Brouns 2003; Harding 1986; Knights and Richards 2003; Krefting 2003; Prichard 1996; Stobbe, Brink, and Duijnhoven 2004; Valian 1999; Wolffensperger 1991). Not only do males dominate numerically in the STEM disciplines, but the overriding culture and norms that prevail are based upon masculine models of work, and exude an ethos that is seen as “competitive, individualistic and monothematic, . . . requir[ing] full-time devotion” (Brink and Stobbe 2009, 452). In these contexts, women and non-traditional men experience difficulty living up to standards based upon hegemonic conceptualizations of what it means to be a “good” professor, or a “good” scientist.

Understanding how these norms and characteristics are (re)produced within organizations is imperative for uncovering how organizations might be restructured in

ways that would emphasize the importance of *both* masculine and feminine characteristics (Britton 2002). Foucault's microphysics of power are insightful in this regard. Using the model of Bentham's architectural panopticon, Foucault (1977) illustrated a haunting metaphor of institutional power and discipline. Conceptualizing the academic institution as functioning with panopticon-like elements allows us to explore how, within the university, faculty are made to feel that they are constantly under the microscope. They are perpetually under evaluation at various levels – from below (i.e. students); from above (i.e. peers, administrators, funders); and perhaps most powerfully, from within (i.e. themselves). This feeling of constant observation and evaluation - whether real or perceived – disciplines women and non-traditional men to conform to the image of the “good” scientist, which is implicitly male. By exploring how academics, especially female academics, are evaluated and disciplined according to the dictates of the “good” professor, we are able to understand how academics help reproduce the academy as a gendered organization.

Most research on the gendered organization focuses on the institutional level, theorizing how norms are constructed and reproduced from a structural perspective (Acker 1990; Britton 2000). Likewise, the ‘leaky pipeline’ literature (see Atkin, Green, and McLaughlin 2002; Blickenstaff 2005; Pell 1996) focuses on aggregate results. Finally, the “motherhood penalty” literature (see Benard and Correll 2010) focuses on wage and hiring disparities, again at the aggregate level. None of these literatures probe the *meaning* of motherhood in academics and the perceptions of workers as they negotiate work-family decisions and experiences. In an effort to create a more holistic picture of the experience of motherhood in academia, my approach explores the

construction of gendered career norms at three distinct levels – at the peer evaluation level, at the individual subjective level, and at the graduate student level. How do peer evaluations and perceptions among colleagues help shape ideas of the (in)compatibility of parenthood and academic life? How are these evaluations internalized at the individual level? And how do these messages get conveyed to and interpreted by graduate students? In answering these questions, I hope to show how academic mothers discipline themselves to fit the disembodied norms dominant in academia and how they role model this discipline to graduate students who are being socialized into the academic culture.

## METHOD

### *Data Collection*

Qualitative data is uniquely capable of offering increased insight into the nuances of relationships and interactions. Given the nature of my research questions, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews in order to illustrate the more subtle relational dynamics that occur between professor mentors and their graduate students. This method also provided the flexibility to probe for deeper understanding of personal values and experiences as needed.

Forty interviews with graduate students (20 women/20 men) and 19 interviews with tenured or tenure-track faculty (10 women/9 men) from two research institutions were conducted. While the two institutions included were based on a convenience sample, their comparison is theoretically appropriate in reference to the aims of the study. Both institutions boast research-intensive programs and student bodies greater than

25,000, indicating an active graduate student presence. Adding to the variety of experiences and perspectives, one institution was located in a large metropolitan area in Canada, the other in a relatively geographically isolated college town in the United States. They will be referred to as Canadian Public University (CPU) and American Public University (APU) throughout the study. Sampling from more than one institution allows for a greater range of experiences and increases the reliability and consistency of findings. Because a faculty sponsor was required in order to obtain approval for the study at CPU, a copy of the e-mail sent to solicit sponsorship is included in Appendix C.

Departments included in the sample were those that traditionally fit within the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics as these disciplines are generally male-dominated and theoretically offer a more stark example of the dominance of masculine norms of work within the academy. Moreover, these departments typify the 'gendered organization.' Departments were matched by university and dropped out of the sample if a given department did not exist in both institutions (see Appendix E for a complete list of departments included in the study). From these departments, a sample of both students and faculty members was drawn using a random sampling procedure stratified by gender in order to achieve an equal representation of both sexes.

From April to September in 2010, potential participants were contacted via e-mail addresses obtained from university departmental pages (see Appendix C). The e-mails requested a confidential interview regarding graduate student mentoring. Follow-up e-mails were sent to non-respondents after one week. If the individual failed to respond within a reasonable time, they were dropped from the sample. The response rates are shown in Tables 3 and 4 below as they correspond to each group and each institution.



TABLE 3. Response Rates for American Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	10	4	1	56%
Men Faculty	11	5	1	50%
Women Graduate Students	17	4	3	71%
Men Graduate Students	22	8	4	56%

TABLE 4. Response Rates for Canadian Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	26	19	2	26%
Men Faculty	37	27	6	13%
Women Graduate Students	19	9	0	53%
Men Graduate Students	26	14	2	42%

To qualify as “not applicable” an individual must have either moved and consider themselves to no longer be associated with the university, were not currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship, or were traveling or conducting field work during the duration of the study. Response rates were therefore calculated from the number of individuals contacted that were deemed eligible for interviews (i.e., were currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship and were physically available for an

interview). Noteworthy are the lower response rates for participants at the Canadian institution. This may be partially accounted for by the timing of the research. Interviews were solely conducted during summer months in Canada, while they were conducted at the end of spring semester and beginning of fall semester in the United States.

Additionally, men at both institutions had a lower response rate in relation to women, perhaps revealing differential time management practices and prioritization of work.

In an effort to maximize confidentiality, when possible interviews were conducted in private offices. Four interviews took place in public settings and another four were conducted over the phone in an effort to accommodate the participant. Interviews ranged from 20-90 minutes in length, with faculty interviews typically taking longer.

After completing a short demographic questionnaire, faculty interviewees were asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, their strategies for work and family life balance, whether they would consider an academic position to be family friendly, current relationships with students they advise, and to describe characteristics of their most successful students. Students were likewise asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, how they approach balance in their lives, whether their advisor has been a positive role model, when they feel is the most strategic time to start a family, and so forth (see Appendix A and B for complete list of questions included). As needed, notes including personal reflections and ideas as they emerged from the interview process were taken following interviews.

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understandings provide a removed but feminist perspective on the interactions of both men and women involved (Martin 2001; see Harding 1991).

### *Sample Characteristics*

Of the 59 participants, 30 were women, and 29 men. Eleven of the 40 students were in masters level programs, the remaining 29 were somewhere along the path to obtaining their PhD. Seventeen of the 40 graduate students were married, while 13 of the 19 faculty members were likewise in marital partnerships. Of the 40 graduate students interviewed, six were mothers and only one was a father. Of those who were married, the majority of their partners were either students themselves, or professionals working outside the home. The one exception was the partner of the lone father, who resided at home with the children. Of the faculty members interviewed, six of the nine men were fathers, and four of the ten women were mothers. Of all the faculty parents, only one man had a partner who stayed at home with the children. The remaining were dual-career couples. The racial make-up of the sample was relatively homogenous, with 44 identifying as white, eight as Asian, one as African, one as Hispanic/Latino, and six as “other” (see Tables 5 and 6).

## FINDINGS

### *Perceptions of Peers*

Women academics have been creatively labeled a number of names depicting their status within the profession. They have been referred to as “outsiders” (Aisenberg

TABLE 5: Sample Characteristics of Graduate Students

PSEUDONYM	GENDER OF ADVISOR	MASTERS/PHD	MARITAL STATUS	DEPENDENTS	
				0 TO 5	6 to 18
Natalie	Woman	PhD	Married	2	
Shilo	Man	PhD	Single		
Tamara	Woman	PhD	Married		
Alicia	Woman	PhD	Single		
Rachel	Man	MS	Married		2
Andrea	Man	MS	Single		
Esther	Man	MS	Single		
Margot	Man	PhD	Single		
Caroline	Woman	PhD	Single		
Hailey	Man	PhD	Single		
Jasmine	Man	MS	Married		
Lori	Man	PhD	Married		
Mindy	Man	PhD	Married		2
Terri	Woman	PhD	Single		
Sarah	Man	MS	Married		
Mariel	Woman	MS	Married	1	3
Sophie	Man	MS	Single		
Elin	Man	PhD	Single		2
Lindsay	Man	PhD	Married	1	
Alyce	Man	MS	Single		
Mark	Man	PhD	Single		
Marek	Woman	PhD	Single		
Christopher	Man	PhD	Single		
Brent	Man	PhD	Single		
Adam	Man	PhD	Married		
Calvin	Man	PhD	Married		
Reed	Man	MS	Married		
Richard	Man	MS	Married	3	
Seth	Man	PhD	Single		
Jason	Woman	MS	Single		
Kendall	Man	PhD	Married		
Neil	Man	PhD	Married		
Andrew	Man	PhD	Married		
Michael	Man	PhD	Single		
Finn	Man	PhD	Single		
Lucas	Man	PhD	Single		
James	Man	PhD	Single		
Everett	Man	PhD	Single		
Cory	Woman	PhD	Single		
Nicholas	Man	PhD	Married		

TABLE 6: Sample Characteristics of Faculty

GENDER	RANK	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	DEPENDENTS	
				0 TO 5	6 TO 18
Man	Professor	Married	Professional		
Man	Professor	Married	Professional		2
Man	Professor	Married	Professional		
Man	Associate	Married	Professional	1	
Man	Dean	Married	Professional		
Man	Professor	Divorced	--		1
Man	Administrator	Married	Professional		
Man	Professor	Divorced	--		
Man	Associate	Married	At home	2	
Woman	Associate	Single	--		
Woman	Professor	Divorced	--		
Woman	Professor	Single	--		
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional		
Woman	Associate	Married	Professional		
Woman	Assistant	Married	Professional	1	2
Woman	Dean	Married	Professional		
Woman	Associate	Single	--		
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional		
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional		1

and Harrington 1988), the “other academics” (Acker 1994), “second class citizens” (Mather 1998), and “immigrants” (Martin 2000). Considering the already marginalized status of women within academe, the additional status of being a mother adds new complications (see Ridgeway and Correll 2004). As Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) explain, there are mixed reactions towards policies that specifically support mothers in academics. In fact, some argue that policies aimed towards easing the burden on parents are at their core, unfair and, “privilege breeders at the expense of the childless” (in Armenti 2004, see Chronicle Colloquy, 2001). The animosity that arises from these feelings of inequity unquestionably impacts the perception of colleagues towards women who do have children during their academic careers.

In my discussions with faculty concerning these issues, respondents often framed the decision to have a family as a personal choice. They conceptualize the decision not only as something they *chose* to do, but they chose to do it despite knowing the costs. Their frustration seems to stem from the perception that everyone else has to make concessions in order to make that ‘choice’ more bearable. For example, a full professor who is married but childless described his feelings towards faculty with children:

My wife and I never really wanted kids and I don’t think we’ve missed them . . . And, for that reason I’m not entirely sympathetic to people who ask to be excused for academic anything, because they have a kid to look after, because from my point of view, that was a choice they made. Just like I might choose to take time off to go to the movies . . . their point of view, or the point of view that’s probably the majority point of view is that having kids is in some way socially mandatory or so desirable that all sorts of excuses and allowances have to be made for that. And as I’ve said, I’ve never wholly accepted that kind of argument . . . My objections are not so much to having, you know, there being kids. It’s when it gets to the level of *you* have to rearrange your schedule to meet mine because I have to pick up my kid after school. That’s when it starts to bug me.

Interviewer: So when it feels like you kind of have to take on extra responsibilities maybe, or be more flexible?

Well not responsibilities or even, just you know . . . the rule is that the person without the kid has to bend to the person who does have the kid because of the special status of the kid. Whereas I might have something that’s just as important to me as picking up the kid after school, but somehow that doesn’t count the same way.

Equating the choice of having children with the choice of whether to, “take time off to go to the movies,” reveals a large misunderstanding of the effort involved in rearing a family. This understatement aside, clearly there exists a frustration towards colleagues who act as their children’s primary caretaker. There is a gendered component to these sentiments since the colleagues most likely acting as primary caretakers are women. The

above account likewise illustrates the belief that the two categories – *parent* and *academic* - are mutually exclusive.

This frustration was echoed by a single, childless, associate professor. She explained her feelings in the following way:

One thing that pisses me off is that single people get stuck with a lot of the shit jobs around the department because somebody who gives you the shit jobs is, *oh well, see so-and-so has a family they need to be with*. And it's like, *well, who the hell are you to say that my personal life is not as valid as his personal life?* We all have a work life and a personal life and balancing them is very important . . . I think we need to be very open minded about what kind of personal life constitutes a personal life . . . I think a lot of people who ask about work/life balance really mean have babies and husbands and balance that with being a physicist, or whatever it is that you're supposed to be. So I think we need to be clear that personal life balance is not about family leave policies only. You know, we need to be equitable to everybody, not just people who decide to follow the biological imperative. For me it was a choice not to have kids, so . . . There's an expectation that a single person doesn't have responsibilities.

The division that 'family-friendly' policies creates between those with and without children is an unintended consequence of said policies. Such division speaks to a kind of motherhood penalty that few scholars have discussed, namely negative evaluation by peers. The possibility of negative evaluation is of major concern to those individuals considering such policies. When asked about her decision to add a year to her tenure clock after having a child, one assistant professor explained her understanding of the potential consequences:

The drawback would be, you know, you just delay your tenure and tenure is a nice thing to have. I guess another drawback would be sometimes that it might be misinterpreted by your committee and by your external reviewers. So it's like, *well what does that mean?* Does that mean that you have an extra year to do the same amount of work, or does that mean that you need to do more work you just have one more year of time before you're judged? So, and I think that that's still not clear and that's actually something that my committee is still kind of bouncing back and forth, *how is this going to be interpreted?* But in the end, it is what it is.



The perceptions of the incompatibility between motherhood and academia are clear when faculty discuss the timing of children. In response to the question of what time is the best time for women to have children in academia, Shilo explained:

If you are in academia, and especially you're hoping for a tenure track position, there isn't a better time anytime. But for that matter, I don't know, maybe graduate school is a better time. Or, the break between graduate school and the post-doctoral. Because it'll just get worse, sort of. As bad as it sounds, it does. Because I mean in physics they call it the *two-body problem*, having a baby . . . like your kid is a problem, and, like it's almost said that until you are, you know, in your late thirties, there is no question of, you know, taking a chance of conceiving, you know. So, it's just what I've heard, you know.

The fact that motherhood is referred to as being a “two-body *problem*,” is again indicative of the perceived incompatibility of playing the role of the primary caregiver *and* the “good” professor (Hochschild 1989; Williams 2000). It is a situation to be avoided, at least until well established as a serious academic, and is labeled and conceived to be problematic.

Men cannot physically, or emotionally, experience the so-called *two-body problem* in the same way as women. They are both by nature (in the sense of their inability to physically bear a child), and general social convention, more removed from their children. They are typically less involved in the day to day care of their children, even when their spouses hold positions in the paid workforce of equal or greater prestige and time commitments (Hochschild 1989). It is perhaps because of this accepted distance that men who choose (or appear to choose) to be more involved are praised, rather than condemned for their efforts. As one woman professor explained,

I slightly resent the fact that the university gives them so many brownie points for [men taking paternity leave]. They don't give the same showering of, you know, approval for women doing it. If a guy does a paternity leave it's a special thing, he must be a great guy. If a woman does it, that's because she's the mother.

This quote illustrates the frustration that women academics experience when they try to live up to current standards of ‘intensive mothering’ *and* the ‘good professor’ – both of which are extremely time-consuming endeavors that are largely viewed as incompatible with one another. To achieve simultaneous success is often perceived as being impossible. The emotional and psychological impacts of this failure to live up to either standard may result in feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and isolation for women in this context. Moreover, while women with children are expected to care for their children, fathers may experience a paternal premium for their display of fatherhood, much as the glass escalator functions to promote men within female-dominated professions (Williams 1992).

### *Mothers’ Self-Perceptions*

The tension over being a “good” professor and a “good” mother haunts women faculty who have children or consider having children. Women with children in the university internalize the norms and standards by which they believe themselves to be evaluated. This is problematic in the sense that the university is based upon a distinctly male model (Grant, Kennelly, and Ward 2000), and women appear to feel compelled to discipline themselves in ways they deem consistent with disembodied norms. This phenomenon is illustrated in the following extended account of a now nearly retired woman professor in which she shares her experience of entering motherhood as a young academic.

[My son] was born the year before I had to hand in my dossier for tenure – and the guys were pretty dinosaur-like . . . But at any rate, I was very grateful to have the job. And I didn’t want to take off time that might make them not hire another

woman who was of child bearing age and looked like might exercise that prerogative.

Interestingly, from the beginning, she felt the weight of her actions as representative of women in her field. She recognized that the way in which she coped with having a child was going to be extremely important in terms of the impact it would have upon not only her own career mobility, but upon other women seeking to enter a male-dominated discipline. In a sense, stereotypes, or more specifically, the threat of stereotypes, can be thought of as another mechanism of discipline.

Returning to the experience of this woman, we learn that her son was born on a long weekend:

. . . It was crazy. Absolutely crazy . . . But I didn't know if I could handle . . . in some sense, if I had taken [leave] I would have felt guilty for what I would be doing to other . . . women. It was, not one of my, you know, favorite times to think back on . . . I remember one time I left the building to go home for lunch because he was a little premature and he couldn't take formula. So I was *it*. So I had to lecture at 2:00 in the afternoon, and I guess I had a lab in the morning. So I went home for lunch, and I had to mark some papers too. So I dropped everything in a puddle, and I picked things up and I got half way down the block when I realized I didn't have my purse. My i.d., and money. And I said, *I have to get home to feed him, I am too tired, I will pass out if I have to walk that extra bloc . . . So I hope somebody who knows me will pick up my purse and hand it to me. . .* [laughs] I cannot now imagine being that tired. So I went home, I nursed him. I called the lab, and I said to my graduate student, *I dropped [my purse] in a puddle and I didn't go back for it, so if somebody hands in a purse please thank them, and I'm going to my 2:00 lecture . . .* Anyway, I got to that lecture. At the end of the lecture she comes down and she hands this pocket book to me and she says, *you don't deserve this!* [laughs] You know, like, *how could you be such a jerk!* But that was before she had three children [laughs] and she's apologized since! Yeah, so that was a very trying time.

Note the judgmental reaction of the graduate student who lacked understanding of the type of pressure her advisor was experiencing. She was unable to comprehend the exhaustion – until she went through it herself. This story highlights the intense

importance placed upon fulfilling the role of the professor, as well as caring for a newborn. Both entities are extremely greedy, both in competition for time and attention. Inevitably, throughout one's career, one role will take greater precedence than the other.

The difficulty women experience in prioritizing decisions of when to value work over family, or vice versa, is something women grapple with throughout their careers. As one woman full professor explains,

You know, where I see it now is my daughter. She's thirty, she's got a 15-month-old, she's a manager . . . she actually endures some of the comments that I used to have about, you know, *my child would grow up and be an absolute failure*, and you know, *why was I working?* . . . The balance issue continues to haunt my daughter, who you would think in 2010, living where there's really wonderful newborn care, and she *still* is grappling with the guilt . . . And so what I grapple with now is that I could be helping with my grandbaby. So you would have thought I would have shed all that when she was in high school, or when she was in college, or when she left, you know, and lived on her own, or when she got married. But now it's back to haunt me in a different way . . . It's probably why the species survives. At a very deep-set level, we worry most about our children . . . and as I watch her now, you know, there are times when the baby's sick and then so she and her husband are negotiating who's going to take a sick day to be at home with the baby. And they do it all beautifully. I shouldn't worry about this at all. But I'm just sharing with you at a deep level, I am still grappling with this personal life and professional life balance.

The cultural role of the father as a breadwinner again distances men from the guilt that a mother experiences (Wall and Arnold 2007). And the guilt that a mother experiences, at least for some, is a wound that never heals. This professor, now late in her career, reveals that these feelings have resurfaced and continue to plague her. And despite the fact that she knows her daughter has access to good child care, has a supportive husband, and is 'handling it all beautifully', she still feels burdened by her inability to live up to what she perceives to be a "good" mother or, in this case, grandmother. But to move, and leave

behind a career that she has spent years building, in which she now serves in a high-status position, would be damaging to her identity as an academic.

It is not simply guilt that mostly mothers endure as a result of their work commitments, but the charade of making invisible one's family commitments. Another woman academic with children shared this story:

As one woman once said many years ago, she was in a masters or PhD exam, and a guy said, *well, we have to finish this up because I have to go and pick up my kids from daycare.* And she said, you know, if a *woman* had said that . . . And the exact thing happened to me. I was – somebody had came an hour late, so the thing was supposed to end from 3 to 5, and now it was going to go to 6, and I had a kid I had to pick up in daycare. And I begged for a moment so I told the daycare I'm going to get there as soon as possible, I'm in this exam, you know. It never would have dawned on me to say we've got to finish this because I have to pick up my kid because I didn't want the stigma of *oh yeah, these women, you can never rely on them to do the job a man would do.* So, it plays, and I wonder now if I could adjust to the current reality. You know, that it's perfectly okay for people to say I have family responsibilities.

Here, it is useful to recall Foucault's microphysics of power. Women academics with children come to discipline themselves against these real or perceived standards. This woman admits that she wonders whether she could let go of the deeply entrenched double standards experienced as a younger professor. She disciplined, and continues to discipline herself in accordance with what she believes to be the standards of being a "good professor." This is problematic in the sense that it makes invisible the constraints and responsibilities that pattern the lives of women with children in academics. Moreover, it perpetuates a culture of silence. The effect this has had on her personal life is unknown, but likely significant. This also illustrates the tendency for individuals to relegate the tensions between motherhood and work as individual problems rather than issues to be dealt with at the institutional level.

Another woman, an assistant professor with three children who recently turned in her tenure portfolio, illustrates the frustrating ambiguity of work norms and so-called “flexibility” within academic careers:

The last couple summers I think I’ve probably taken advantage of [the fact that I have a nine-month position] and I feel like, oh, I can just work at home, you know, three days a week, and I’ll come in two days a week, and that seems to be acceptable. But that’s another area where things are fuzzy. And I don’t think there’s any, at least, I can’t find any hard and fast rules . . . you know, like I know my department head works in the summer and when I’m here I see him in the halls and wandering around and you know, my colleagues the same thing. So if you’re *never here*, your office is always dark, you kind of fall out of the loop, and your department head starts wondering [laughs] where you are, are you being productive . . .

Despite the advantages of flexible work in an academic career, the nagging feeling that one’s absence is noticed, questioned, and remembered creates unease for women who are already outside the boundaries of the image of the ideal worker.

As a final note, the response of a single associate professor without children lends insight into the ways in which adherence to perceived norms and standards significantly pattern the life decisions and discipline the behavior of academic women. In response to a question regarding whether she has been able to achieve a satisfactory level of balance between her work and personal life, this professor explained:

Slightly touchy subject. Although I’m not upset about being asked, it’s just, many women who go into male dominated disciplines end up not having a family. If I think of all of the women who are my age, or older or younger, we have far fewer children and spouses than an average woman in the population. And so, for my case, I decided I didn’t want entanglements at various times. I wanted to follow the physics. And it’s not even because I had a great ambition or anything, I just was, you know, intensely, intensely curious about physics and, you know, what might be coming next, and you know, so it sounded really exciting, and hmmm follow that, okay, and what? I got a post doc offer at Princeton?! Shit! Okay, I better go then, eh? You know? So I think I kind of discounted the importance of that. And I think that’s a myth that a lot of women of my age group in particular . . . we’re fed a bill of sale that sort of says that when you know, you’re a woman,

you can roar, you can do anything, and you should do everything! So there's this expectation on us that we should, you know, be financially independent and have our own careers, and of course if you possibly can, fit in being a partner and a mother, and you know, a caregiver to whoever, and so forth.

While it is unclear whether this woman regrets not having children during her career, what is clear is her assumption that the two are incompatible. She would not be the caliber of scientist she desired to be had she done so. Whether this is true or not, she behaved in a manner consistent with her perceptions of the incompatibility of motherhood and career success. She avoided "entanglements" that would deter her from career success. She is frustrated by the "bill of sale" fed to women, that they can do it all. This idea, from her perspective, is mythical.

#### *Student Perceptions of Professors*

Graduate students were quick to establish the traits of a "good" professor and mentor. Among the most often cited characteristics were those associated with being involved, available, interested, and engaged. For example, Marek describes the ideal professor in the following way:

He would be available most of the time. I can find him. And the way he works with me, his guiding me is basically for me to get benefit, not for him to get the benefit. What else? He could be more like a big brother or big sister to me, yeah, just a professional. First he needs to be professional, but treat me like if I'm his little brother.

Not only is availability of time of high importance, but Marek describes a desire for something more than a professional relationship. He is quick to point out that being "professional" is key, but to be treated as "a little brother" is ideal. This implies a somewhat delicate balance – one that in my discussions with professors was described as difficult to maintain. A working relationship that denotes familial ties implies a nurturing

role on the part of the elder brother or sister (aka professor). Noteworthy is the fact that while Marek currently works with a *woman* professor, his description of the ‘ideal’ professor is *primarily* in the masculine form. This could be indicative of the overwhelming masculinity of the discipline in which he works (in his case, engineering), where it may seem natural to speak in masculine terms. Furthermore, this language could reflect unrecognized biases held by the student in the sense that if a professor meets these expectations, they are also most likely to be a man.

Margot echoes the sentiment that time and availability are important. She explains the ideal professor as, “[s]omeone who’s willing to be there to talk to students and doesn’t treat his students as if they’re, you know, a time suck.” Christopher quantified the time component by explaining that a good professor is “there to contact them when you need. Within three or four hours of emailing, getting something back, that’s *really* good contact.”

Time and availability of professors seems to be an issue across the board. When students lack this element in their relationship, there is discontent. Everett, who had expressed dissatisfaction with his experience in graduate school, explained that,

[To be a good professor] means you should not ignore your student, I think that’s really important. So you have to be attentive, meet regularly. I think, I mean, I think it depends a lot on who the student is, you know? [pause] I like someone who will meet regularly.

Generally, students understood that professors’ time is limited. Professors who are perceived to be accessible despite their busy schedules are therefore likely to be evaluated in more favorable terms by their students. Calvin, a first year student describes his relationship with his professor:



He's the department head, and so I've always had a lot of respect for him. [H]e's somewhat reserved and so you're not always sure what's going on in his head . . . I know he's very approachable, and I can go to him at any time, but I also know how busy he is, so I don't want to take up his time for trivial matters . . . Generally, I wait and let four or five things, four or five questions that I need before I go and talk to him to make it worth his time.

Calvin clearly shows consideration of his professor's time, acknowledging the constraints of his role and the pressures of administrative duties on top of that. He still feels that his professor is accessible, but is careful not to waste this time. In fact, he conceptualizes meetings as taking up his *professor's* time, negating his *own* time in the process. In this sense, Calvin reveals his deep respect for his professor and his role in the university, as well as his own subordinate status.

Women, and specifically women with children, are less likely to be in administrative positions within the university (Perna 2001; Xie and Shauman 2003). Women with children are also more likely to be the primary caregivers (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2004). Their time is limited by duties that are often less venerated than those competing for men's time (e.g. administrative responsibilities). So, while men are often admired or praised for their responsibilities that take time away from students, women who are mothers find a more complicated reaction and evaluation of their ability to fulfill the role of a "good" professor. For example, Cory shares his frustration of working with a professor whose availability and commitment has drastically shifted throughout his graduate career. His professor was eight months pregnant with her second child at the time of our interview. He explains,

When she first started here, before she got married and started a family, she was very readily accessible for communication. And nowadays she obviously has much less time to devote. Which is totally understandable, though at the same time sometimes I feel, and this is an opinion that I've kind of got from other

students in her lab too, is she seems to be kind of a *have-her-cake-and-eat-it-too* sort of approach where she's trying to devote more and more time to her home life while also expanding the research lab beyond even what she had been supervising before she was doing, you know, building a family and dealing with a homestead and what not. So communication, so the amount of time she can devote to any one student has definitely dropped a fair bit . . . the amount and type of feedback has definitely evolved in the last couple of years as her, you know, personal situation has changed, so. I almost, like I - from some aspects I feel bad complaining about it. But from a selfish point of view, I am, like, *this is my communication time*. I need that . . . so it gets frustrating.

Cory describes his professor as being initially very responsive and accessible. Perhaps this perception is heightened by the current circumstances he now finds himself in. Were his professor to already have children at the time he began working with her, he likely would not see such an exaggerated change in her availability as she would have already established a schedule that incorporated her child care responsibilities. Indeed, his perceptions may differ from those of incoming students who did not experience the earlier-and-more-attentive version of his professor. While his professor unquestionably has less time to devote to him, it is the meaning that is placed upon this change and the resulting evaluation of his professor that matters. Cory is quick to admit that her lack of time is understandable, but only to a degree. He attributes her lack of time to personal choices that are in conflict with one another – growing a family while simultaneously expanding her lab and her research. These efforts would not be viewed as contradictory for men professors with children, given the assumption that men can be fathers *and* workers. Cory does not seem to acknowledge that his professor's attempts to expand her lab are completely in line with her career expectations, which are to secure tenure and establish herself as a researcher (Grant, Kennelly, and Ward 2000). She is instead judged negatively for trying to “have-her-cake-and-eat-it-too” – a message that highlights the

masculinity of this career and the incompatibility of motherhood and academic career success (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2004).

A somewhat similar sentiment was expressed by Tamara. Her advisor had been on maternity leave<sup>2</sup> for the past few months at the time of our interview. In response to a question about how she personally planned to negotiate her relationships with students at a future point in her career when she started a family of her own, she explained,

I would probably try to *not* have a graduate student at that time, if at all possible . . . just because it *has* been very independent and very low contact . . . and I don't think it would be very fair to just be out of contact with them. Like, I knew this was coming, she did talk to me before I started my PhD saying, *I am pregnant*. I'm going to be on maternity leave, making sure I was okay with it. Additionally she did make sure that the rest of my committee was aware that she was going on maternity leave and asked them to kind of step in if needed to help me out where I needed, and I also did plan to take courses while she was on maternity leave because I knew that that was something that I could do with less influence from her. So, if I were to be in the same position I would probably take similar steps if I did have a graduate student, or I'd try and avoid it if possible. So, but, I guess it's something you just have to deal with if the time comes and the time is right, so.

While both Cory and Tamara are supportive of their professors in theory, they each believe that they would do things differently (and better), were they in the same situation. Although they recognize to a degree the constraints of a professor's role and express formal recognition of the familial responsibilities of their professors, they still feel personally burdened by their limited interactions. This backhanded support and ambivalence results in a relatively strained relationship. How this cumulatively affects women faculty's position and evaluation by graduate students warrants further investigation. There is reason to believe that the effects may be substantial. Considering

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<sup>2</sup> At the institution Tamara attended, professors and graduate students were able to take up to one year of maternity leave as requested.

that graduate students often view their relationship with their faculty supervisor as being the most important aspect of their graduate career (Kurtz-Costes, Helmke, and Ulkū-Steiner 2006-Costes et al. 2006, see Wilde and Schau 1991), students may avoid entering mentoring relationships with individuals whom they may perceive as being limited in terms of accessibility and support. Mothers in academia, particularly those who appear to prioritize their families, may be publicly supported but perhaps overlooked by students seeking supervisors. This is problematic in that graduate students are an integral component for advancing one's research agenda, in addition to establishing oneself as a serious professor.

## CONCLUSIONS

This analysis seeks to delineate how motherhood penalties are reproduced within gendered organizations – from above, from below and from within. Mothers in academe are disciplined on each of these levels. The definition of what it means to be a “good” professor and a “good” mother are constructed at all levels as more or less incompatible.

At the peer level, frustration towards colleagues whose family responsibilities cut into their professional time was expressed. The lack of formal validation for alternative life paths (i.e. ones that do not include children) caused some professors to begrudge the policy efforts aimed at alleviating parental burdens. Tellingly, the very act of having a child was referred to in some circles as being a *two-body problem*. This reference reveals a hostility towards and general sense of incompatibility between motherhood and academic career success.

From the subjective level, mothers in academia grapple with the tensions of this perceived incompatibility throughout their careers. Because they perceive the standards of the academic career to be in conflict with those of mothers, they discipline themselves in ways that are most in line with those disembodied norms. This serves to silence the lives of academic mothers, whose reality is haunted by ambiguity, unrealized potential (both within and outside the home), and a sense of loss.

Finally, from below we see that a tension exists between students who understand to a degree that professors with children have limits on their time, yet feel frustrated by their lack of availability. This frustration appears to be heightened for students who enjoyed greater accessibility to their professors prior to the birth of their children. Indeed, availability and interest in their work are among the most prized qualities of a supervising professor, and when they are lacking, professors are seen in less positive light. Professors that lack time due to administrative or other work-related responsibilities are generally forgiven. Men are more likely in these situations. The reaction is more complicated for professors whose responsibilities extend outside the workplace, and into the home. Women are more likely in these situations. In this situation, a superficial level of support and understanding is offered towards women professors with children, but a private frustration and dissatisfaction with the supervisory relationship is expressed.

From this analysis we can see the multiple levels at which mothers in academia are penalized in a more subjective sense. This is a significant contribution considering the dominant trend within the “motherhood penalty” literature is to use aggregate-level analyses to highlight wage disparities. This research expands our conceptualization of a motherhood penalty to include more subtle discrimination, and illuminates the

complexity within which motherhood is embedded in work organizations and reproduced through interaction. The sense of constant observation and evaluation from multiple levels unquestionably has consequential effects upon behavior. By exploring the subjective experience of individuals, we are able to better understand the mechanisms by which gendered organizations are internalized and reproduced. We also see how the disciplining process begins from a very early stage in the academic career. Because graduate students are in the position to observe motherhood penalties experienced by women faculty, these observations understandably influence their own work-family decisions.

Future research may explore whether a fatherhood premium exists in relation to a motherhood penalty within academia. Additionally, a comparison between departments with higher proportions of women faculty and departments with large proportions of men (as in this study) would be of interest, specifically in parsing out whether this is a university-wide phenomenon, or specific to more masculine disciplines. Incorporating an analysis of race and sexuality into the experience of academic women with children would additionally provide a compelling story of how the *two-body problem* is negotiated.

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## CHAPTER III

## CHAPTER TWO - MAKING THE “GOOD” PROFESSOR: DOES GRADUATE

## MENTORING PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN ACADEMIA?

“The results indicate mentoring was very beneficial, showing that mentees were more likely to stay in the university, received more grant income and higher level of promotion, and had better perceptions of themselves as academics” (Gardiner et al. 2007).

“I have another collaborative project with two men and me and then our students . . . there’s some interesting personality conflicts between one of my graduate students who’s a woman and one of the guy’s graduate students who’s a man. And I think a lot of it just has to do with how she asserted herself, or didn’t assert herself. And at that age it’s really hard for a female scientist to learn to project herself in a way that a man can understand, ‘cause I think sometimes men are a little . . . a little dense [laughter].” *Emily, Associate Professor in Science*<sup>3</sup>

The accounts above offer varying examples of the function of mentoring in academia. The first clearly demonstrates its benefits, as cited in a recently published longitudinal study of Australian universities. The second offers one particular professor’s implied perceptions of the role of mentorship. As a mentor to a woman graduate student, Emily had the opportunity to encourage her student to challenge gender norms and men’s dominance, or in other words, to challenge the “male model” of work and self-expression. She chose not to. The male graduate student’s actions were instead excused. It was *her* graduate student who was expected to adapt. According to Emily’s observations, the male graduate student’s behavior was a result of some essential male “denseness.” It appears that through the years Emily has learned there is a certain role she

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<sup>3</sup> This example is drawn from a paper I currently have under review, “Instituting Change Within the Institution: Gender & the Blindness of Neutrality.”

must fill at the interpersonal level in order to successfully be a woman scientist – a fine balance between retaining her womanhood and otherwise functioning not unlike a rational, heterosexual man (see Benschop and Brouns 2003). This learning is in turn projected onto her students, contributing to a cycle that teaches women how to behave properly in the scientific context of which they remain minorities.

In organizational literature, mentoring is the key mechanism put forth by countless scholars as a means for increasing gender equity in the workplace (Gardiner et al. 2007; Hansen et al. 1995; Kram 1985). Mentoring has historically been an integral part of the socialization process within academia. It is through extensive mentorship that graduate students learn to be professors, and this mentorship continues throughout one's career. Still, the ways in which mentorship impacts an individual's early *academic* career are unclear. Moreover, the influence and power mentorship has regarding issues of gender equity within academe is not well understood.

It is not simply mentoring that is considered vital to the advancement of women in the academy, and in male-dominated disciplines in particular, it is mentoring by senior women in the academy. Current literature would have us believe that if more women were in positions to serve as mentors to help younger women navigate their way to the top, the numbers of women in science would increase. But do young women really benefit from the mentoring of senior women? It is possible that women mentors might actually be detrimental to one's career. Some scholars have suggested that because women in masculine institutions occupy a more marginalized position, the guidance and influence they provide to mentees may be limited (Chandler 1996). In addition, senior women may fail to problematize their experience as a woman in a workplace based upon

a masculine model and therefore fail to role model how women might confront gender inequalities in the workplace in a transformative manner. Given these findings, one might alternately assume that because women mentors have succeeded in a masculine framework they are unlikely to mentor graduate students in ways that might challenge institutional norms. In this chapter, I compare the same-gender and cross-gender mentoring relationships to see how they compare in this regard.

In this article I compare the experiences of women graduate students and their faculty mentors in same-gender and cross-gender relationships. Again, the literature does suggest that more women are needed as mentors for younger women. Emily's comments indicate that in some cases mentoring relationships are more likely to perpetuate norms within institutions than challenge them. Yet numerous studies, as the excerpt above illustrates, continue to support the idea of mentorship, and particularly call for an importance of women mentoring women (Burke and McKeen 1995; Chesler and Chesler 2002; Horn 1994; Gardiner et al. 2007; Kram 1985; Ragins and Cotton 1991). This study will challenge the taken for granted assumption that mentoring – especially women mentoring women – is a mechanism for overcoming inequalities in the academic institution. In the following paragraphs I will outline the ways in which academe functions as a gendered institution; how mentoring may challenge or reinforce gender norms in the institution; and how we might examine mentoring empirically by exploring the implicit gender messages that are transmitted by mentors to mentees.

## ACADEME AS A GENDERED INSTITUTION

*“[D]espite its high aspirations and ivory towers, academe is just another workplace”* (Williams 2004).

Just like any other institution in society, academe reflects existing gender differences and gender inequalities. While women are making inroads in many arenas of social life, the inequalities within academic institutions remain striking (Valian 1999; West and Curtis 2006; Williams and Segal 2003). For instance, despite an increasing number of women earning PhDs in science and engineering, there remain only 12.5% at the higher levels of tenure (Lawler 1999). At doctoral granting institutions, only 25% of full professors are women when accounting for all disciplines (Davis 2001). In addition, numerous studies have documented the wage gap between faculty members, demonstrated to be as high as 14% when controlling for discipline and type of institution. When controlling for education, level of experience, academic discipline, level of productivity, individual characteristics and human capital, women still earn less money than their male counterparts (Umbach 2008). On average, this translates to a 4% difference between salaries, or women earning \$3200 less than men (Umbach 2008; see Barbazet 1991, 2002; Bellas 1993, 1994, 1997; Perna 2001; Toutkoushian 1998a, 1998b; Toutkoushian and Conley, 2005). Not only are women generally paid less, but they typically progress through tenure at a slower rate, are employed at institutions of less prestige, and make up the bulk of contingent positions in the university (Valian 1999; Williams 2004).

Numerous studies have grappled with the reasons behind women's failure to achieve equality in academics (Valian 1999; Williams and Segal 2003). Scholars have argued that the American university is, in fact, based on masculine conceptualizations of work (Benschop and Brouns 2003). For example, the promotion and tenure process were established by men and clearly advantage an ideal worker model, which many women (and men) fail to fit (Bain and Cummings 2000; Martin 1982; Williams 2000). The ideal worker model assumes a given individual is supported by a partner that is responsible for all domestic duties. This arrangement provides countless hours for which the requirements of tenure might be pursued by the ideal worker (Benschop and Brouns 2003). Because of its restraints, tenure can be conceived of as a disciplining tool that forces men and women to submit to a hegemonic conceptualization of an ideal worker.

A more recent trend in universities has been the increasing reliance upon contingent workers, a large percentage of which are women. In fact, women are 15% more likely than men to hold contingent positions (Touchton, Musil and Campbell 2008). Michelle Webber (2008) has identified the problem with this increasing percentage of contingent workers, specifically within Women's Studies program at a Canadian university. Webber outlines the ways in which workers are disciplined by the corporatization of the academy. She argues that the new managerialism that dominates in this setting can be thought of as "a new form of organizational masculinity for feminist educators to negotiate" (Webber 2008, 47). As universities adopt this business model, students increasingly hold power. For example, students directly influence merit and promotion decisions via course evaluations (Webber 2008). This arguably creates an atmosphere in which faculty – particularly faculty with less palatable messages (i.e.



feminist messages) – are disproportionately vulnerable. Essentially, feminist pedagogy, scholarship, and power are undercut by the commodification of education. This unfortunately translates into a dilution of the feminist message within the increasingly corporate, and masculine, culture of the university. This is another mechanism by which the masculinity of academe is secured.

Current research in this area has moved towards a focus on some of the more intangible aspects of organizational life to explain these inequalities. For example, scholars have looked at departmental climates, culture, and atmosphere for answers regarding why these gender inequalities continue to persist (Bailyn 2003; Callister 2006; Kanter 1993; Katila and Meriläinen 1999; Martin 2003, 2006). In a study of six women employed at multinational corporations, Patricia Yancey Martin explores how masculinities are mobilized and conflated with actual work in the workplace on a routine basis (2001). Although men are often only liminally aware of their gendered actions, the resulting consequences for women's success, well-being, and essentially, equity, are real. Women also experience a relative lack of information due to limited access to informal networks which over time, is reflected in fewer publications, but also promotes feelings of isolation (Bailyn 2003; Gardiner et al. 2007).

Because of this shift towards identifying some of the more interpersonal and relational aspects of organizational life that potentially contribute to gender inequality, it is understandable that mentoring might be looked to as a solution for empowering women in this context. After all, women are believed to be more “grounded in relationships” in terms of their learning and development (Gibson 1999), and tend to feel more comfortable in relationships with mentors of the same gender (Burke and McKeen 1995).

From this knowledge we might assume that the potential benefits of mentoring upon women's career trajectories may in fact be greater than men's (Gibson 1999).

#### MENTORING: TRANSFORMING THE INSTITUTION?

The benefits of mentoring upon career trajectories are well documented (Chao, Walz, and Gardiner 1992; Noe 1988; Ragins and Cotton 1991, 1999; Ragins, Cotton, and Miller. 2000; Viator 1999). In her mentor role theory, Kram (1985) identified two distinct overarching categories of mentor functions – psychosocial aspects and career development. Psychosocial functions include (1) acceptance and confirmation of protégés' professional identities; (2) counseling; (3) friendship; and (4) role modeling (Kram 1985). Career development functions include: (1) sponsorship; (2) coaching; (3) extending challenging assignments; (4) protection; and (5) exposure. Potential benefits of the psychosocial set of functions may extend beyond the workplace due to the complexity and interconnectedness of life spheres, recognizing that the realization of said benefits is dependent upon a high quality mentoring relationship. The career development aspects of mentoring are beneficial both to individual career development as well as to the institution when those individuals who experience positive results become more productive and successful in meeting institutional goals.

More specifically, mentoring in academic institutions has been shown to increase access to information, provide both personal and career satisfaction and growth, stress reduction, and has also been linked to higher rates of promotion and retention for women (Chesler and Chesler 2002; Gardiner et al. 2007). Women mentoring women has been especially advocated for, with the assumption that senior women are more likely to have

similar experiences, understanding, and pertinent knowledge for their female protégés in relation to men who have not dealt with uniquely feminine problems in the workplace (Chesler and Chesler 2002; Gardiner et al. 2007; Kram 1985). In general, women appear to seek mentoring relationships with other women. Many studies have documented the reasons behind same gender preferences for mentoring relationships. Reasons ranged from fears of rumors of or genuine intimacy developing; patriarchal and protective relationships that would inhibit growth; and lack of adequate role modeling potential due to a masculine experience of work (Burke and McKeen 1995; Kram 1985).

In a recent study, Jennifer Boisvert (2010) presents the experiences of three faculty members (including one man) who are self-proclaimed feminist mentors. This approach to mentorship is characterized by efforts aimed towards, “helping mentees to question power, become empowered, engaged in social activism, and committed to demonstrating revolutionary feminism by embodying ‘the personal with the political’ tenet” (82). It should be noted that these are stated goals of a specific group of faculty, and are not part of the general population’s approach to mentoring. Still, this study seeks to find elements of feminist mentoring in the relationships of participants as an indicator of their transformative potential.

This information leads to the following research expectations:

*1a. Women mentors are preferable for women mentees because they are more likely to exhibit appropriate role modeling given their similarities in work and life experiences. They are more attuned to the difficulties and tensions that exist for women in academics, and having succeeded themselves, are equipped to provide pertinent advice for overcoming and challenging institutional norms based on masculine models of work.*

*1b. Alternately, men as mentors have more flexibility and power to promote change within academe because of their privileged position within the institution.*

*Therefore, men who recognize and are sympathetic to gender inequities are well positioned and also likely to instigate change through transformative mentoring practices.*

#### MENTORING: REPRODUCING INSTITUTIONAL NORMS?

On the other hand, the function of mentoring is not necessarily transformative and may, under certain conditions, instead be a form of labor control and socialization to masculine norms. By and large, discussion of mentorship fails to acknowledge the managerial aspects embedded in professor-student relationships, which may partially account for the fact that mentoring may in some instances lack transformative power. As graduate mentors, faculty experience conflicting roles. Relationships between professors and their graduate students are complex and multifaceted. In one sense, the mentee is both an apprentice and a junior colleague. In another sense, the mentee is a low wage laborer in support of the faculty's career. Again, this calls into question the function of mentorship in academics. Is the type of mentoring that occurs between faculty and students more of a disciplinary tool, in which the student is taught how to be a "good" professor?

This may in fact be the case. In a study of 62 highly productive professor "mentors" whose current positions were generally in institutions of prestige, results of a survey revealed that by and large, mentors "overwhelmingly see their most successful protégés as those whose careers were essentially identical to their own" (Blackburn, Chapman, and Cameron 1981). The implications of this are numerous. Firstly, women are less likely to have careers that mirror men - specifically women with children - due to their additional responsibilities in the home (Jacobs and Winslow 2004; Sutor, Mecom

and Feld 2001; Webber 2008). Thus, they are less likely to be viewed as ‘successful’ by mentors. This presents another limitation to cross-gender mentoring relationships, which is problematic in that the number of women mentors in fields that are largely male-dominated is minimal. Furthermore, mentors that choose not to utilize family friendly policies – whatever their availability may be – will likely have an effect on their mentees decision to do the same, knowing that their “success” depends upon their ability to mirror their mentors career.

The difficulties of mentoring within academia include, but are not limited to, “power struggles, exploitative relationships, professional stagnations, sexual harassment, and dependency problems” (Chandler 1996). Scholars have additionally pointed out that minority women may in fact be limited by minority mentors, given their own limited networks and status (Chandler 1996; Mcguire 2002). The burden of having to mentor based upon demographics may also be a disservice to minority mentors who are seeking their own advancement and battling their own inequities. One might argue that assuming women should mentor other women is an essentialist take on mentoring, and ignores the variation of experiences, talents, goals, and personalities of individuals. Moreover, who is to say that women who have succeeded in a highly masculine institution have the incentive, awareness, or desire to mentor in ways that might challenge the institutional norms from which they have benefitted?

If these reasons are correct, the following research expectations will be supported:

*2a. Women mentors who have succeeded in a masculine framework are unlikely to mentor graduate students in ways that might potentially challenge institutional norms. While they may recognize gender inequity on some level, they are unlikely to engage in mentoring styles that question the system in which they personally experience ‘success.’*

*2b. Additionally, men as mentors are incapable of fully relating to the experience of women in academia, resulting in relationships that adhere to prevailing masculine norms. In these relationships, perceived gender differences are too great to overcome, with reduced levels of psychosocial support as a consequence because of lack of intimacy or openness.*

## METHOD

### *Data Collection*

Qualitative data is uniquely capable of offering increased insight into the nuances of relationships and interactions. Given the nature of my research questions, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews in order to illustrate the more subtle relational dynamics that occur between professor mentors and their graduate students. This method also provided the flexibility to probe for deeper understanding of personal values and experiences as needed.

Forty interviews with graduate students (20 women/20 men) and 19 interviews with tenured or tenure-track faculty (10 women/9 men) from two research institutions were conducted. While the two institutions included were based on a convenience sample, their comparison is theoretically appropriate in reference to the aims of the study. Both institutions boast research-intensive programs and student bodies greater than 25,000, indicating an active graduate student presence. Adding to the variety of experiences and perspectives, one institution was located in a large metropolitan area in Canada, the other in a relatively geographically isolated college town in the United States. They will be referred to as Canadian Public University (CPU) and American Public University (APU) throughout the study. Sampling from more than one institution allows for a greater range of experiences and increases the reliability and consistency of

findings. Because a faculty sponsor was required in order to obtain approval for the study at CPU, a copy of the e-mail sent to solicit sponsorship is included in Appendix C.

Departments included in the sample were those that traditionally fit within the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics as these disciplines are generally male-dominated and theoretically offer a more stark example of the dominance of masculine norms of work within the academy. Moreover, these departments typify the ‘gendered organization.’ Departments were matched by university and dropped out of the sample if a given department did not exist in both institutions (see Appendix E for a complete list of departments included in the study). From these departments, a sample of both students and faculty members was drawn using a random sampling procedure stratified by gender in order to achieve an equal representation of both sexes.

From April to September in 2010, potential participants were contacted via e-mail addresses obtained from university departmental pages (see Appendix C). The e-mails requested a confidential interview regarding graduate student mentoring. Follow-up e-mails were sent to non-respondents after one week. If the individual failed to respond within a reasonable time, they were dropped from the sample. The response rates are shown in the tables below as they correspond to each group and each institution.

To qualify as “not applicable” an individual must have either moved and considered themselves to no longer be associated with the university, were not currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship, or were travelling or conducting field work during the duration of the study. Response rates were therefore calculated from the number of individuals contacted that were deemed eligible for interviews (i.e., were currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship and were physically

TABLE 7. Response Rates for American Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	10	4	1	56%
Men Faculty	11	5	1	50%
Women Graduate Students	17	4	3	71%
Men Graduate Students	22	8	4	56%

TABLE 8. Response Rates for Canadian Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	26	19	2	26%
Men Faculty	37	27	6	13%
Women Graduate Students	19	9	0	53%
Men Graduate Students	26	14	2	42%

available for an interview). Noteworthy are the lower response rates for participants at the Canadian institution. This may be partially accounted for by the timing of the research. Interviews were solely conducted during summer months in Canada, while they were conducted at the end of spring semester and beginning of fall semester in the United States. Additionally, men at both institutions had a lower response rate in relation to



women, perhaps revealing differential time management practices and prioritization of work.

In an effort to maximize confidentiality, when possible interviews were conducted in private offices. Four interviews took place in public settings and another four were conducted over the phone in an effort to accommodate the participant. Interviews ranged from 20-90 minutes in length, with faculty interviews typically taking longer.

After completing a short demographic questionnaire, faculty interviewees were asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, their strategies for work and family life balance, whether they would consider an academic position to be family friendly, current relationships with students they advise, and to describe characteristics of their most successful students. Students were likewise asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, how they approach balance in their lives, whether their advisor has been a positive role model, when they feel is the most strategic time to start a family, and so forth (see Appendix A & B for complete list of questions included). As needed, notes including personal reflections and ideas as they emerged from the interview process were taken following interviews.

### *Data Analysis*

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and pseudonyms have been used to ensure confidentiality. Each transcript was read through a minimum of three times in an effort to increase reliability and consistency. The first reading helped establish initial general themes and a framework from which to guide subsequent readings. This exercise of open coding was followed by axial coding, which is defined by Strauss and Corbin as

“[t]he process of relating categories to their subcategories” (1998, 123). Themes and subthemes were discussed and honed in relation to theoretical implications with others familiar with the project, primarily my own major professor. During the analysis stage we met weekly to discuss themes emerging from the data and possible avenues for organization and theoretical development. Quotations were included based on their ability to capture both unique insights and illustrations of more general themes. Thick description in the form of respondent’s own words and experiences were used to explore this topic and add authenticity to the work (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

This research and analysis is an attempt to understand both men and women’s behavior from the standpoint of women (Harding 1991, 2004; Smith 1987). Like Martin (2001), I do not suppose that my interpretations of the ways in which interviewees speak of their experiences are necessarily the interpretations they would personally give them. They are influenced by my own position, experiences, and biases as a woman in academics. Additionally, power differentials may impede frankness in interviews with faculty members, given my identity as a graduate student, and a *female graduate student studying gender* at that. Analysis was completed largely by myself, but was also informed through conversations with other students and faculty. Our combined subjective understandings provided a removed but feminist perspective on the interactions of both men and women involved (Martin 2001; see Harding 1991).

### *Measures*

*Masculine models of work:* practices that assume single-mindedness towards work. For instance, the assumption that an individual has only to be concerned about his

or her research with no acknowledgment or respect for one's external responsibilities. For individuals with families, this includes the assumption that a full time care worker is responsible for all matters inside the home, allowing the individual to completely devote him or herself to matters of work (Williams 2000). Also includes the assumption that one's time, energy, and enthusiasm towards work is limitless and that an individual's profession is of primary importance to one's identity.

*Transformative potential:* practices that encourage or promote action or thoughts that are either explicitly or implicitly incongruent with institutional norms based on a masculine model (again, these norms include such things as adherence to strict schedules and workloads involving long hours; lack of acknowledgement of outside responsibilities, lack of recognition of the emotional aspects of work). Examples of these practices include encouragement of emotional openness, flexibility of work hours and schedules, open-mindedness towards alternative career paths, and general sensitivity towards gendered experiences. Additionally, the encouragement of students to question power, commit to activism, and promote empowerment (Boisvert 2010) are indicators of the transformative potential of mentoring relationships.

*Psychosocial support:* in accordance with Kram (1985), this component includes the acceptance and *validation* of student's professional identities, counseling, elements of friendship, and appropriate and positive role modeling.

### *Sample Characteristics*

Of the 59 participants, 30 were women, and 29 men. Eleven of the 40 students were in masters level programs. The remaining 29 were somewhere along the path to

obtaining their PhD. Seventeen of the 40 graduate students were married, while 13 of the 19 faculty members were likewise in marital partnerships. Of the 20 graduate students interviewed, six were mothers. Of those who were married, the majority of their partners were either students themselves, or professionals working outside the home. The one exception was the partner of the one father, who resided at home with the children. Of the faculty members interviewed, six of the nine men were fathers, and four of the ten women were mothers. Of all the faculty parents, only one man had a partner who stayed at home with the children. The remaining were dual-career couples. As for the racial make-up of the sample was somewhat homogenous though representative of the population, with 44 identifying as white, eight as Asian, one as African, one as Hispanic/Latino, and five as “other.” The majority of women graduate students had men as faculty mentors (14 of the 20, see Tables 9 & 10). Important demographic information of all participants is represented on Tables 9 through 11.

TABLE 9. Sample Characteristics of Faculty Demographics of Women Students in Same-Gender Mentoring Relationships

PSEUDONYM	GENDER OF ADVISOR	PROGRAM	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	CHILDREN		AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	DISCIPLINE
					0 to 5	6 to 18		
Natalie	Woman	PhD	Married	Professional	2	-	40	Science
Tamara	Woman	PhD	Married	Student	-	-	50	Science
Alicia	Woman	PhD	Single	-	-	-	45	Science
Terri	Woman	PhD	Single	-	-	-	80	Science
Mariel	Woman	MS	Married	Student	1	3	32	Mathematics
Caroline	Woman	PhD	Single	-	-	-	50	Science

## FINDINGS

Findings have been organized into the two broad themes of *processes that challenge the masculine model* (including openness, sensitivity to gender, and role modeling in ways

TABLE 10. Demographics of Women Students in Cross-Gender Mentoring Relationships

PSEUDONYM	GENDER OF ADVISOR	PROGRAM	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	CHILDREN		AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	DISCIPLINE
					0 to 5	6 to 18		
Rachel	Man	MS	Married	Professional	-	2		Science
Andrea	Man	MS	Single	-	-	-	40	Science
Esther	Man	MS	Single	-	-	-	55	Science
Margot	Man	PhD	Single	-	-	-		Science
Hailey	Man	PhD	Single	-	-	-	40	Science
Shilo	Man	PhD	Single	-	-	-		Science
Jasmine	Man	MS	Married	Professional	-	-	45	Science
Sophie	Man	MS	Single	-	-	-	50	Mathematics
Elin	Man	PhD	Single	-	-	2		Mathematics
Lindsay	Man	PhD	Married	Student	1	-	20	Science
Alyce	Man	MS	Single	-	-	-	45	Science
Mindy	Man	PhD	Married	Professional	-	2	45	Science
Sarah	Man	MS	Married	Student	-	-	40	Engineering
Lori	Man	PhD	Married	Professional	-	-	50	Science

TABLE 11. Demographics of Faculty Mentors

GENDER	RANK	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	CHILDREN		AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK	DISCIPLINE
				0 TO 5	6 TO 18		
Man	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-		Science
Man	Professor	Married	Professional	-	2	70	Mathematics
Man	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-	55	Science
Man	Associate	Married	Professional	1	-	75	Engineering
Man	Administrator	Married	Professional	-	-	50	Science
Man	Professor	Divorced	-	-	1	55	Mathematics
Man	Administrator	Married	Professional	-	-	80	Engineering
Man	Professor	Divorced	-	-	-	30*	Engineering
Man	Associate	Married	At home	2	-	55	Science
Woman	Associate	Single	-	-	-		Science
Woman	Professor	Divorced	-	-	-	40	Science
Woman	Professor	Single	-	-	-	52.5	Science
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-		Science
Woman	Associate	Married	Professional	-	-	55	Science
Woman	Assistant	Married	Professional	1	2	50	Science
Woman	Administrator	Married	Professional	-	-	60	Engineering
Woman	Associate	Single	-	-	-		Engineering
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-	50	Science
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional	-	1	57.5	Science

\*Part-time position, Emeritus faculty member

that question the system); and *processes that reproduce the masculine model* (including expectations of single mindedness, issues preventing personal connectivity and openness, and negative role modeling). The experiences of same-gender (SG) and cross-gender

(CG) relationships with women graduate students are explored within each category, and compared for similarities and differences.

## PROCESSES THAT CHALLENGE THE MASCULINE MODEL

### *Openness*

Mentors that were able to communicate a sense of openness to their students allowed room for growth, connection, encouragement, and a flattening of the hierarchical relationship. Importantly, professors from a number of mentoring relationships of both same and cross-gender compositions expressed a general sense of openness towards alternative career path choices for their mentees. This is in contrast to prior research stating that professors tend to see those students who follow their own personal career path as more successful. Moreover, mentors benefit from their student's research in the sense that ongoing collaborations lead to increased productivity for both individuals and increased recognition for the institution at large. When students choose a career outside of academics, the potential benefits of the relationship to the mentor is minimized. The fact that a number of professors expressed their support of alternative career paths, therefore, is indicative of prioritizing the satisfaction of the student, rather than faculty career advancement or institutional prestige. As one woman professor explained,

A success or failure of a student for me is when they have at some point in time enunciated a goal and they are reaching their goal. And that may not be the same goal they started off with . . . when that person then reaches that goal, and then when they're here in town still come by and say, *I'm here, I want to tell you I'm doing well*. For me that's a success. Because they have reached where they wanted to be.

When mentors exude an open attitude and acceptance and celebration of personal decisions, there is more room to express emotion and share relatively intimate feelings.

Whereas men were open to career trajectories that lead their students outside of academics, women professors were much more likely to express a general ease of communication with women students. For example, as one administrator in engineering explained:

I think there are differences in working with women compared to men. I really like working with female students. I think we develop a rapport and an openness that I've not developed as much with a male student . . . . I've always had, I don't know, sort of professional life barriers, about how close I'll let a male colleague or a male student get to me. So, I would never show male students pictures of the grandbaby. But I will for female students. So I *really* like working with female students . . . actually after you leave, [a female student is] coming. . . . And talk often with her about my life setting and decisions I've made. I would never do that with a male student. So I like female students.

It is important to note that she recognizes how her own gender barriers perhaps prevent this sense of ease between herself and her male students. A wider range of topics is open to her when working with women, and these topics are more likely to delve into the personal and intimate arena.

This intimacy often translates into comfort with discussing how to negotiate the emotional aspects of graduate school. Again, this appears to be a gendered phenomenon that is acknowledged on some level by both men and women. One woman professor explained that, “[my department chair] used to say . . . if anybody was getting close to tears then he would send them to my office . . . he just doesn't like any kind of - just he doesn't like emotional.” This professor was not the only one to speak about how she often was the go-to person when it came to a student getting emotional. In fact, when asked if she felt that women students were drawn to her, one professor responded that, “sometimes I think they're *sent* to me, because you know, hey! We have a woman's problem! You know, so they get sent to me for probably the wrong reasons.” This

illustrates an important arena in which women faculty are assumed to be better equipped to offer comfort and ease in the presence of emotion. Of course, women were differentially inclined to be comfortable with this aspect of their relationships. But in general, women professors were more likely to bring up the topic of the emotional aspects of graduate school with their women students than were men professors. A woman professor in physics shared her example of the types of conversations she has with her woman student who happens to be the first she's worked with:

I see in her a lot of qualities that I noticed about myself when I was that age. So I talk with her pretty openly about all the factors and you know, the following might occur in the following circumstance, and this is just what to expect and this is the best way to deal with it. Usually only as the need arises. Why scare her? No, no point in doing that. When she came here she was pretty unsure of her abilities, and pretty tentative, and always giving herself a hard time for not doing better, and so forth. And I think she's starting to really build up her confidence from, with the conversations that we've had . . . So, yeah, we talk about, you know about, not just physics. Talk about the emotional aspects of doing physics and you know, how to manage your health, and so forth, and it's not something I begrudge at all, it's a joy, to share the insights with her.

Importantly, not only is she open to addressing the emotional aspects of the work, she recognizes the need for confidence building and actively seeks for ways to do so.

Women faculty were also quite open and honestly about their personal shortcomings so that students, especially women students, might get a candid view of academic life. For example, one woman serving as an administrator in engineering explained in reference to her current mentees:

I'm just pretty candid about successes and failures. And I try to give them a glimpse of what a day in my life looks like. In part because it's an excuse for why I've done such a poor job mentoring them, but also . . . I think it's valuable for them to have a glimpse of what an administrator who might someday be judging them in the tenure and promotion process, what a sort of typical days look like.



As illustrated above, women were much more likely to be open with their students about their own fallibilities. Recognizing the imperfections and constraints placed upon faculty throughout their academic careers is both an eye-opening and healthy way to encourage women students who might feel alone in their struggles.

A number of men and women faculty members were also cognizant of the need to reflect an open and flexible approach to work schedules. As in the following account, this sometimes translates into the obscuring of the number of actual hours worked. When asked if his graduate students were aware of the time commitment that this type of job requires, an administrator in engineering responded,

No. And I don't want them to be necessarily . . . because it's been my choice. And there are faculty here that work 30 hours. Some of them are my friends, you know, and if they call up at 2:00 on a Thursday and say let's play golf, and I say, what are you talking about?! [laughs] . . . But, you know I want people to do what they want to do, not do things, you know, not to be the last one to leave because the boss is working harder than anybody else - I think that's dumb. *So not letting them know the hours is because you don't want to say that's the only way to do it? Yeah. They have to find their own path.*

This response reflects an open attitude that does not penalize those who work fewer or non-traditional hours. In this sense, the responses indicate a healthier and less male-dominated model of work.

Although men were just as likely as women to have flexible attitudes towards work schedules and other traditional markers of commitment, women faculty were more honest and frank about women's exclusion from informal networks, as this woman professor in science explains:

You know . . . I'm still invisible for some of my colleagues. So, missed opportunities. Non-inclusion . . . when that happens, I get in my office, I kick walls. I pound walls. And then I rant and rave. And I go have a glass of wine at home. Because it makes me mad. It makes me absolutely mad. How it affects my

mentoring is that I tell these young women, *yes*, we are not the sixties anymore. There is no overt discrimination. They will give you the job. But you will *never be an equal*. So what I tell them is, here are the rules, here is what goes on, this, you, in order for you to make the same advancement you're just going to have to be better. Just know that. I'm not going to tell you that the world is rosy because it isn't.

Although openly discussing these issues may be discouraging to women students, the act of sharing provides a sense of openness and support from their mentor should they seek a place for disclosure and venting throughout their own difficulties.

### *Sensitivity to Gender*

Both men and women demonstrated sensitivity to gender issues, such as the importance of building confidence in women students. That said, women often reported a greater ease with identifying with women students. For example,

With the young women I think working with them has been . . . it's almost like a sisterhood in a way. It's like, *I'm here to help you, here are the rules. Trust me*. And there's no other undertones. There's no undertones of you know, father figures, or authority figures. *I'm here to help you*, and it seems to work with young women a lot better.

This account is interesting in relation to the thoughts of a man professor who also sees himself as an individual sensitized to the needs of women.

I feel like a student who's a woman who is interested in mathematics is *rare* and therefore should be *really* encouraged. So I think I maybe make an extra effort with women. And that might be paternalistic, and it might create more problems, but, so I think in that way I'm different. . . . I think I end up giving a fair amount of professional advice that I think will help prepare women against the forces that tend to push them out of the field . . . There's a lot of ways in which a stereotypical white-guy-arrogant-math-student might act as though they know a lot. And that can be very intimidating . . . in some ways I want to make sure that women have the confidence that's required to confront the arrogant hazing that takes place typically in this field. And more often than not, women who are at this level have already gone through so much hazing and so much filtration that they're pretty tough, but a little validation and a little confidence I think can go a long ways.

Unlike the woman professor, this man recognizes that he has perhaps a paternalistic attitude toward aspiring female students. The woman professor feels no barriers in her connection, no sense of being an authority figure. Regardless, both demonstrate considerable sensitivity to the needs and circumstances of women graduate students.

Other professors echoed the recognition of the need to build confidence in women students. One woman professor explained her observation of the differences between men and women students in her field:

I think the guys were more confident and not because they were better. Guys just seem to have an over confidence problem and girls seem to have an under confidence problem, and that's a *very general* phenomenon in physics, as even true of me. So you know, I mean after ten years *finally* not having cases of imposter syndrome every day . . . I am more encouraging of my female student. But that's because she needs it.

One woman professor used the parable of pulling wool away from the eyes of her students as both a pedagogic method appropriate for her field, but additionally applicable to the idea of preparing women for the realities of the gendered dynamics of academe.

She explained:

You want to protect [students], but you want to let them grow and become independent, so the best way is to provide safe, miniature contexts - dry runs for what they're going to come against in the future. I think education is really a fine art of learning exactly how much wool to pull over the eyes of the student. When I teach first years about relativity, I select out what I think are the most important things for them to know, and don't give them all the details, because it would, they'd go *blind*, trying to look at all the details and not see the forest through the trees. And so it's a process of gradually pulling back the wool as they become more experienced students and do higher level work and so forth, and by the time they're ready to graduate and go out into the wide world, you hopefully have pulled all the wool away so that they're ready to go into the world as it really is. But there's, my point, I don't believe in, *well I had to suffer through the following indignities when I was a graduate student and I turned out great so everybody else should have to suffer through those rites of passage as well!* I don't believe in that.

This professor in particular believes in providing “safe contexts for learning” that “include making mistakes.” Importantly she believes that it is not right to make student’s suffer simply because she personally might have suffered. In this regard, she recognizes the benefit of questioning dominant norms rather than accepting them as *the* way to prepare an academic.

In some instances, men openly talked about the topic of gender with their women students, though this happened less frequently than with female professors. Shilo shared the following example to illustrate her comfort level with having a professor who is a man:

I remember when I had to pick a supervisory committee, he told me, you know, you can ask a woman faculty to be in your supervisory committee. Like having a group of guys you know, always giving you feedback, and grilling you in appraisal exams . . . He *told* me this and I said that, and I was talking about this other woman faculty in the department who’s sort of like a mentor and all the girls go to, so I said that I had her in the department. It’s not that I have to have her in my supervisory committee, but thanks for telling me that. I’m pretty okay with the five guys on my committee member, even if that means like they’re very enthusiastic and sort of hard ass committee members to deal with, but he’s brought the subject up, which you know – it felt good.

The fact that her professor explicitly recognized and communicated his concerns for the possibility that she might feel uncomfortable with the gender composition of her committee was highly appreciated. Moreover, it is indicative of the type of sensitivity towards gender that can potentially lead to positive change.

As a final example of gender sensitivity, the following professor shared an account of how he almost missed out on the opportunity to mentor a young woman who he now considers to be his “greatest success.” He recalled how she had wanted to work in his lab but that initially, “she didn’t impress me at all. She was a very bubbly,

enthusiastic, type of personality who I didn't really think really understood what she was wanting to get herself into." This assessment was confirmed by a lab technician who felt that she was, "too flighty." But he had still not made up his mind about whether to take her on. He explains:

And then I came home and told my wife about it, and I said in the conversation, *you know, she just looks like one of these cutesy, southern California cheerleaders*. And my wife said well don't you *dare* not take her on just because she's pretty! You know. I thought, okay, okay okay. And by the end of the first week it was really obvious that I made a great choice . . . And she was bubbly and enthusiastic all the way through, but she had the chops. And she ended up as an undergraduate, as a coauthor on four publications . . . so. Yeah, and it's all because my wife said, don't *not* hire her because she's pretty.

This experience illustrates somewhat of a turning point in this man's career, in which his realization of his own biases became very apparent, thanks largely to a discerning wife. It is moreover an interesting insight into how the body plays a role in the image of what one might consider to be a 'legitimate scientist.' As he shared this story, he was very emotional and it was evident that this experience had a great impact on him. It has likely caused him to be a more self-reflexive individual in the sense of thinking twice about making decisions about individuals' aptitude for science based on superficial markers.

#### *Role Modeling in Ways That Question the System*

Both men and women professors engaged in behaviors that provided a model to students of faculty that are both successful in their fields and in their own way do not conform to the typical demands of the institution. This played out in a number of situations including the refusal to adhere to unrealistic standards, incorporating outside interests and responsibilities into typically rigid schedules, and challenging hierarchical norms and standing up when injustices occur. For instance, one associate professor in

science shared her experience of the uncertainty she experienced related to a decision to add a year to her tenure clock:

[W]ell, the whole tenure process is anxiety inducing . . . But I think that [adding a year to the tenure clock] did add kind of another level of, *I wonder if this is the best thing or not?* But I felt in my, in my example I just felt super supported by both my department chair and then also my dean, so I felt pretty good about my decision. But I know others have kind of wondered if it's the best thing. But I also think it's important to kind of help set the precedence that we *should* do that. And you know, that the profession, the institute needs to provide that opportunity for people, you know, to focus on family a little bit more if they need to for a period of time. So, I felt it was important just to do it, even just for that.

Despite being somewhat unsure about the how she would be evaluated by others, setting a precedent was prioritized by this woman. In doing so she showed her students a way in which it is appropriate to push the boundaries until they become more accepted.

Another woman professor in science explained the daily struggle she has with letting go of the standards to which she was socialized to uphold in academe, recognizing that they are unhealthy. She explains:

I'm still learning, you know . . . I was schooled by *boys*, who including my dad, were very ambitious, very successful people, and I followed that path and it didn't work out. And so now I'm learning to just go, *look, it's okay* . . . Every day in the week I have to have a talk with myself and say, it's okay not to, you know, I'm on a nine-month appointment, yet I feel compelled to run to the university. It's okay to read a book when you just came out of surgery. *You have no idea how much talking I have to do to myself to get there.* So I still have a long ways to go in learning to balance that, but I'm a better person I think because I think I'm becoming kinder too . . . it's like, it's okay, you know, we do not have to get the Nobel prize. And it's okay to do what you do, and it's okay to not be done, and it's okay to miss opportunities, but I have to, you know, learn to just say it's okay. And that's, it's a tough one. It's a tough one when you're brought up to just be, you know driving, and driving, and making career the first thing, the be all and end all.

Letting go of these masculine standards has been a gradual and difficult process. But in the process of learning to have more balance and being kinder to herself, she has felt it

has made her kinder to others as well. Women often feel compelled to prove themselves in situations where they are the minority – letting go of this idea and its accompanying behaviors is not only freeing, but indicative of a shift towards greater equity among men and women in academe. Because she openly discusses these sentiments with her women graduate students, she is contributing to the socialization of young women who will feel empowered to do the same.

The importance of providing a diverse range of models within academe was also addressed. For instance, one woman in engineering shared that, “it’s wonderful to be Associate Dean and to be able to walk into a room and say, *I’m the Associate Dean*. Because I think some students only need one example . . . And so I try to be a single example of somebody who I think is pretty normal, pretty balanced.” Students also shared their appreciation of role models whose lives included passions outside of work. A number of professors recognized the importance of modeling an active personal life, of revealing outside interests, and in general, demonstrating that there is more than one way to be a “good” professor. One woman professor explained her graduate mentor in the following terms:

You know we had grants to do field work and we would be in Madrid for a day or something and we would always go to the Prado to go look at the Goya’s, I mean, you know, it was a good match for me. I probably could have had somebody who was a real one-dimensional-science-geek who put me right off, but this was . . . I was lucky I think.

It was also important for women to see that their professors prioritized their families.

Elin, a graduate student in mathematics, shared how her advisor “has two daughters and he has no bones about saying I can’t help you because I’m going to do such and such with my daughters and so I like – being a mother also I really appreciate that he takes

time off to go and do what his daughters need.” Lindsay, another student, shared her experience of having her first child while in graduate school. Her professor was a father of five himself, and was extremely supportive of her through the process. She spoke of bringing her daughter to play with his children in his home while they met to discuss work. While atypical, this example provides an important model of diversity and challenges the ideal masculine model of work so dominant in academe.

Other professors chose to challenge the traditional masculine atmosphere of competition in their own ways. For instance, a now emeritus professor who had worked with close to fifty graduate students during his career recalled his epiphany as a young faculty member.

I started insisting that my students call me [by my first name] . . . As the age distance increases it’s so hard to maintain any sense of equality. And people have just a terrible time being called by their first name, as opposed to Dr. [so-and-so]. And this is a competitive, *I want to be superior*, rather than helpful. I have all this wisdom and I can tell you what to do and if you do it you’ll be successful like I am . . . I think this is really hard for people to give up. And the harder they have worked for something, like their doctorate, the harder it is to let go of that . . . So it has taken me a long time to get that sense of egalitarianism. That just because I’ve been around longer, doesn’t mean that I deserve respect for that. I mean I’ve just been eating, sleeping, breathing, longer.

In this small and distinct way, this particular professor has found an opportunity to challenge the hierarchical structure of academe and in so doing, communicates a supportive approach to working relationships.

Other professors were more direct in their attempts to break down the dominant norms of the system. For instance, in regards to advice on how to balance work and family life in particular, one woman professor stated that it is possible to do so



successfully, but only if you are willing to, “hit the system with a bazooka.” Women need to negotiate on their terms, and to say,

[L]ook, this is the plan, I’m coming in for a job, I have two children, I have to go home at night, how is that going to affect me when you’re evaluating people to come to social functions? Just hit it with them right up front because I would claim that a lot of stuff is happening not because people are malignant, or they’re bad. They haven’t thought about it! Guys don’t think about it! . . . And just say, guys, this is how it’s going to be, because when you say it like that, you don’t do it tentatively. Instead of *would it be okay now*, you say, *this is how it’s going to be*. Because they understand that.

She admits that this is a masculine approach, but feels that it is necessary because, “you still have to work within the masculine world. You have to use the tools that they understand.” And in this way, she believes in actively advocating for oneself. In a sense, this is a way of demanding equity. Whether it will be achieved is uncertain, but she firmly believes that sitting back and not saying anything will only serve to reinforce the traditional gender roles within academe.

Other professors shared their experiences of standing up for themselves when injustices present themselves. For instance, a woman professor in physics who also has a disability shared her frustration with being asked to complete tasks that were impossible for her to undertake. This frequently happened, and seemed to be a misunderstanding of her position, and communicated to her a lack of thoughtfulness. She shared one such experience:

Just last week they asked me to chair an exam and all the exam rooms are on the third floor and I said, *No. Moreover, you may not penalize me for refusing to do this service. Unless I am told you have disabled accessible rooms, I will not be participating. The law’s on my side*. I don’t like ramming it down people’s throats, but, if I have to then I will advocate for myself. I just resent having to be in the position to doing it in the first place.

This story is an example of the ways in which she has modeled the practice of standing up for herself when injustices occur. She further explained her philosophy in that she believes that, “being a good professor means not being that stereotypical ivory tower person who focuses on their own ambition and trying to win various prizes and running roughshod over their students and so forth.” She conceptualizes as good professor as someone who is good to one’s students in a “very deep sense. So, having a willingness even to just be compassionate about a student’s current circumstances is.” Finally, she explained that she doesn’t “believe in making people suffer just for the hell of it. *In particular* because we suffer doesn’t mean we should pass on the suffering.”

This way of thinking reveals both sensitivity to individual needs and a powerful sense of being an appropriate advocate for students as they navigate academe. She likewise explained in reference to her duties that

[R]ole modeling is important, although it’s a burden for the people who have to do the role modeling. And if you’re a woman, you know, loads of people want to put you on a committee because they need a woman on the committee and so what it ends up doing is overloading the people who we’re wanting to be role models for the younger people and if we’re tied up doing you know, a lot of administrative boring work, not doing the actual science, then that drags her down and means she’s not as good of a role model for the ones who are coming behind her, so.

Her solution for this problem was to “educate the men.” She explains that she’s, “learned that the most effective way of disapproving of sexist behavior is for a man to make the disapproval in front of the dinosaur who’s just made an absolute bomb of a statement, a sexist, piggish, you know, up in the extreme.” She recognizes that her personal disapproval carries little weight, and how important it is to “identify and recruit the good guys that are willing to help.”

While there are a number of so-called “good guys” in academe, one department head in engineering shared his reservations about standing up when women were not being treated right. He explained that often

the women faculty have a terrible time with both male *and* female students who expect certain types of deference and behavior from a women professor . . . men don’t, you know, we just say something and they might get mad at us but they don’t argue with us. We have women faculty that the students will sit and argue with and shout and yell and scream and try to intimidate them into changing their mind. And no one should have to put up with that. It’s just blatantly unfair.

When he witnesses this happening, he explained that, “there are times when I want to step in but I don’t want to step in because that kind of perpetuates this thing – *oh, she needs help*. And I would step in if it was a male faculty member, just because everybody needs a bad guy to point to you know,” but that it becomes much more complex when you consider the message that might be delivered. He revealed that he would not “feel any sort of loss of face if [another professor] does that for me, but if I was a woman I might feel that way.” He spoke of there being “a more delicate balance” and how he would be

worried about the perception of the student about the faculty member. That, you know, she can’t handle the thing herself so she has to call in the big guns, and the students that we need help that way with are the students that would think about it in those terms. Because already they’re trying to intimidate the faculty member. And so, you know, it’s kind of like having your big brother save you from the bully, you know, and yeah you get saved from the bully but the bully just gets madder. And they haven’t changed their behavior.

While this particular professor is still struggling with what would be the most appropriate way to combat these issues, the very fact that he has thought this deeply about how to make positive and lasting changes in the arena of gender equity is extremely promising.

He pointed out that his own wife's experience as a working mother in a masculine environment has made him much more attuned to these inequities.

## PROCESSES THAT REPRODUCE THE MASCULINE MODEL

This section is organized into three themes that highlight the most often cited processes that appear to reproduce the masculine model within mentoring relationships in academe. They include an expectation of single mindedness towards work, issues preventing personal connectivity, and finally, evidence of masculine role modeling.

### *Expectation of Single Mindedness*

The expectation of a single mindedness towards work was prevalent in a number of mentoring relationships, for students with both men and women as professors. This was communicated to students in various ways, including strict standards for work schedules, general inflexibility, as well as value-laden advice regarding issues of personal and family life. At times these messages were subtly delivered. In other contexts, they were formally addressed. Modeling of work schedules was often a relatively subtle arena in which expectations were communicated. For example, the following conversation with Esther revealed her internalization of the expectations of someone who was to be successful in academics:

[My professor] spends a lot of time working. Even you will get an email from him at 11:30 at night on a Sunday with regards to something work related. So he seems to have a strong, I guess, bias towards his work life as opposed to personal life.

Interviewer: What affect does that have on you in your training, you know when you think about . . .

Well I would definitely like to have family at some point and I think that I would

like to be more involved with my family and outside of work life than spending all day everyday working and thinking about work.

Whether Esther felt this was possible for someone to achieve in academics was somewhat unclear. As Hailey notes, fitting into an academic lifestyle as portrayed by single-minded professors is a difficult undertaking. She explains that her professor

has his own idea of what makes a successful scientist, and he projects that onto all of his students and some people fit it; some people don't fit it and other people learn how to just ignore it. So I think every student that comes in the lab in the beginning really, really struggles with that and tries to fit themselves into that paradigm and it just doesn't work for everyone.

Some students felt frustrated by the fact that their professors seemed to adhere to a sort of 'rights of passage' mentality in their approach to mentoring. For instance, Sarah explained that she and her professor have

. . . different priorities. Like, you know, I work during the day and then go home at night and be with my family, or do other activities. Whereas he kind of thinks I should be in the lab 24/7. You know, because that's what he did as a graduate student. He'd sleep in the lab, and you know.

Sarah's mentor has additionally been very verbal about his opinions regarding family planning issues.

I would eventually like to be a mother - to him, you know, like he was kind of mad that you know, I got married when I did. I was almost 23. But he thinks people shouldn't get married until they're 26. You know, and so me wanting to have a baby, I'm like, *I cannot do that until I'm done here, because he won't be understanding at all!* . . . he made his opinions known. But he wouldn't, like he didn't really leave room where you're like, oh well I think *this*. Or he's like, you should only have two kids. That's a responsible number to have. It's just like, well, I've always wanted a big family, but I'm *never telling you that!*

Another example in which professors likely had well-meaning intentions with somewhat debatable outcomes is recounted in the experience of Rachel. She explained

that a single-mindedness towards academics was communicated loudly by women professors she worked with. She explains:

[T]he women I encountered as professors in courses I took had *absolutely* no sympathy for you know, family issues. I would sort of say, I'm really sorry my paper is late, because you know, my kids are sick. And she would say, oh, that's really too bad, I'm taking 5% off. You know, they would just, they wouldn't cut you any slack for being a parent and it's because they went through it and they know that you have to compete, you know, on the value of your work and nothing else. You know, no – they don't expect people to give them a break so they don't give anyone else a break. They were way, way tougher on me than the men were. You got to someone like my supervisor, and they'd be like, oh, well take another week, take another two weeks, and they'd be sort of scared of the whole issue. But in many ways, the former attitude like the one of the woman was actually would have been more useful because you need to learn to do that, and I never really did. I was always - always, always, always, put my family and my kids first . . . so, I don't know. I think his wife didn't work so he's used to the idea of women putting their families first and therefore he was very understanding of that idea. Yeah, but the women, the women *were not!*

Although these women professors most likely understood the difficulties associated with being a woman in academics, their focus was not upon instigating change per se, but reinforcing the traditional masculine norms of prioritizing work and obscuring the responsibilities that might compete for one's time and attention. Interestingly, Rachel's professor was much more understanding of her family obligations. She attributes this to his personal arrangement with his wife, who has prioritized the concerns of their family over her career.

### *Issues Preventing Interpersonal Connectivity*

A number of issues regarding the boundaries of connectivity with women graduate students were raised. These issues were almost exclusively voiced by men professors. They felt repressed by cultural norms and boundaries that discouraged the type of openness and intimacy in cross-gender relationships that they enjoyed in same-

gender mentoring relationships. Moreover, the perception (both from without and within) that they could not fully understand the feminine experience served to widen the distance between men professors and women graduate students.

Regarding realms of the professional experience relating to gender for which they felt ill equipped to offer advice due to their lack of personal experience, men professors generally reported that they suggested speaking with other women faculty. For example, one professor explained that

the kinds of questions that female students bring up are sometimes you know, difficult for me to relate to. I think almost all of my female graduate students have at least at one point had classroom difficulties that to me seem like they're gendered problems. Like you know, the male student's treating them in a certain way, or you know, harassing them . . . And that's not a problem I ever have, and so, that's a difference - I can kind of point them to resources, and as much as I can I can talk about it. But I just don't have any personal experience of it . . .

Other men felt impeded by their gender in the sense that the advice they would like to offer did not seem to carry the same weight as it might were it delivered by a woman. In other words, men professors sometimes referred their students to women professors who would validate the advice given, which might otherwise be dismissed coming from a man assumed to be unable to fully comprehend the female experience. For example, one professor explains his approach to dealing with questions of work and family life balance from his women students:

I always tell them to go talk to the women down the hall. Because I know that what I say will be politely listened to . . . I could say the same thing that the woman down the hall says and it won't have the same impact. So listening and encouraging and holding my tongue.

Besides assuming this gendered disconnect, a number of women graduate students reported experiencing feelings of intimidation towards professors who were men

which impeded their likeliness for establishing interpersonal connectivity. Interestingly, this sentiment was echoed by men graduate students (see Chapter One). Feelings of intimidation were not reported regarding women professors for either men or women students. For some individuals, intimidation resulted in contributing to inferiority complexes and feelings of not belonging. The resulting distance experienced by students creates relationships in which support is lacking. For example, Jasmine describes her feelings towards her professor in the following terms:

I respect him a lot. He's a little scary sometimes [laughs] so, I try not to bother him too much. I'd say there's a good bit of distance and I don't always know what he thinks about what I'm doing . . . I don't know, standoffish I guess.

A handful of men professors seemed to be aware of this impediment, and actively thought about ways in which they might reduce their tendency for appearing to be intimidating. For example, when asked if there was anything that might be done to improve his relationship with his graduate students, one professor explained that

I have the reputation of being a little intimidating. And, I would, if I could, I try, but you know, who knows. I don't - that's not my intention . . . So if I could be less [intimidating] then that would make things better with students. Because I give them independence they kind of take it as my being uninterested in what it is they're doing and so sometimes they're reluctant to talk to me about things.

While recognizing that intimidation was a barrier in his relationships with students, he was somewhat at a loss of how to bridge the gap.

Other men professors felt inhibited by fears of their relationships with women graduate students being misconstrued as bordering on sexually inappropriate. Sexual harassment training has contributed to what Vicki Schultz (2003) has termed the "sanitized workplace," in which relationships between men and women are closely monitored by the both the institution and the individual. One professor describes the way



in which the “rigorous sexual harassment training” he underwent as a new faculty member has influenced his approach to working with women in general:

Gosh, you know, the horror stories that they tell you. And yeah, I tend to be, to play it safe, and that sort of, and yeah maybe they feel some sort of aloofness because - well my female masters students, felt some sort of you know, this wall. I cannot be quite as open with them as I am with my male students.

*Open in what sort of ways?*

Well okay, jokes. Because you know, I can never be sure how a joke can be taken, you know, by a female student, right. And so you know, am I harassing you or not, right? And so forth, and so forth. So you know, it gets to be more formal. You know, much more formal than I tend to be with my male students.

Fear of sexual harassment complaints limits communication further by influencing how physical space is shared between individuals. For instance, one professor explains that

there are some practical issues. For example, I never totally close my door when there's a woman in my office [laughs, in reference to the door being open during our interview], so you know, those are things that you just think about because in the end, you just gotta make sure. It's just much safer for there never to have to be any questions about anything . . . I take the prophylactic steps but it's never been a problem or anything.

While he has never had a problem in terms of sexual harassment, the fact that his women students do not have access to complete privacy limits the topics that might potentially be discussed and confided in him. Opportunities for intimacy in the sense of openness and connectivity are thereby potentially stunted in cross-gender mentoring relationships.

The lack of connectivity is not always recognized as a limitation in that some professors do not seem to formally acknowledge the emotional aspects of graduate school and incorporate this type of support in their mentoring. The following conversation with Sophie is insight into possible barriers in communication, yet she interestingly does not acknowledge or perceive any limitations to exist:

*Would you feel more comfortable if you had a female supervisor?*

I'm probably not the person to ask because I've been in the military for ten years. So I'm in a male dominated world. I'm probably more comfortable that way, honestly, than the opposite.

*Okay, so you're more comfortable with a male?*

I think just because I'm so used to it.

*Interesting. So you don't feel like there are any limitations in what you can talk about, or anything like that?*

No. No, but with math you might not have those things come up anyway, so.

This conversation reveals that Sophie's relationship with her professor is strictly professional. Both Sophie and her professor appear to see their relationship as one in which the emotional aspects of graduate school are not discussed. There was a wide range in terms of whether students felt that they could approach emotional topics with their professors. Those with women professors were much more likely to feel comfortable doing so.

Although Sophie's understanding of what was and was not appropriate to discuss with her professor was perhaps more intuitively based, other professors have formal expectations regarding their interactions with students. For example, one professor recounted the following conversation she had with a Chinese graduate student on her way back from a conference:

So as we started talking, she was telling me different things that her major professor told her . . . he just said, I don't want you to hang out with all the other Chinese students, I want you to, you know, be integrated into the department . . . I don't want you speaking Chinese, you know, in public situations . . . I want you to really integrate with the rest of the department. And then she said, you know, I really took that as, I *had* to do that . . . and then he had told her, no crying in my office [surprised laughter]. I said, did you have a problem with that, or *would* you have had a problem? And she goes, I *might* have. And she was kind of tentative, a little insecure. And she just said, but he just said you know, if you think I'm your friend, I'm not. I'm your major professor, and I don't want you crying in my office, that's not what our relationship is all about. Go to your friends to cry, not to me . . . and she says, I just treated that as that's exactly what I had to do. She said, I didn't know I had a choice.

The rules laid out by this professor were clearly based upon an expectation that at some point in her graduate career this student would likely *feel* like crying. The message he sent was that he was not interested in these personal concerns. This was not the type of relationship they were going to have. Moreover, if she were to be successful, she needed to actively integrate herself in the dominant culture, negating the support she might receive from others in a similar situation as herself. Given her inexperience she understandably treated these rules as law. The distance already present due to both gender and cultural differences was widened.

Other stories were shared concerning difficulties of connecting with men professors in working relationships. One woman professor recalled her experience of being the first woman student of her advisor. She described him in the following way:

But he was a very tactless man, absolutely tactless. For example, he would, you know I've always had problems with my weight, and so he would try to give me a compliment, and he would say, [*Oh*], *you look less fat today*. So that's kind of the level he was operating at.

Interviewer: How did you - didn't that affect you, wasn't that difficult?

It did . . . And up until then he had made every woman who ever walked in his office cry . . . And I'm a tough cookie . . . But I was still working in the premise of he's the boss and I'm the underling and I'm not going to say anything until he says something. And we were mutually waiting. And one day I got very angry. And it got the better of me, and I mean, he could have thrown me out of the school. Basically I came to an appointment and he was late for an appointment and he says, you have five minutes to make your point. And I became very angry. And I said, look, I pay for my education. I pay out of state tuition. You are being paid to give me an education and I *demand of you* that you give it to me – it's your job! I was *so* angry, and when I thought about it afterwards, I mean it gave me the cold shivers that I even said that. And the man looked at me, and he says, oh if you feel about it that way, please step into my office. And it was the beginning of the most wonderful working relationship. Because I finally got to the point where I honestly expressed what I wanted.

This story illustrates an interesting phenomenon in that she was unable to connect with her professor until she asserted her own power and reacted in a very masculine way to him. In a sense, she reinforced masculine norms within this context, but doing so allowed her to flatten the hierarchy between them.

*Evidence of Masculine Role Modeling*

Negative role modeling in the sense of enacting a masculine model of work came from both men and women professors. This was largely communicated through acting in ways that do not highlight outside responsibilities that typically fall on the shoulders of women. For example, one woman professor shared her experience of having her first child pre-tenure.

I was pregnant during the period when they installed parental leave. And so, I had to decide whether I would be the first by whom the new was tried, or yet the last to lay the old aside. And the department was full of men . . . and the guys were pretty dinosaur-like . . . But at any rate, I was very grateful I can tell you, to have the job. And I didn't want to take off time that might make them not hire another woman who was of child bearing age and looked like might exercise that prerogative. So [my son] was born on a holiday weekend - I missed one or two classes, which I had arranged for. But then I somehow managed to come back the following week [laughs]. I was exhausted. It was crazy. Absolutely crazy. And I absolutely don't suggest to anybody to follow that stupid example. But I didn't know if I could handle . . . in some sense, if I had taken it I would have felt guilty for what I would be doing to other, you know, other women.

Ironically, in an effort to protect other women, she was contributing to the reinforcement of masculine norms within her environment. In hindsight she recognizes that it was a terrible example, but in the midst of those events it was unclear.

The same woman shared another example of how women might at times be responsible for adhering to masculine norms while men are less concerned with upholding them.

As one woman once said many years ago, she was in an exam, and a guy said well we have to finish this up because I have to go and pick up my kids from daycare. And she said, you know, there he was, what a good father he is, how responsible – if a *woman* had said that . . . And the exact thing happened to me. Somebody came an hour late, so the thing was supposed to end from 3 to 5, and now it was going to go to 6, and I had a kid I had to pick up in daycare. And I begged for a moment, so I told the daycare I'm going to get there as soon as possible, I'm in this exam, you know. It never would have dawned on me to say we've got to finish this because I have to pick up my kid because I didn't want the stigma of oh yeah, these women, you can never rely on them to do the job a man would do. So, it plays, and I wonder now if I could adjust to the current reality. You know, that it's perfectly okay for people to say I have family responsibilities.

This woman professor was nervous to act in ways that might be interpreted as revealing some sort of incompetence associated with those who have outside responsibilities from work. . The fact that she wonders whether she could “adjust to the current reality” reveals that she would be unlikely to encourage others to do so. Interestingly, it is the man in this story that provides a transformative example. Overall, a number of women students expressed frustration in terms of navigating their academic experience on their terms. One student asserted that her understanding of how things worked in her department was that, “I don't know, it's sort of like we take it, I guess it's also a philosophy of, like it's a man's work, so you just adjust to it, and that's how it works.”

Sarah's relationship with her professor was complicated by the fact that while he recognized the need to mentor women students who are a minority in his field, he has somewhat misguided approaches to doing so. Sarah explains:

[O]ne thing that's been hard with me having [him] as a professor is he actually comes at it very much like, you know, women are a minority in engineering so *you* are going to make it, you're going to be great! And he won't ever let us say *we can't do this because I'm a girl*. You know, for example, he had me set up his laboratory and I had to install gas lines and stuff which I had never done before and I had to drill like these rackets into the wall and I was wanting help from an undergrad male student. You know, because I don't know how to work a drill! He's like, so, figure it out – just because you're a woman doesn't mean you can't use a drill. And I was like, you

know, I'm not saying that, I'm saying I need someone to show me because I don't want to just put holes in your wall.

This interchange is a fascinating insight into the complex dynamics between well-meaning, albeit misguided, men professors and their women graduate students. Sarah seems to be saying in essence that she knows she is capable of the task required of her, but that she still needs to be shown *how* to do it. Her professor perhaps feels as if he has had to do things in the past that he was never taught to do – just like a woman might be expected to know how to change a diaper, even if she has never spent time around children. In reality, this reflects what could be considered a masculine approach to mentoring. It is perhaps more masculine to just pull up one's sleeves and do the task at hand. This is part of the masculine learning process. But does guidance really harm? And furthermore, does admitting not knowing how to do something make one appear to vulnerable, or feminine? It appears to be that way in the eyes of this particular professor.

Another way in which masculine norms of work are communicated to students is through the example of extensive hours worked by faculty. One woman professor openly admits:

I don't really have balance. But I really love my work, so I am a bad example for my students. I will just tell you one example - If I don't answer my email for about a day it is like, *Oh my God, [she] is dead in her kitchen cause she didn't answer her email!*

This was true of men professors as well. For example, one professor who also happened to be a new father, recounted his work schedule:

I am usually here 9 to 6 or 7-ish, and then I put another two or three in at night and I usually work the weekends.

Interviewer: Do you think that your students have a good idea of how much you work at home?

Yeah. Because we are always communicating electronically, so I am always emailing them at crazy hours at night, or they message me at crazy hours of the night and I respond.

One woman professor shared her experience as a graduate student, and the impact her advisors' approach to work had upon her own life trajectory.

I had two co-advisors, . . . the two of them were like, you know, academic mom and dad. . . So I had great models in almost every way. But looking at their professional work life balance equation, both of them pretty dysfunctional in some ways. I look for example at her, and how accomplished she was and things that she had had to sacrifice, . . . So, no, I don't think I've ever really had a good role model, for what I would call a functional work life balance that I could imagine becoming. And I think that may be related to the fact that I never married and had kids. Didn't really see a plausible role model for how to do all that.

This particular professor's lack of an alternative role model – one that incorporated outside responsibilities - left her with little room for imagining a life that could include a family. This is further evidence of the type of single mindedness projected onto students, and the very real impact that it has upon their lives.

## CONCLUSIONS

This analysis explored the function of mentorship within the early portions of one's academic career, specifically as it relates to gender equity. Mentoring has been identified as a key mechanism for increasing gender equity within the workplace (Gardiner et al. 2007; Hansen et al. 1995; Kram 1985), and yet, the messages that are conveyed in mentoring have been understudied. This analysis attempted to explore what those messages are and whether they have the potential to transform the academy in egalitarian ways. As I have shown, these messages are equally if not more likely to reproduce a male model of work. I also compared and contrasted the relational dynamics

of cross-gender and same-gender relationships with women graduate students to see whether these mentoring relationships differed in the messages they conveyed.

The overwhelming conclusion of this study is that both men and women faculty mentors are capable of socializing their women graduate students in ways that have potential to transform the academic institution in gender egalitarian ways. Moreover, a number of them are actively engaged in this effort. Still, it is often the case that these mentoring relationships perpetuate gender norms in the institution. Evidence supporting each of the research expectations was uncovered in the data analysis. To review, the first research expectation was as follows:

*1a. Women mentors are preferable for women mentees because they are more likely to exhibit appropriate role modeling given their similarities in work and life experiences. They are more attuned to the difficulties and tensions that exist for women in academics, and having succeeded themselves, are equipped to provide pertinent advice for overcoming and challenging institutional norms based on masculine models of work.*

This expectation certainly was supported to a degree, although much more modestly than originally supposed. Women had the advantage of experiencing a greater ease in communication with their women students. They were also more likely to be open and honest about their difficulties, and were much more comfortable addressing the emotional aspects of graduate work. Still, this is a generalization of women, and many men enjoyed a level of intimacy and communication with their women students as well, although it was not achieved without work.

The alternative to this research expectation was also supported. It was as follows:

*1b. Alternately, men as mentors have more flexibility and power to promote change within academe because of their privileged position within the institution. Therefore, men who recognize and are sympathetic to gender inequities are well*



*positioned and also likely to instigate change through transformative mentoring practices.*

Typically men who were fathers themselves or who had wives that were active in the professional realm were more attuned to the needs of promoting gender equity. Their personal experiences, and the experiences of their partners, contributed to a sense of the injustice and instilled a sense of duty towards being part of the solution. Still, men occasionally felt at a loss of how to help. For instance, the administrator in engineering grappled with how best to stand up for injustices experienced by women in his department, worried that his involvement would be misinterpreted as patriarchal. Still, men provided an important means for communicating the message that it was okay to set limits on one's time and commitment to work in ways that women faculty felt incapable of doing without risk of appearing incompetent.

To understand how mentoring may reproduce institutional norms, I presented the following research expectation:

*2a. Women mentors who have succeeded in a masculine framework are unlikely to mentor graduate students in ways that might potentially challenge institutional norms. While they may recognize gender inequity on some level, they are unlikely to engage in mentoring styles that question the system in which they personally experience 'success.'*

This research expectation was supported in a handful of relationships. For instance, Rachel experienced difficulty with women professors who seemed to lack empathy for her not finishing work due to family responsibilities. They essentially adhered to the masculine model in which they were academically raised. This was apparent in situations where women appeared to lack active personal lives. Additionally, some women seemed

to project an attitude of single-mindedness towards work in their adherence to intense work schedules.

The second research expectation under this assumption was as follows:

*2b. Additionally, men as mentors are incapable of fully relating to the experience of women in academia, resulting in relationships that adhere to prevailing masculine norms. In these relationships, perceived gender differences are too great to overcome, with reduced levels of psychosocial support as a consequence because of lack of intimacy or openness.*

Men did occasionally experience barriers in terms of fully relating to their women graduate students. This mostly occurred in the context of being unable to fully connect due to fears of sexual harassment accusations. Interestingly, men's ability to connect was also stifled by the assumption that they were not able to fully understand the experience of women, and thus their advice was either not sought after, or was simply regarded as inapplicable. Intimidation also played a role in these relationships, which was a problem unique to men professors. Finally, men were less prepared to engage in discussions of the emotional aspects of graduate school with their women graduate students, which further established distance between them.

Thus, there appear to be both positive and negative elements related to working with either men or women faculty mentors. Importantly, these elements are not essential to being a man or women, but are contextual and dependent upon a number of factors. It would likewise be presumptuous to say that women graduate students receive all their mentorship from a single source – the faculty member under whom they work. In reality, mentoring and socialization occurs in a number of relationships throughout one's graduate career.

While this research is a good start on uncovering the function of mentoring and its relation to promoting gender equity within academe, future research would do well to incorporate analyses of the role of race and ethnicity as well as sexuality. Furthermore, extending research to include a longitudinal design would allow us to track the impact of graduate mentorship upon later attitudes, practices, experiences, and career attainment. A more detailed look at the impact of specific departmental cultures within the university and how they might differentially pattern mentoring practices would also be a fascinating area of exploration.

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## CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER THREE - CONTEXTUALIZING THE ROLE OF GRADUATE  
MENTORING IN THE USE OF FAMILY POLICIES WITHIN ACADEME: A CROSS-  
CULTURAL COMPARISON OF CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

*“I believe it is imperative that your country give you the tools to succeed not only in the workplace but also at home. If you or any American has to choose between being a good parent and successful in your careers, you have paid a terrible price, and so has your country”* (Bill Clinton, President’s Commencement Address 1999).

Noteworthy politicians, numerous scholars, and a large portion of the general population have looked towards the adoption of work-family policies as the key to easing the burden of tensions between responsibilities in public and private spheres (Gottfried and Reese 2004; Williams 2000; Wisensale 2004). Policies are seen as integral in the effort to specifically support women with children as they enter and remain attached to the paid workforce at increasing rates (Wisensale 2004). In particular, the adoption and implementation of work-family policies are commonly assumed to be a vital solution for neutralizing the gender-ratio problem within academe’s higher ranks (Williams 2004). This is especially pertinent within the traditionally male-dominated fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). After all, despite significant advancements in the number of women awarded doctorates within these fields (now 40%), women still represent only 28% of tenured or tenure-track faculty (Mason and Ekman 2007). Moreover, a recent survey of 800 postdoctoral fellows revealed that 59 percent of women with children were contemplating their exit from academia, citing the

high levels of stress between balancing work and family life as the culprit (Mason and Goulden 2009).

Social scientist and law scholar Joan Williams (2000, 2003, 2004) has written extensively on the topic of gender equity within academe, advocating a wide-range of policies as a springboard towards a more inclusive atmosphere. Among these are the adoption of part-time tenure track alternatives, extended paid parental leaves, flexible benefit plans, the creation of mentoring and networking opportunities, and so forth (see [www.worklifelaw.org](http://www.worklifelaw.org)). The underlying assumption is that these policies will translate into wider institutional change and acceptance, for *both* women and men. The intent of this research is to unpack the assumption behind the argument that these types of policies will really make a difference in the lives of men and women in academe through an empirical exploration of *how* they matter and *when* they matter. This will be accomplished through a qualitative cross-national comparative study of the experiences of graduate students and faculty at two academic institutions.

Whether and how these policies matter is dependent upon how they are translated and interpreted by individuals in the position to take advantage of them. While formal policies may be initially helpful in terms of recruitment, the heart of the question lies in whether they make substantive differences in the everyday lives of workers. Moreover, the ways in which policies are filtered and translated through faculty mentoring of graduate students will have lasting impacts upon the recruitment and training of a new generation of scholars.

Role modeling as a function of graduate mentoring may be particularly important in this context. Many doctoral students believe their relationship with their faculty

supervisor to be the most important aspect of their graduate school experience (Kurtz-Costes, Helmke, and Ulkü-Steiner 2006, see Wilde and Schau 1991). Interestingly, a study of 62 highly productive professors whose current positions were generally in institutions of prestige, results of a survey revealed that faculty mentors, “overwhelmingly see their most successful protégés as those whose careers were essentially identical to their own” (Blackburn, Chapman, and Cameron 1981). The implications of this finding are numerous. Given the weight of importance attributed to this student-supervisor relationship, personal decisions of faculty supervisors regarding family planning, time management, and use of official leave policies will likely have great impact upon their student protégés. Specifically, students who foresee having children will look towards their faculty mentors for guidance in terms of the timing of such events and the acceptability of using work-family policies available. They will either be encouraged or dissuaded depending upon perceived career related, psychological and emotional impacts of these decisions.

Essentially, this research will explore whether mentoring adopts different meanings and practices when policies aimed towards increasing work and family balance are institutionalized. Moreover, how do these meanings and practices contribute to, or inhibit, institutional change?

#### THE COMPARATIVE CONTEXT: CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

Both the United States and Canada have adopted policies designed to promote women’s employment and participation in the public sphere. As Ann Orloff (2002) has theorized, each country has to an extent supported relative defamilization, also referred to

as individualization (Daly 2011). Familization and defamilization can be thought of as the extent to which women are able to participate in the workforce due to government supported initiatives designed to support the family. The degree to which families have been supported by the government, however, differs largely by country. The United States weighs more heavily on the side of defamilization, and somewhere in the middle sits Canada, with European countries such as Sweden at the other end of the spectrum. Given the geographic proximity of the United States and Canada, not to mention their interdependence economically and politically, they provide a natural comparison for teasing out the effects of different work-family policies.

In recent years, the United States has experienced significant increases in the number of hours worked per employee per year (averaging 1,996 hours in 2000) as well as the percentage of women working full time, an astonishing 60% (Wisensale 2004). Interestingly, women with children are employed at an even higher rate (67.7 %) than women overall (Wisensale 2004). This places the United States at the forefront of women's labor force participation. At the same time, of all industrialized nations, the United States currently has the least developed family friendly policies (Gottfried and Reese 2004; see Wisensale 2004). Scholars have noted that in this context of limited work-family policies and increasing work demands, "the costs of motherhood are particularly acute" in the United States (Mcquillan et al. 2008; Misra, Budig, and Moller 2007).

At the federal level, Americans may take advantage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) established in 1993. This enables individuals who meet specific requirements (e.g. employed at a workplace of more than 50 employees) to take a leave

of up to 12 weeks to care for an infant (adopted or biological), an elderly or disabled family member, or to for personal health reasons. Although an individual's job is to be guaranteed upon return from leave, no wage replacement is provided under the act (Trzcinski 2004; Wisensale 2004). Furthermore, employers are given the option of excluding "key employees" (earning within the top 10 percent of the company) from coverage under the FMLA (Haas 2004). As Haas (2004) points out, this exclusion "is significant, because this sends the messages to employees that the company culture does not support high-level managers taking parental leave, which would have a dampening effect on others' decisions regarding leave taking" (205). This begs the question of what it means when an individual does take leave – for instance, are they securing their status as a 'non-key' employee?

Because of the limited coverage of the FMLA (applicable only to approximately 6 percent of workplaces within the country, and 60 % of the actual workforce, (Wisensale 2004) as well as the fact that few individuals can afford to take unpaid leave of work, the likelihood of policy use is limited. Interestingly, studies have shown that "less than 3 percent of employees use the FMLA within an eighteen-month period to care for a newborn or newly adopted child. This is the same percentage of employees estimated to use employer-provided leave *before* the Family and Medical Leave Act was in place (emphasis added, Haas 2004, 206). The effectiveness of the FMLA in providing any type of substantive benefits for individuals who happen to be eligible to use it is dubious at best.

In terms of the policies available at the American Public Institution (APU) from which part of the sample of this study is drawn, workers may take advantage of FMLA or

a newly developed family policy. This policy, available to tenure and tenure-track faculty, provides the parents of a newborn or adopted child with a modification of duties, specifically alleviating them of the responsibility for teaching for a semester. Faculty who are eligible for this policy receive 90 % pay during their leave, with the understanding that they will return to the university for a minimum of one semester. While this policy is an excellent start towards moving towards a model that recognizes family responsibilities and places value upon care work, knowledge of its existence has not been formalized given the political climate and economic hardships faced by APU at this time. Word of mouth has been the primary method of spreading information regarding the policy, and assumedly the extent of its use has thus been limited.

In summary, the American orientation towards family friendly policies is of an individualized nature. The responsibilities of the home and childcare in particular are considered to be primarily private concerns, as evidenced by the limited policies available aimed at supporting care work (Wisensale 2004).

In contrast, Canadians are much more likely to be oriented favorably towards government support of the family. Parental leave for Canadians is granted federally and provincially through the Employment Insurance (EI) program at a much more generous amount of up to 52 weeks and includes wage replacement (Trzcinski 2004). The remaining sample for this study comes from the Canadian Public University (CPU), in which faculty are formally aware of the policies available to them should they desire to take a parental leave. An individual is eligible once they have worked a minimum of 600 insurable hours, which is rarely an issue for faculty (but occasionally can be for graduate students). Eligible parents (including biological, adoptive, and same-sex) may split their

time on leave. The university tops the wages they receive federally to 95% of their income for up to 40 months. After this time, the individual will experience a decrease in income (down to 55%) should they choose to take the full 52 weeks of leave. The specifics of parental leave policies are widely accessible to all employees at CPU.

In contexts where extended paid parental leave and other relatively generous work-family policies are institutionalized (i.e. in Canada), one would assume that the conflict between work and family is lessened. It is my intent to explore whether this is actually the case.

As Heidi Gottfried and Laura Reese suggest, “merely having national or even local policies to address gender equity and work-family balance does not mean that policies are fully implemented or implemented in a meaningful way” (2004, 21). Indeed, evidence suggests that gender inequality persists in Canadian Universities (Doucet, Durand, and Smith 2008; Ornstein, Stewart, and Drakich 2007; Webber 2008). So whether the institutionalization of work-family policies matters to faculty and the students they mentor remains to be seen. This study approaches the experience and meaning of work/family policies with the following research expectations:

*1. Faculty mentors will experience more flexibility in work-family arrangements in contexts where family policies are institutionalized, thereby providing alternative models of work to graduate students and consequently, creating space for increased gender equity within academe.*

*2. Alternately, in practice, faculty mentors will remain wedded to ideal worker models rooted in the masculine work ethics of their professions regardless of institutionalized family policies, thereby perpetuating the male model of work through mentorship.*

Again, understanding the conditions under which work-family policies matter is a vital component of understanding how they might contribute to increased gender equity within academe. Heidi Gottfried and Laura Reese (2004) have issued a call for research

that improves our understanding of policy implementation. This study examines role modeling via graduate mentoring as a mechanism for understanding work-family policy implementation or lack thereof.

## METHOD

### *Data Collection*

Qualitative data is uniquely capable of offering increased insight into the nuances of relationships and interactions. Given the nature of my research questions, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews in order to illustrate the more subtle relational dynamics that occur between professor mentors and their graduate students. This method also provided the flexibility to probe for deeper understanding of personal values and experiences as needed.

Forty interviews with graduate students (20 women/20 men) and 19 interviews with tenured or tenure-track faculty (10 women/9 men) from two research institutions were conducted. While the two institutions included were based on a convenience sample, their comparison is theoretically appropriate in reference to the aims of the study. Both institutions boast research-intensive programs and student bodies greater than 25,000, indicating an active graduate student presence. Adding to the variety of experiences and perspectives, one institution was located in a large metropolitan area in Canada, the other in a relatively geographically isolated college town in the United States. They will be referred to as Canadian Public University (CPU) and American Public University (APU) throughout the study. Sampling from more than one institution allows for a greater range of experiences and increases the reliability and consistency of



findings. Because a faculty sponsor was required in order to obtain approval for the study at CPU, a copy of the e-mail sent to solicit sponsorship is included in Appendix C.

Departments included in the sample were those that traditionally fit within the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics as these disciplines are generally male-dominated and theoretically offer a more stark example of the dominance of masculine norms of work within the academy. Moreover, these departments typify the ‘gendered organization.’ Departments were matched by university and dropped out of the sample if a given department did not exist in both institutions (see Appendix E for a complete list of departments included in the study). From these departments, a sample of both students and faculty members was drawn using a random sampling procedure stratified by gender in order to achieve an equal representation of both sexes.

From April to September in 2010, potential participants were contacted via e-mail addresses obtained from university departmental pages (see Appendix C). The e-mails requested a confidential interview regarding graduate student mentoring. Follow-up e-mails were sent to non-respondents after one week. If the individual failed to respond within a reasonable time, they were dropped from the sample. The response rates are shown in Table 12 and 13 as they correspond to each group and each institution.

To qualify as “not applicable” an individual must have either moved and considered themselves to no longer be associated with the university, were not currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship, or were traveling or conducting field work during the duration of the study. Response rates were therefore calculated from the number of individuals contacted that were deemed eligible for interviews (i.e., were

TABLE 12. Response Rates for American Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	10	4	1	56%
Men Faculty	11	5	1	50%
Women Graduate Students	17	4	3	71%
Men Graduate Students	22	8	4	56%

TABLE 13. Response Rates for Canadian Public University

	Number Contacted	Number Declined/No Response	Number Not Applicable	Response Rate for Eligible Participants
Women Faculty	26	19	2	26%
Men Faculty	37	27	6	13%
Women Graduate Students	19	9	0	53%
Men Graduate Students	26	14	2	42%

currently involved in a graduate mentoring relationship and were physically available for an interview). Noteworthy are the lower response rates for participants at the Canadian institution. This may be partially accounted for by the timing of the research. Interviews were solely conducted during summer months in Canada, while they were conducted at the end of spring semester and beginning of fall semester in the United States.

Additionally, men at both institutions had a lower response rate in relation to women, perhaps revealing differential time management practices and prioritization of work.

In an effort to maximize confidentiality, when possible interviews were conducted in private offices. Four interviews took place in public settings and another four were conducted over the phone in an effort to accommodate the participant. Interviews ranged from 20-90 minutes in length, with faculty interviews typically taking longer.

After completing a short demographic questionnaire, faculty interviewees were asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, their strategies for work and family life balance, whether they would consider an academic position to be family friendly, current relationships with students they advise, and to describe characteristics of their most successful students. Students were likewise asked to describe what it means to be a good professor, how they approach balance in their lives, whether their advisor has been a positive role model, when they feel is the most strategic time to start a family, and so forth (see Appendix A & B for complete list of questions included). As needed, notes including personal reflections and ideas as they emerged from the interview process were taken following interviews.

### *Data Analysis*

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and pseudonyms have been used to ensure confidentiality. Each transcript was read through a minimum of three times in an effort to increase reliability and consistency. The first reading helped establish initial general themes and a framework from which to guide subsequent readings. This exercise of open coding was followed by axial coding, which is defined by Strauss and Corbin as “[t]he process of relating categories to their subcategories” (1998, 123). Themes and

subthemes were discussed and honed in relation to theoretical implications with others familiar with the project, primarily my own major professor. During the analysis stage we met weekly to discuss themes emerging from the data and possible avenues for organization and theoretical development. Quotations were included based on their ability to capture both unique insights and illustrations of more general themes. Thick description in the form of respondent's own words and experiences were used to explore this topic and add authenticity to the work (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

This research and analysis is an attempt to understand both men and women's behavior from the standpoint of women (Harding 1991, 2004; Smith 1987). Like Martin (2001), I do not suppose that my interpretations of the ways in which interviewees speak of their experiences are necessarily the interpretations they would personally give them. They are influenced by my own position, experiences, and biases as a woman in academics. Additionally, power differentials may impede frankness in interviews with faculty members, given my identity as a graduate student, and a *female graduate student studying gender* at that. Analysis was completed largely by myself, but was also informed through conversations with other students and faculty. Our combined subjective understandings provides a removed but feminist perspective on the interactions of both men and women involved (Martin 2001; see Harding 1991).

### *Sample Characteristics*

Of the 59 participants, 30 were women, and 29 men. Eleven of the 40 students were in masters level programs, the remaining 29 were somewhere along the path to obtaining their PhD. Seventeen of the 40 graduate students were married, while 13 of the

19 faculty members were likewise in marital partnerships. Of the 20 graduate students interviewed, six were mothers. Of those who were married, the majority of their partners were either students themselves, or professionals working outside the home. The one exception was the partner of the lone father, who resided at home with the children. Of the faculty members interviewed, six of the nine men were fathers, and four of the ten women were mothers. Of all the faculty parents, only one man had a partner who stayed at home with the children. The remaining were dual-career couples. As for the racial make-up of the sample was relatively homogenous, with 44 identifying as white, eight as Asian, one as African, one as Hispanic/Latino, and five as “other” (see Tables 14 through 17).

TABLE 14. Demographics of Canadian Graduate Students

PSEUDONYM	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	DEPENDENTS		AVERAGE HOURS WORKED per WEEK	GENDER OF ADVISOR	PARENTAL STATUS OF MENTOR
			0 TO 5	6 to 18			
Neil	Married	Professional	-	-	57.5	Man	Parent
Kendall	Married	Professional	-	-	50	Man	Parent
Andrew	Married	Professional	-	-	45	Man	Parent
Michael	Single	-	-	-		Man	Parent
Finn	Single	-	-	-		Man	Parent
Lucas	Single	-	-	-	52.5	Man	Parent
James	Single	-	-	-	45	Man	Parent
Everett	Single	-	-	-	37.5	Man	Parent
Cory	Single	-	-	-		Woman	Parent*
Nicholas	Married	Professional	-	-	60	Man	
Natalie**	Married	Professional	2	-	40	Woman	No kids
Shilo	Single	-	-	-		Man	Parent
Tamara	Married	Student	-	-	50	Woman	Parent *
Alicia	Single	-	-	-	45	Woman	Parent
Rachel	Married	Professional	-	2		Man	Parent
Andrea	Single	-	-	-	40	Man	
Esther	Single	-	-	-	55	Man	
Margot	Single	-	-	-		Man	No kids
Caroline	Single	-	-	-	50	Woman	
Hailey	Single	-	-	-	40	Man	Parent

\*mentor currently on leave \*\*student currently on leave

TABLE 15. Demographics of American Graduate Students

PSEUDONYM	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	DEPENDENTS		AVE. HRS WORKED per WEEK	GENDER OF ADVISOR	PARENTAL STATUS OF MENTOR
			0 TO 5	6 to 18			
Jasmine	Married	Professional	-	-	45	Man	No kids
Lori	Married	Professional	-	-	50	Man	No kids
Mindy	Married	Professional	-	2	45	Man	Parent
Terri	Single	-	-	-	80	Woman	No kids
Sarah	Married	Student	-	-	40	Man	Parent
Mariel	Married	Student	1	3	32.5	Woman	Parent
Sophie	Single	-	-	-	50	Man	Parent
Elin	Single	-	-	2	60	Man	Parent
Lindsay	Married	Student	1	-	20	Man	Parent
Alyce	Single	-	-	-	45	Man	Parent
Mark	Single	-	-	-		Man	Parent
Marek	Single	-	-	-		Woman	No kids
Calvin	Single	-	-	-	60	Man	Parent
Brent	Single	-	-	-		Man	Parent
Adam	Married	Student	-	-	37.5	Man	Parent
Christopher	Married	Professional	-	-	40	Man	Parent
Reed	Married	Professional	-	-	40	Man	Parent
Richard	Married	At home	3	-	70	Man	Parent
Seth	Single	-	-	-	50	Man	Parent
Jason	Single	-	-	-		Woman	No kids

TABLE 16. Demographics of Canadian Faculty Mentors

GENDER	RANK	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	CHILDREN		AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK
				0 TO 5	6 TO 18	
Man	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-	
Man	Professor	Married	Professional	-	2	70
Man	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-	55
Man	Associate	Married	Professional	1	-	75
Woman	Associate	Single	-	-	-	
Woman	Professor	Divorced	-	-	-	40
Woman	Professor	Single	-	-	-	52.5
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-	
Woman	Associate	Married	Professional	-	-	55

## FINDINGS

This section is organized around three broad questions: (1) how is work-family balance modeled by faculty mentors? (2) how is work-family balance depicted by faculty

TABLE 17. Demographics of American Faculty Mentors

GENDER	RANK	MARITAL STATUS	PARTNER'S OCCUPATION	CHILDREN		AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK
				0 TO 5	6 TO 18	
Man	Administrator	Married	Professional	-	-	50
Man	Professor	Divorced	-	-	1	55
Man	Administrator	Married	Professional	-	-	80
Man	Professor	Divorced	-	-	-	30*
Man	Associate	Married	At home	2	-	55
Woman	Assistant	Married	Professional	1	2	50
Woman	Administrator	Married	Professional	-	-	60
Woman	Associate	Single	-	-	-	
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional	-	-	50
Woman	Professor	Married	Professional	-	1	57.5

\*Part-time position

mentors? and (3) how do these messages about work-family balance influence student's work-family aspirations? Each section will compare examples from the American experience to examples from the Canadian experience. For ease of orientation, quotations will be identified not only by pseudonyms but also in reference to the individual's affiliation with either the American Public University (APU) or the Canadian Public University (CPU). To reiterate, the purpose of this study is to examine whether formal work-family policies make a substantive difference in how faculty members transmit messages about work-family compatibility in academia to graduate students. If formal policies do matter, we should see a significant difference between the experiences and perceptions of American and Canadian faculty mentors and their students.

#### *How Is Balance Modeled?*

Balance between work and family life was modeled by American and Canadian faculty mentors in ways that were positive and negative. In some instances, it was difficult to categorize the model as fitting neatly into either category. But what is most

noteworthy is the similarity of modeling in both countries. Even so, important differences did appear, specifically in reference to the actual implementation (or lack of) parental leave policies in Canada.

In both countries, stories of positive work-family models involved professors talking about their families, professors canceling meetings or changing plans due to children's needs, or professors offering assistance to students with families. In these instances, professors were demonstrating their acknowledgement of and respect for family responsibilities. For example, a woman professor (APU) relates her experience having her first child during graduate school in the 1970s. Speaking of her mentor, she explained:

[He] had a wonderful balance because his wife was a lawyer, and so when [my daughter] was born he actually moved me into an office, if you can believe this, private office as a grad student. Unheard of. With a sink. So I could bring her to school with me and change a diaper. So he was all about balance, and promoting this.

Her professor's sensitivity towards her situation and his attention to details (i.e. providing a sink in a private office) are indicative of the type of role modeling that promotes institutional change. Of note is the fact that the professor's wife worked full-time as a professional, to which this woman attributed his sensitivity. The general perception is that men professors with children and partners in the paid work force appeared to be more aware of and sympathetic to the specific needs of students with families.

Elin, a graduate student at APU and mother of two teenagers expressed her appreciation for her supervisor's example of prioritizing his family.

He has two daughters and he has no bones about saying I can't help you because I'm going to do such and such with my daughters— being a mother also I really



appreciate that he takes time off to go to swim meets and stuff and do what his daughters need and that's really cool.

Students at CPU likewise related similar instances in which they were appreciative for the indications that family life was important to their faculty mentors. Interestingly, this appreciation was limited to instances in which the prioritization of family life did not drastically affect the amount of attention they received from their professors.

This sentiment was expressed only in instances where a student's supervisor was currently on parental leave. Still, students in this situation (two in my sample) articulated formal appreciation and praise in regards to their professor's choice to prioritize family "as they should," yet also frustration in how it impacted their personal experience of graduate school. For example, Cory (CPU) shares his frustration of working with a professor whose availability and commitment has drastically shifted throughout his graduate career. At the time of our interview, his professor was eight months pregnant with her second child and about to go on parental leave. He explains:

When she first started here, before she got married and started a family, she was very readily accessible for communication. And nowadays she obviously has much less time to devote. Which is totally understandable, though at the same time sometimes I feel, and this is an opinion that I've kind of got from other students in her lab too, is she seems to be kind of a *have-her-cake-and-eat-it-too* sort of approach where she's trying to devote more and more time to her home life while also expanding the research lab beyond even what she had been supervising before she was doing, you know, building a family and dealing with a homestead and whatnot. So communication, so the amount of time she can devote to any one student has definitely dropped a fair bit . . . the amount and type of feedback has definitely evolved in the last couple of years as her, you know, personal situation has changed, so. I almost, like I - from some aspects I feel bad complaining about it. But from a selfish point of view, I am, like, *this is my communication time*. I need that . . . so it gets frustrating.

This experience may negatively impact Cory if faced with a decision of whether or not to take parental leave should the time arise in his future. Given his feelings of frustration, not to mention his understanding of her actions as being indicative of a “*have-her-cake-and-eat-it-too*” approach to work and family life - Cory may very well not take advantage of parental leave policies or to respond unfavorably to colleagues who do.

Commonly expressed by individuals from both American and Canadian contexts was the perception that professors did role model balance in the sense that they appeared to be happy with the amount of time they devoted to work and family. Although the level of balance modeled was not satisfactory from the perspective of the students, it appeared that it was satisfactory to the professors, who were perceived as working disproportionately long hours because they loved the work that they did. For example, Calvin (APU) explains that his field is, “something that you get into because you love. It’s not something you go into because of the money. And because you love it, you give everything you have to it.” In reference to whether his professor has a satisfactory level of balance, James (CPU) responded,

I think he is satisfied with it. He doesn’t seem to be in need of any more free time, but I think that is his personality. And I think that someone else in that position would not necessarily be satisfied with the amount of free time he has. But yeah, he’s just that kind of person. He doesn’t work because he needs to - he actually enjoys it. He gets a lot of satisfaction just from working that much.

A similar sentiment was echoed by a woman professor at CPU. Regarding balance, she explained:

Well, of course, everybody has a balance - the question is, is it a satisfactory one? And what is satisfactory will vary for each person. And my - I have a very unprofessional view of my work which is it’s an extension of my hobbies and if it doesn’t, if I’m just working for the next grant or something, I might as well do something which earns me more money, you know.

This rhetoric of work being a labor of love, used not only by students but by professors themselves, is reminiscent of Crittenden's (2001) description of how women's work has been disappeared. Professors appear to be willing to put up with longer hours because they enjoy what they are doing. In this logic, work is merely an extension of one's hobbies. Being a "good" professor involves dedication, passion, and love for what one does, without concern for the hours worked or the conditions under which one works. In upholding an ideal that pivots on long work hours and unbounded devotion, this rhetoric serves as a disciplinary tool in that it ensures that professors will internalize the need to work long hours as an outward sign of their devotion to and love for science. The "good" professor is one that works long hours and does not complain. Why this is problematic is that within this logic - specifically the assumption that if an individual loves one's job they will commit wholeheartedly to it at the expense of their personal life - norms are perpetuated that systematically disadvantage people who want a personal life and especially a family life. Mothers, no matter how much they love the work, cannot make the same degree of commitment and devote the same number of hours as non-mothers. In this way, the reproduction of the masculine model of work is facilitated through this rhetoric of the labor of love.

Numerous interviewees shared examples of the ways in which professors failed to model balance in both American and Canadian contexts. American students often expressed discouragement in the amount of hours worked and the level of stress experience by their faculty mentor. Moreover, some students were frustrated by professors who imposed strict work schedules upon them. For instance, Sarah (APU)

shared the following example of the how her professor lacked an approach to balance that she felt comfortable with. She explained:

You know, I work during the day and then go home at night and be with my family, or do other activities. Whereas he kind of thinks I should be in the lab 24/7. You know, because that's what he did as a graduate student. He'd sleep in the lab.

This expectation clearly was difficult for Sarah who had different attitudes towards her work. She admitted coming close to quitting altogether on numerous occasions. Neil (CPU) had an advisor with a similar model of work hours. He shared that “the joke is that his wife lets him come to work for Christmas. That is her Christmas gift to him.” These professors appear to fit nicely within the ideal worker model. Interestingly, Sarah saw this as problematic while Neil did not, reflective of typically gendered differences in ability to commit to long hours of work.

Unique to the Canadian context was the negative examples of professors who either decided not to take parental leave at all, or who did so on in a very limited way. For instance, Alicia (CPU) spoke about how she believed her professor to be “nuts” for “coming back four months after having kids.” Even so, there was an expectation that even those professors who took leave would not be completely unavailable. For example, Cory (CPU) explained that

I think the technical rules are you're not really supposed to be doing work at all, yet everyone in academics on parental leave is always doing something. You know, they have students who need attention, so they can't just be left adrift. Also I think, a lot of people in the situation realize that you know, sure they're on mat leave but it's still, they still have useful time that they could spend on work stuff, and it's a good opportunity. And there's a lot of people in specialized academics – I mean, they're doing the stuff that they like anyway, it would probably be their hobby if they weren't at the university anyway, so it would probably be weird to expect them not to be doing this sort of stuff. So I mean, [my professor] definitely scaled back the amount of time we see with her when she's on mat leave. She's

planning, you know, a chunk of time when she won't be around, basically, like, out of commission you know, just before giving birth and afterwards, but after . . . I mean, you know she'll be dropping in, she'll be on email, she'll be responding to things, so it's, I mean she won't be totally out of touch.

Note again the justification for not taking a complete leave in the sense that she would probably be working on her own anyway, given that her work is more of a hobby. The precedent that taking leave sets, though only a *partial* leave, implies that formal policies do not always translate into the type of substantive benefits they are meant to. Demands of the professional realm appear to trump the institutional context in this sense.

One professor shares his view of the barriers that present themselves when attempting to take leave:

I took the full ten weeks, but it wasn't really *leave*. It is hard to step away from the job completely and it is hard to get people to respect that you have stepped away completely. I think that even people who go on maternity leave experience the same thing, from talking to colleagues. So I think I was probably doing 50% time off—But even when I was home, I was working because the lab doesn't stop. There was one course that I was relieved from, but I still had one course that I was responsible for, that I didn't get leave from, and I had some service stuff that I wasn't relieved from. So it was a partial leave. I would have liked to completely step away from it, but again, that is partly my fault I think. I probably could have said, *no I am on leave*. They may not have liked it . . . you do hear some more senior faculty say, *we never had paternity leave, why do you need paternity leave*—so there is that attitude. And even some younger faculty don't take paternity leave, they don't see the point in that . . . I don't think there would have been concrete consequences, but I do think that there would have been perceptions. But, I am not very good at saying no . . . there were lots of people asking so I was able to say no to some stuff, but not everything.

Also fearing the repercussions of colleagues' potentially negative perceptions, one professor explained that she decided not to take a maternity leave at the time of her son's birth. Interestingly, she was concerned not as much about how she would be perceived, but on how future women might be judged because of her. This reflects the burden of

tokenism for women in largely male-dominated fields (Kanter 1993), as well as the power of stereotype threat.

Of note was a conversation with a professor at CPU who was a self-described feminist and who was actively seeking ways to bring women into his field. His wife was likewise a professor, and he openly shared his thoughts on how to increase gender equity within the university.

I think the fact that tenure coincides with typical childbearing years is especially difficult on women. For example one thing that happens at [CPU] is we get a big, a rather substantial benefit if we have a child, we can take essentially a year off or something like that, at 80% of salary or something. And most new moms do that. But, I don't know what the percentages are, but not all new dads do that. And I think that puts our female colleagues at a disadvantage. I think it should be mandatory that dads take time off, just like moms. Because there should be a hiccup in my tenure process, you know, I should have a little gap because I had a child, like [my wife] did.

Interestingly, despite his progressive views, when asked if he was able to take a paternity leave he responded that his daughter

. . . was born in April. And both of us just took advantage of the summer, although [my wife] took off one semester after that. And I didn't. And I probably should have, I mean my advice that I just gave to everyone else says that should have, but I didn't, partly because it was the summer maybe.

This example illustrates that even when individuals believe family friendly policies to be important and powerful tools, their belief does not necessarily translate into personal choices. As a final note in this section, the following conversation with a woman professor at CPU was telling,

*Do you see men taking paternity leave very often?*

No.

*Okay, never?*

Never [laughs].

*Is Balance Attainable?*

Both American and Canadian students by and large agreed that balance between work and family life within an academic career was possible, though never without substantial caveats. For example, when asked if someone in his field could be successful while having a family Marek (APU) responded:

Definitely. Let's see. I know a lot of professors who have family and they are very active in my field. I don't think it would be hard but you just have to know how to organize your time. The first couple - five years maybe - will be hard, but yeah, after that I think it would be easy.

Similarly, when asked the same question Lucas (CPU) replied:

I think so. So if I look at my supervisors, or other people that I know fairly well, yeah I think so. I think . . . once you're tenured basically. So tenure track, because I imagine it being fairly stressful and be working most the time, but I feel like after that there's definitely space for it.

While there is perceived "space" for balance during the latter stages of one's career, it is important to note the time in which there is little space for balance coincides with women's peak in fertility and therefore, most busy time both at home and in the workplace.

Another common response to whether balance was attainable was that balance could be achieved, but only through substantial work and effort. As one respondent explained:

I do think it's doable . . . just so long as you have realistic expectations in the field you're going into and understanding that you know, that professors work extends beyond just the months of the year that they work but also when school is out of session that there's also work being done and that you know, it's not all free and play time. And so I think so long as you have that mindset, that it's a year round job, just like any other, and so long as your family has that mindset as well, that you know, it's work (Richard, APU).

Natalie (CPU) shared a similar view of the process in that she believes that balance is attainable but that “it takes a lot of work.” From this perspective, the only barrier to balance is one’s willingness to work hard for it.

Others believed balance to be attainable, but at a cost. The specific cost varied somewhat by individual. For instance, Jasmine (APU) believed that it would be possible to experience balance in the sense of having a personal life, but that, “you might not be able to have kids,” as “the really high powered ones are usually just single, or a couple without kids.” Mindy (APU) felt that she had personally limited the size of family she would have liked to have had due to her perceptions of the inability to properly balance graduate school and childrearing. In general, the perception seemed to be that it was possible to have a family and some sense of balance, but not without sacrificing in both realms

Costs were also born in the sense of anxiety. For instance, Andrew (CPU) felt that he may be able to take a paternity leave when he and his wife decide to have children and that this indeed would allow him a greater sense of balance, but that he “would be anxious about it . . . maybe six months or so would be possible.” This fear reveals that even when formal policies are available, the use of them is not without costs.

Lindsay (APU) experienced unique cost in her attempt to balance her graduate work and a new baby. Her professor was extremely supportive of her decision to start a family. In fact, they often meet in his home and he has always been open about her bringing her daughter to play with his children. While in many ways she believes him to be a “role model” and a “guardian angel” even, she also feels that the experience resulted in what might be considered a form of benevolent sexism. She explains:



I don't know. I've always had good terms with him . . . it's just like, recently there are some issues . . . As a person he's very nice, very humble, but you know, a person is different thing, being a professor is a different thing. I feel that I was capable of doing much more than what I'm doing now, and I kind of relied on him, and I needed a push. And instead of getting that motivation I got a little demotivated . . . I always heard him saying like, *oh, you are had working, and you are good, and this and that*, and only last year I got to know that he's just saying it maybe just encouraging me or something. And there was my candidacy exam, and I made some slides and he said that initially they were good. But then I myself didn't feel like they were good, and so I made totally different slides and everything, totally completely changed it. And then he said, *oh I like this one, I didn't like that one*. I said, *you said you like that one*. So there are small things which I have noticed he just says just for saying it . . . I would like him to be more honest with me.

Lindsay feels that she has not been pushed enough – perhaps because of her status as a mother – and that she could have achieved more were her professor more honest with her. While recognizing that his approach has allowed her greater balance with her work and family life, the cost she has born as a result is a lowered self-confidence in her own abilities.

The sense that balance is attainable, but only for others, was strongly voiced by participants as well. For instance, Alicia (CPU) talks about the one example of a man professor who was able to take a paternity leave in the following terms:

[H]e took a paternity leave but he was honestly such a genius . . . He was away from the lab, I think he came in once a week just to meet with everyone and then go home. He didn't write anything and his lab kept running completely smoothly and everything was great because with the little interaction he had with you, he could fix your problem in two seconds. Whereas I think that if you're really, I mean that's one in how many people can actually do that? . . . he was also one of those profs who would randomly not come into work one day because he decided he wanted to go golfing. Which is one of those things that makes you think, "I want to be you" - not golf, but - I want to be you but I'm not as much of a genius as you so I don't think I'll be able to.

Alicia attributed this professor's example of balance to his superior intellect. Clearly it was not possible for most people, and certainly not for her. Considering that in Alicia's

mind, one has to be a genius in order for paternity leave without too significant a cost to one's career is indicative of the failure of formal policies to buffer the the constraints of the profession.

Of final note is an interesting example of how Lindsay (APU) believes that the type of balance her professor enjoys is similarly not within her capabilities. She believes that he is able to maintain “a perfect balance” and that he “has time for everything, everything!” She explained his schedule in detail to illustrate:

So he has a class at nine. So he comes here about 8, 8:30 in the morning. Takes a class, stay here until four, and he goes back, makes dinner, he has wife at home but they make together something, and then in the night, he again comes back and if he doesn't have too much of work at home or kids are busy, then he comes early around six or seven, and then goes back at around 2 in the night. And during Saturdays and Sundays I think he takes completely off and spends time with his family. At the same time, when his family sleeps he starts his work. He was in Vegas last semester, with his friends and family - there also he worked. I had some questions, he looked at it, and he emailed me back, while he was on vacation. And his family doesn't mind that, because he spends good time with his family. I have been to his house so many times, I know his family quite well, . . . sometimes he calls me at his home for a meeting and then he babysits his daughter - So he babysits while he works. Like he's discussing and taking care of her. Both time of day, this is like, I can't do that, I just cannot do that.

While Lindsay's professor arguably provides an excellent model of how to balance work and family life, the message appears lost in translation. She is distinctly discouraged by his example because she cannot imagine herself being able to maintain the same balance.

What is important to note is that Lindsay does not account for the emotional labor involved in childrearing, which is differentially born by mothers. She does vent in later discussions that she does not understand how her own husband (who happens to be a graduate student in the same department as her) is able to go to work and “shutter his brain” and concentrate while working from home. She has difficulty turning off her

worry, particularly at time when her daughter is sick. This is the kind of emotional labor for which women are typically held responsible, which makes balancing much more difficult for mothers in comparison to fathers. Therefore, the supreme balancing acts displayed by these male professors may not be so much a product of their “genius” but the fact that they are men.

*Influence Upon Student’s Career Aspirations  
and Family Planning*

Graduate students observe the ways in which professors negotiate work-family balance. And they make their own work-family decisions and plans in response to these observations. In reference to family planning, for example, there was a mixture of students who felt that there is indeed a strategic time within one’s career to start having children. Others felt strongly that there is no ideal time, and that it is up to the individual to decide when is best. Mark (APU) shared his opinion that

if school is going to be important in your life, you should wait. Because I see people here, who are married with children taking classes and working full time and if something’s going to give, school’s going to give first. And so you’re spending a lot of money there but you’re not focusing on it. And I have no problem, if you want to go have a family, by all means, go have a family, if you want to be a student, by all means be a student. But, if you have a choice in the matter I would think postponing – I think it’s harder for graduate students because graduate students can be older, but you know, if you have a choice to you know hold off on the children as a graduate student, I think you should.

Mark illustrates an either/or conceptualization of work and family life, believing that they really should remain exclusive as long as possible. Although he attempts to appear non-judgmental in his assessment (i.e. *I have no problem, if you want to go have a family . . .*), it is clear that he does not consider students trying to do both as committed. Starting a family is more appropriate as a faculty member.

Although many students agreed that there are more strategic times in one's academic career to start a family, the specifics of those times were debated. Other students felt strongly that having children during graduate school was better, since the demands for one's time only grow once one becomes a professor. Shilo (CPU) shares this concern:

For our field, normally what I've seen, if you are in academia and especially you're hoping for a tenure track position, there isn't a better time any time, but for that matter, I don't know, maybe graduate school is a better time. Or, the break between the graduate school and the post-doctoral. Because it'll just get worse sort of. As bad as it sounds, it does. Because, I mean in physics they call it the *two-body problem*, having a baby . . . like your kid is a problem, and . . . it's almost said that until you are you know, in your late thirties or, there is no question of, you know, taking a chance of conceiving.

Unfortunately, the fact that Shilo will have access to parental leave policies does not seem to abate her anxiety about the proper timing of starting a family. Terri (APU) struggles with the decision as well. She explains:

I don't think there's any good time. [laughs]. You know, I've heard the argument for why you should have kids while you're in grad school, and that to me seems crazy because I work like 16 hour days often, or 20 hour days, you know. But I think it just all depends on your personal life and what type of research you're doing makes a huge difference, like I do a ton of field work, where I'm in the field for five weeks straight, that sort of thing . . . so, I don't think there's ever an easy time to have a family, I think you just make it work.

This last example suggests that while there is no "good" time to have a baby, it is possible to make things work.

In reference to student's career aspirations, very few wholeheartedly embraced the idea of following a similar career path as their faculty supervisors. Those who did generally had professors who were later on in their careers and had secured tenure and those who were seen by the student as capable of achieving a satisfactory level of balance

between work and personal life. A handful of students thought it would be nice to have a similar career path, but felt it was not realistic for them personally to do so. A great majority felt that they would ultimately do something different than their professors, and wished to avoid what they perceived to be a stressful life. As Lori explains:

In the beginning of graduate school, I wanted to do you know, tenure track position, have graduate students, do research. And probably about two to three years ago I decided that is not what I want. I mean, it's very stressful, I've seen, you know, people on my committee fighting for tenure, and people who are well established and have been here for ages still you know, they're really busy. They lead stressful lives. And I actually don't think that's for me, at this point.

There were no apparent differences in the patterns of responses between American and Canadian students in this category, suggesting that in both contexts, faculty mentors by and large are perceived to be very busy, and lead stressful lives. Those that do achieve balance are thought to work hard at doing so.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research largely supports the research expectation that, in practice, faculty mentors remain wedded to ideal worker models rooted in the masculine work ethos of their profession. And this is true regardless of institutionalized family policies. Professors who did take parental leave were largely unable to fully disengage from the workplace. To the extent that they did disengage from the workplace, they were viewed negatively for what was seen as an attempt to have-their-cake-and-eat-it-too or as an example of a professor's superior intellect or time management skills. Thus, in contexts where professional norms remain rooted in hegemonic masculine worker models (such as is the case in STEM fields), formal work-family policies may have a limited effect. Of note was the finding that students and professors alike often justified their working very

long hours as their work being a labor of love. This rhetoric is a disservice to transformative institutional goals in that it obscures the structural constraints of a system that rewards individuals for perpetuating norms of a masculine work ethic.

Given the assumption that family-friendly policies make a difference in the lives of individual workers, we should see a distinct separation of experiences between American and Canadian academics. In reality, these experiences overlap and echo one another in many respects. Despite very large differences in levels of institutional support formally offered to families in the American and Canadian cases, professional barriers experienced by academics in both cases prevent them from reaping the benefits that such benefits are meant to afford.

Interestingly, balance between work and family life was viewed as attainable by the majority of students in both contexts. The definition of balance was however highly subjective, and not without its caveats. In this regard, students generally expressed one of four beliefs: (1) balance was attainable but at a future point in life; (2) balance was attainable but only if one worked hard enough; (3) balance was attainable, but not without significant personal costs; and (4) balance was attainable, but not the kind of balance that was preferable. Again, students from both American and Canadian contexts expressed these beliefs, suggesting that the influence of work family policies did not appear to penetrate the psyche of Canadian graduate students in a meaningful way.

Perceptions of whether balance was attainable served to impact student's attitudes towards family planning and career aspirations. In general, it was believed that there may be some strategy in terms of timing of children and the ease of integrating family and work life, but the exact timing was debated. The overriding assumption appeared to be

that there is not an ideal time, and that therefore individuals needed to just figure out how to make it work within the current system. Again, the fact that individuals in both the American and Canadian context expressed these sentiments is indicative of the overriding power of hegemonic professional norms that undercut any transformative power policies may hold.

Does this mean that policies aimed towards easing the tension between work and family life should be abolished? No. But it does mean that the problem is more intractable than once imagined. There is a need to develop approaches designed to attack norms at the professional level, rather than merely the institutional level. Future research may explore the prevalence of the “labor of love” rhetoric and its influence on enforcing professional norms that favor a male model of work. The complacency that may result from this rhetoric is a barrier to institutional change and a mechanism for disciplining workers in that it systematically excludes individuals who are unable to express a passion for their work in equal ways. Although it is certainly acceptable to love one’s work, this passion should not stand in the way of making the workplace more compatible with other aspects of life, such as family life.

This research also uncovered differing responses to paternity leave and maternity leave. These differences should be explored further, with an emphasis on understanding what conditions lead to positive evaluations of individuals who utilize these policies and vice versa. Longitudinal studies that track the impact of role modeling upon not only career aspirations of graduate students but actual mobility within careers would likewise be a fruitful area of research.

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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Despite the support for mentoring, there is reason to question its role as a means for increasing institutional gender equality. This work explores the conditions under which mentoring has transformative potential, or conversely, when it instead appears to reproduce and solidify inequalities in the academy. More specifically, the influence of parental status; the experience of cross-gender and same-gender mentoring relationships; and the influence of institutionalized work-family policies on the function of mentoring and its ability to promote gender equality in a decidedly masculine context was explored through qualitative analyses of in depth interviews with both faculty mentors and their graduate mentees. This study contributes to our understanding of why gender inequalities persist in academia; how universities might improve mentoring practices; how work-family policies might be better designed; and lastly, will improve our theoretical understanding of both gender as an institution, and the institution as being gendered. Findings from each chapter are reviewed in the paragraphs below.

#### REVIEW OF CHAPTER ONE

This analysis seeks to delineate how individuals as academic mothers are conceived from differing levels. The definition of what it means to be a “good” professor is constructed both at the institutional level and the subordinate level. While contradictions may exist, the professor is accountable to both. This is not to dismiss the importance of an individual’s own self perception of what it means to fulfill these roles, and live up to the status characteristics of both a mother and a professor.

From the subordinate level we see that a tension exists between students who understand to a degree that professors with children have limits on their time, yet feel frustrated by their lack of availability. This frustration appears to be heightened for students who enjoyed greater accessibility from their professors prior to the birth of their children. Indeed, availability and interest in their work are among the most prized qualities of a supervising professor, and when they are lacking, professors are differentially seen in less positive light. Specifically, professors that lack time due to administrative or other work-related responsibilities are generally forgiven (men are more likely in these situations). The reaction is more complicated for professors whose responsibilities extend outside the workplace, and into the home (more likely women). This is where a more formal or theoretical support and understanding is offered towards women professors with children, but a private frustration and dissatisfaction with the supervisory relationship is felt.

From the peer level, frustration towards colleagues whose family responsibilities cut into their own personal time was expressed. The lack of formal validation for alternative life paths (i.e., ones that do not include children) caused some professors to begrudge the policy efforts aimed at alleviating parental burdens. Tellingly, the very act of having a child was referred to in some circles as being a *two-body problem*. This reference reveals a hostility towards and general sense of incompatibility between motherhood and academic career success.

Finally, from the subjective level, mothers in academia grapple with the tensions of this perceived incompatibility throughout their careers. Because they perceive the standards of the academic career to be in conflict with those of mothers, they discipline

themselves in ways that are most in line with those disembodied norms. This serves to silence the lives of academic mothers, whose reality is haunted by ambiguity, unrealized potential (both within and outside the home), and a sense of loss.

From this analysis we can see the multiple levels from which mothers in academia are penalized. This is a significant contribution considering the dominant trend within the “motherhood penalty” literature of using aggregate-level analyses to highlight wage disparities. This research expands our conceptualization of a motherhood penalty to include more subtle discrimination, and illuminates the complexity within which motherhood is embedded in work organizations and reproduced through interaction. The sense of constant observation and evaluation from multiple levels unquestionably has consequential effects upon behavior. Specifically through exploring the subjective experience of individuals, we are able to better understand the mechanisms by which gendered organizations are internalized and reproduced.

Future research may explore whether a fatherhood premium exists in relation to a motherhood penalty within academia. Attention to the timeline and stage of career and how this may differentially affect mothers would be a possible avenue for exploration. Additionally, a comparison between departments with higher proportions of women faculty and departments with large proportions of men (as in this study) would be of interest, specifically in parsing out whether this is a university-wide phenomenon, or specific to more masculine disciplines. Incorporating an analysis of race and sexuality into the experience of academic women with children would additionally provide a compelling story of how the *two-body problem* is negotiated.

## REVIEW OF CHAPTER TWO

This analysis empirically explored the function of mentorship within the early portions of one's academic career, specifically as it relates to gender equity. Mentoring has been identified as a key mechanism for increasing gender equity within the workplace (Gardiner et al. 2007; Hansen et al. 1995; Kram 1985), and yet, its function in the process deserves further investigation. This research has been an attempt to understand under which conditions mentoring has transformative potential in the sense of increasing gender equity, and under what conditions it instead serves to reproduce institutional norms based upon the masculine experience of work. In particular, I compared and contrasted the relational dynamics of cross-gender and same-gender relationships with women graduate students.

The overwhelming conclusion is that both men and women as faculty mentors are capable of socializing their women graduate students in ways that have potential to transform the academic institution in the arena of gender equity. Moreover, a number of them are actively engaged in this effort. Still, there are conditions under which institutional inequities are perpetuated. Evidence supporting each of the research expectations was uncovered in the data analysis. To begin with, processes that held transformative potential will be discussed in relation to the first research expectation.

*1a. Women mentors are preferable for women mentees because they are more likely to exhibit appropriate role modeling given their similarities in work and life experiences. They are more attuned to the difficulties and tensions that exist for women in academics, and having succeeded themselves, are equipped to provide pertinent advice for overcoming and challenging institutional norms based on masculine models of work.*

This expectation certainly was supported to a degree, although much more modestly than originally supposed. Women had the advantage of experiencing a greater ease in communication with their women students. They were also more likely to be open and honest about their difficulties, and were much more comfortable addressing the emotional aspects of graduate work. Still, this is a generalization of women, and many men enjoyed a level of intimacy and communication with their women students as well, although it was not achieved without work.

*Ib. Alternately, men as mentors have more flexibility and power to promote change within academe because of their privileged position within the institution. Therefore, men who recognize and are sympathetic to gender inequities are well positioned and also likely to instigate change through transformative mentoring practices.*

Typically men who were fathers themselves or who had wives that were active in the professional realm were more attuned to the needs of promoting gender equity. Their personal experiences, and the experiences of their partners, contributed to a sense of the injustice and instilled a sense of duty towards being part of the solution. Still, men occasionally felt at a loss of how to help. For instance, the administrator in engineering grappled with how best to stand up for injustices experienced by women in his department, worried that his involvement would be misinterpreted as patriarchal. Still, men provided an important means for communicating the message that it was okay to set limits on one's time and commitment to work in ways that women faculty felt incapable of doing without risk of appearing incompetent.

To understand how mentoring differentially reproduces institutional norms, I will again return to the research expectations presented earlier. First of all:



*2a. Women mentors who have succeeded in a masculine framework are unlikely to mentor graduate students in ways that might potentially challenge institutional norms. While they may recognize gender inequity on some level, they are unlikely to engage in mentoring styles that question the system in which they personally experience 'success.'*

This research expectation was supported in a handful of relationships. For instance, Rachel experienced difficulty with women professors who seemed to lack empathy for her not finishing work due to family responsibilities. They essentially adhered to the masculine model in which they were academically raised. This was apparent in situations where women appeared to lack active personal lives. Additionally, some women seemed to project an attitude of single-mindedness towards work in their adherence to intense work schedules.

The second research expectation under this assumption reads as follows:

*2b. Additionally, men as mentors are incapable of fully relating to the experience of women in academia, resulting in relationships that adhere to prevailing masculine norms. In these relationships, perceived gender differences are too great to overcome, with reduced levels of psychosocial support as a consequence because of lack of intimacy or openness.*

Men did occasionally experience barriers in terms of fully relating to their women graduate students. This mostly occurred in the context of being unable to fully connect due to fears of sexual harassment accusations. Interestingly, men's ability to connect was also stifled by the assumption that they were not able to fully understand the experience of women, and thus their advice was either not sought after, or was simply disregarded as inapplicable. Intimidation also played a role in these relationships, which was a problem unique to men professors. Furthermore, men were less prepared to engage in discussions of the emotional aspects of graduate school with their women graduate students, which further established distance between them.

There appear to be both positive and negative elements related to working with either men or women as faculty mentors. Importantly, these elements are not essential to being a man or women, but are contextual and dependent upon a number of factors. It would likewise be presumptuous to say that women graduate students receive all their mentorship from a single source – the faculty member under whom they work. In reality, mentoring and socialization occurs in a number of relationships throughout one's graduate career.

While this research is a good start on uncovering the function of mentoring and its relation to promoting gender equity within academe, future research would do well to incorporate analyses of the role of race and ethnicity as well as sexuality. Furthermore, extending the research to include a longitudinal design would allow us to track the impact of graduate mentorship upon later attitudes, practices, experiences, career trajectory and attainment. A more detailed look at the impact of specific departmental cultures within the university and how they might differentially pattern mentoring practices would also be a fascinating area of exploration.

### REVIEW OF CHAPTER THREE

Given the assumption that family-friendly policies make a difference in the lives of individual workers, we should see a distinct separation of experiences between American and Canadian academics. In reality, these boundaries are more blurred, and experiences overlap and echo one another in many instances. This finding implies that despite very large differences in levels of support formally offered to families through

policy initiatives, professional barriers experienced by academics prevent the type of substantive benefits they are meant to afford. This in turn, prevents institutional change.

This finding largely supports the research expectation that in practice, faculty mentors remain wedded to ideal worker models rooted in the masculine work ethics of their professions regardless of institutionalized family policies, thereby perpetuating inequality through mentorship. Even in instances in which positive role modeling was apparent (recall Lindsay's professor who often met with her in his home as their children played), this did not necessarily translate into substantive benefits for those involved. Furthermore, professors who did take parental leave were largely unable to fully disengage from the workplace, and were at times viewed negatively for what was seen as an attempt to have-their-cake-and-eat-it-too. Examples of parental leave were minimal, and were also viewed by some as possible to do only if one is intellectually superior. This finding introduces the limitations of formal policies in contexts where profession norms remain rooted in hegemonic masculine worker models (such as is the case in STEM fields). Of note was the finding that students and professors alike often justified their negative role modeling, specifically in the sense of working very long hours, as being a labor of love. This rhetoric is a disservice to transformative institutional goals in that it obscures the structural constraints of a system that awards individuals for perpetuating norms of ideal workers based upon a masculine work ethic.

Nevertheless, balance between work and family life was indeed viewed as attainable by the majority of students in both contexts. The definition of balance was however highly subjective, and not without its caveats. For example, students generally fell within one of four categories: the belief that balance was attainable but at a future

point in life; balance is attainable but not without significant personal costs; if one is willing to work hard enough, balance is within reach; and finally, balance seems to be enjoyed by some, but it is not the type of balance I would want. Again, students from both America and Canada fit within each of these categories, suggesting that the influence of work family policies did not appear to penetrate the psyche of Canadian graduate students in a meaningful way.

Perceptions of whether balance was attainable served to impact student's attitudes towards family planning and career aspirations. In general, it was believed that there may be some strategy in terms timing of children and the ease of integrating family and work life, but the exact timing was debated. The overriding assumption appeared to be that there is not an ideal time, and that therefore individuals needed to just figure out how to make it work within the current system. Again, the fact that individuals in both the Canadian and American context expressed these sentiments is indicative of the overriding power of hegemonic professional norms that undercut any transformative power policies may hold.

Does this mean that policies aimed towards easing the tension between work and family life should be abolished? No. But it does mean that the problem is more intractable than once imagined. There is a need to develop better approaches designed to attack norms at the professional level, rather than merely the institutional level. In terms of specific policy proscriptions, institutions may consider adopting a formal recognition of mentoring as part of an individual's evaluation during the promotion and tenure process. Additionally, formal training workshops in mentoring issues, with a special emphasis on diversity, could be required of professors working with students. Although

this would not ensure that *transformative* mentoring would necessarily result, but it would promote a critical and serious approach to what has thus far been largely left unquestioned. Recognizing that mentoring approaches are limited by the demands imposed by professional level norms in conjunction with more broad academic norms, perhaps discipline specific organizations could become involved in redefining what it means to be not only a “good” professor, but a “good” scientist, a “good” engineer, and so forth. By expanding these definitions, room for a diverse approach to academics will hopefully be made.

Future research may explore the prevalence of the “labor of love” rhetoric uncovered in this work and its influence on institutional change. The complacency that may result from this rhetoric is a barrier to institutional change and a mechanism for disciplining workers in that it systematically excludes individuals who are unable to express a passion for their work in equal ways. While it is okay to love your work, this does not mean that a given job is above improvement.

This research also uncovered differing responses to paternity leave and maternity leave. These differences should be explored further, with an emphasis on understanding what conditions lead to positive evaluations of individuals who utilize these policies and vice versa. Longitudinal studies that track the impact of role modeling upon not only career aspirations of graduate students but actual mobility within careers would likewise be a fruitful area of research.

## LIMITATIONS

This research has been an attempt to understand institutional change and gender inequalities, specifically through the mechanism of mentoring. As a graduate student, I believe that my insights have been both enlightening, as well as perhaps limited at times. I admittedly do not fully understand the tensions and experiences felt by faculty, nor do I fully comprehend the process of mentoring from the standpoint of the mentor. Moreover, my own gender as a woman may have at times prevented full disclosure from both men students and faculty, especially in light of my findings of the ways in which interactions are limited in cross gender relationships.

Findings may also be limited in the sense that a longitudinal survey would shed light on the actual impact that mentoring relationships have had on the career trajectories of students involved. Furthermore, it may be important to parse out the importance of career timing, age, race and sexuality of the individuals involved to more fully understand the function of mentoring in academe. I encourage future researchers to build off of this work in ways that might fill these gaps.

## REFERENCES

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- Hansen, E., S. Kennedy, D. Mattingly, B. Mitchneck, K. Monzel, and C. Nairne. 1995. Facing the future, surviving the present: Strategies for women graduate students in geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 19 (3): 307-315.

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APPENDICES



Appendix A. Semi-structured & Demographic Interview  
Questions for Faculty Mentors

1. What does it mean to be a good professor?
2. What does it mean to be a good mentor?
3. Who is your mentor? Describe your relationship with them.
4. How were you taught to succeed in this field?
  - a. How do you teach your students to succeed?
5. How has your experience being mentored influenced your personal approach to mentoring?
6. How do you decide which students to work with?
  - a. Do you feel more comfortable working with students that are not the same gender as you? Why or why not? Do you feel that you have to be careful or that your interactions are limited in any way because of differing genders?
7. Did your mentor provide an example of work/family/personal life balance to you?
  - a. In what ways?
  - b. What effect did this have on you?
8. Do you have children?
  - a. At what stage in your career did you have children?
  - b. Did you seek advice from anyone before this decision? From who?
9. Can someone in your field succeed if they choose to have children/a fulfilling personal life?
  - a. When do you suggest is the most strategic time to have children?
  - b. Do you openly talk about this issue with your protégés? Why or why not?
10. Do you feel that your relationship is typical of mentoring relationships between graduate students and their faculty mentors? Why or why not?
11. What motivates you to be a good mentor? What prevents you? What limitations to good mentoring exist?
12. Who is your most successful student? (probe: What makes them successful?)
13. Do you wish you could change anything about your relationship with your students? (What would enhance your relationship with your students?)
14. What changes would you make in order to increase gender equality and help women succeed?

## FACULTY MENTOR DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Year of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender (circle one): Male/Female
3. Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Size of household: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Occupation of spouse: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of Children: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Please list the ages of each child: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of graduate students currently mentoring: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Highest degree received: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Year degree awarded: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Degree awarding institution: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Number of years at [institution]: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Position: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Department: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B. Semi-structured & Demographic  
Interview Questions for Graduate Students

1. What would a good mentor look like to you?
2. What does it mean to be a good professor?
  - a. Is your advisor a “good” professor? In what ways?
3. Describe your relationship with your mentor.
4. How did you start working with (your mentor)?
  - a. What factors influenced the decision to work together - Was it your own choice, were you assigned, etc.
  - b. Would you feel more comfortable if your advisor was the same gender as you? Why or why not?
5. Do you feel that your relationship is typical of mentoring relationships between graduate students and their faculty mentors? Why or why not?
6. What kind of mentor do you plan to be?
7. Is your mentor a role model to you? Why or why not?
8. Has this relationship solidified your desire to go into this field? Or have you questioned your decision based on this experience in any way? Please explain.
9. Do you feel that your mentor is able to give you honest feedback? Appropriate advice?
10. Can someone in your field have an active personal life and still be successful?
11. Does your advisor have an active personal/family life?
  - a. Do they seem to achieve a satisfactory level of balance?
  - b. Do they seem to value balance?
12. Do you discuss family planning and/or career/family balance issues with your mentor? Why or why not?
  - a. If yes, what kinds of discussions? What explicit or implicit signals do they get from their mentors regarding these issues?
  - b. Can someone in your field succeed if they choose to have children?
  - c. At what point in your career do you feel is the most strategic time to have children?
13. Do you dream of following the career paths of your mentor? Why or why not?
14. Do you generally follow the counsel of your mentor? Why or why not?
  - a. Do you feel that your mentor follows the same advice he or she gives you?
15. Do you wish you could change anything about your relationship with your mentor? (What would enhance your relationship with your mentor?)

## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Year of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender (circle one): Male/Female
4. Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Size of household: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Occupation of partner: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of Children: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Please list the ages of each child: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Masters or PhD (circle one)
10. Year in program: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Major Professor: \_\_\_\_\_
12. On average, how often do you meet with your major professor?:  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C. Sample E-mail Sent to Potential Faculty  
Sponsor at the Canadian Public University

Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a graduate student currently studying at Utah State University, under the supervision of Dr. Christy Glass (cc'd on this email should you have questions for her). For my dissertation research I am hoping to do a comparative analysis of mentoring practices and their function within academia, looking at potential differences between the US and Canada. I have been in contact with \_\_\_\_\_ (the Research Ethics Officer at the University of \_\_\_\_\_) to figure out how to go through the process and get approval to do the interviews that I need this coming summer. Given your research interests, I thought you may be interested in this project. Please know that I am not asking for much time - what I really need is a faculty member willing to act as a "sponsor/supervisor" at the University of \_\_\_\_\_. This means that you would be willing to read through my proposal just to familiarize yourself with my project, and act as the local contact for my project. Aside from that, I do not need any further assistance and do not want to take up much of your time. I apologize for the cold contact, and understand if you do not feel that you have time for this, but I would really appreciate any help/advice you may have to offer.

I have already filled out the application for ethics approval for the University of \_\_\_\_\_ (attached to this email as a pdf). I have also already received approval at my own institution. In addition, I have attached a very condensed (4 page) version of my project proposal. Should you be willing/interested in helping, I would really just need you to read through the project and look over the application, and then hopefully be willing to fill in the sections in the application that asks for "Sponsor/Supervisor" information, including a signature at the end. I assume that this all gets turned in to the office of research ethics following this.

Thank you for taking the time to look this over. And please, feel free to respond either way - if you do not feel that you have time to do this, please let me know and I will attempt to make other contacts, Thanks again,

Anita Armstrong  
PhD Candidate  
Utah State University  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX



APPENDIX D: Sample E-mails Sent to Potential Participants

Subject line: **Request for confidential interview about grad student mentoring**

Dear (name of professor from APU),

My name is Anita Armstrong, and I am a current graduate student conducting a study under the supervision of Professor Christy Glass in the Department of Sociology at Utah State University. I am contacting you to request your participation in a research study seeking to explore the mentoring practices among academics, specifically between faculty and the graduate students with whom they work. You have been asked to take part because of your involvement as a faculty mentor to graduate students here at APU.

If you agree to be in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a private interview that will be taped and transcribed. The interview should take between 30-45 minutes. At the beginning of the interview you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire covering basic demographic information. Faculty will additionally be asked to provide a list of the current graduate students with whom they are working. This additional information (including the demographic questionnaire) will be kept in coded files on a personal computer.

Please respond to this email if you are willing to participate in this study, along with a suggested date and time that the interview might take place.

Thank you in advance for your time - I hope to hear back from you soon and look forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Anita Harker Armstrong  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology, Social Work & Anthropology  
Utah State University  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

Subject line: **Request for confidential interview about grad student mentoring**  
Dear (name of graduate student from APU),

My name is Anita Armstrong, and I am a current graduate student conducting a study under the supervision of Professor Christy Glass in the Department of Sociology at Utah State University. I am contacting you to request your participation in a research study seeking to explore the mentoring practices among academics, specifically between faculty and the graduate students with whom they work. You have been asked to take part because of your involvement as a graduate student here at Utah State University.

If you agree to be in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a private interview that will be taped and transcribed. The interview should take between 30-45 minutes. At the beginning of the interview you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire covering basic demographic information. This additional information will be kept in coded files on a personal computer.

Please respond to this email if you are willing to participate in this study, along with a suggested date and time that the interview might take place.

Thank you in advance for your time - I hope to hear back from you soon and look forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Anita Harker Armstrong  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology, Social Work & Anthropology  
Utah State University

Subject line: **Request for confidential interview about grad student mentoring**  
Dear (name of professor from CPU),

My name is Anita Armstrong, and I am a current graduate student conducting a cross-national comparative study under the supervision of Professors Christy Glass in the Department of Sociology at Utah State University and \_\_\_\_\_ from the Department of Sociology at the University of \_\_\_\_\_.

I am contacting you to request your participation in a research study seeking to explore the mentoring practices among academics, specifically between faculty and the graduate students with whom they work. You have been asked to take part because of your involvement as a faculty mentor to graduate students at the University of \_\_\_\_\_.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to engage in a private interview that will be taped and transcribed. The interview should take between 30-60 minutes. At the beginning of the interview you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire covering basic demographic information. Faculty will additionally be asked to provide a list of the current graduate students with whom they are working. This additional information (including the demographic questionnaire) will be kept in coded files on a personal computer.

Please respond to this email if you are willing to participate in this study, along with a suggested date and time that the interview might take place. I will be in \_\_\_\_\_ for the month of July, during which time I hope to meet with you. Should you be unable to meet during this time and prefer to speak over the phone, please let me know.

Thank you in advance for your time - I hope to hear back from you soon and look forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Anita Harker Armstrong

PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology, Social Work & Anthropology  
Utah State University  
Cell phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX  
Local phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Subject line: **Request for confidential interview about grad student mentoring**  
Dear (name of graduate student from CPU),

My name is Anita Armstrong, and I am a current graduate student conducting a cross-national comparative study under the supervision of Professors Christy Glass in the Department of Sociology at Utah State University and \_\_\_\_\_ from the Department of Sociology at \_\_\_\_\_.

I am contacting you to request your participation in a research study seeking to explore the mentoring practices among academics, specifically between faculty and the graduate students with whom they work. You have been asked to take part because of your involvement as a graduate student at \_\_\_\_\_.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to engage in a private interview that will be taped and transcribed. The interview should take between 30-60 minutes. At the beginning of the interview you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire covering basic demographic information.

Please respond to this email if you are willing to participate in this study, along with a suggested date and time that the interview might take place. I will be in \_\_\_\_\_ for the month of July, during which time I hope to meet with you. Should you be unable to meet during this time and prefer to speak over the phone, please let me know.

Thank you in advance for your time - I hope to hear back from you soon and look forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Anita Harker Armstrong

PhD Candidate

Department of Sociology, Social Work & Anthropology  
Utah State University  
Cell phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX  
Local phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

FOLLOW-UP E-MAIL:

Subject line: **RE: Request for confidential interview about graduate student mentoring**

Hello again,

I just wanted to check in and see if you received this message a few weeks ago. If you could respond and let me know if you are willing to participate, I would be very appreciative,

Thanks for your time,

Anita

APPENDIX E: Complete List of Departments Included in the Study

## LIST OF DEPARTMENTS INCLUDED IN SAMPLE FROM BOTH INSTITUTIONS

1. Engineering Science
2. Civil Engineering
3. Electrical and Computer Engineering
4. Environmental Engineering
5. Mechanical Engineering
6. Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
7. Chemistry
8. Cell and Systems Biology
9. Biochemistry
10. Nutritional Sciences
11. Computer Science
12. Geology
13. Mathematics
14. Astronomy & Astrophysics
15. Statistics
16. Physics



## CURRICULUM VITAE

Anita Harker Armstrong  
(March 2011)

**EDUCATION**

Utah State University, Logan, UT <i>PhD Program: Sociology</i>	Current
Brigham Young University, Provo, UT <i>MS: Sociology</i>	Aug 2005
Brigham Young University, Provo, UT <i>BS: Sociology, Minor: Art</i>	Dec 2002

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

Instructor, SOC 3230: Criminology <i>Utah State University, Logan, Utah</i>	Spring 2011
Instructor, SOC 3500: Social Psychology <i>Utah State University, Logan, UT</i>	Spring 2010
Instructor, SOC 4370: Sociology of Gender <i>Utah State University, Logan, UT</i>	Fall 2009
Grant Writer/Coordinator <i>Utah State University, Logan, Utah</i>	Summer 2009
Co-wrote a grant proposal (\$1million) titled "Building Capacity to Serve Northern Utah's Poverty Populations." Additionally responsible for coordinating and compiling all documents required for submission to the Department of Health & Human Services.	
Research Assistant, ADVANCE <i>Utah State University, Logan, Utah</i>	May 2007 to May 2009
Instructor, SOC 3500: Social Psychology <i>Utah State University, Logan, Utah</i>	Fall 2008
Instructor, SOC 3230: Criminology <i>Utah State University, Logan, Utah</i>	Summer 2007
Instructor, SOC 1020: Social Problems <i>Utah State University, Logan, Utah</i>	Spring 2007
Teaching Assistant, SOC 3010 Race, Class & Gender <i>Utah State University, Logan, Utah</i>	Fall 2006

Research Assistant, Parolee Project Sept 2003 to June 2005  
*Brigham Young University, Provo, UT*

Helped to write interview schedules in addition to conducting face-to-face interviews with a group of fifty parolees at three points in time. Was additionally responsible for transcribing and analyzing the results. Used results to publish articles and present at sociological and criminological conferences.

Research Coordinator, Prison Fathers June 2004  
*University of East Anglia, Norwich, England*

Conducted several semi-structured interviews with various professionals advocating the rights of families, and specifically the children, of prisoners in the UK.

Teaching Assistant, SOC 111: Introduction to Sociology Sept 2003 to April 2005  
*Brigham Young University, Provo, UT*

Research Manager, Saints at War project May 2000 to Dec 2002  
*Brigham Young University, Provo, UT*

Headed a team of research assistants in the collection and preservation of wartime histories. This project resulted in the publication of two books and the production of two films in addition to the creation of the *Saints at War* Archive in the Harold B. Lee Library.

Group Facilitator, Paris Study Abroad Program March to Dec 2001  
*Brigham Young University, Paris, France*

Assisted in various aspects of organization for the study abroad experience, including researching prospective destination sites and the writing/administering of quizzes in our preparatory class.

## **SERVICE**

English Instructor March 2003  
*Volunteer teacher at village school in Seulee-Bazaar, Nepal.*

Mexico Study Abroad Program May 2002  
*Spent 3 weeks working with the Tarahumaran people of northern Mexico on various development projects.*

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Bahr, S., P. Harris, J. Fisher, A. H. Armstrong. 2010. Successful Reentry: What Differentiates Successful and Unsuccessful Parolees. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*.

Bahr, S., A. H. Armstrong, B. G. Gibbs, P. Harris, J. K. Fisher. 2004. The Reentry Process: How Parolees Adjust to Release from Prison. *Fathering*.

Armstrong, A. H., R. R. Callister, S. Malin. "Instituting Change Within the Institution: Gender and the Blindness of Neutrality." (*Under review at Journal of Diversity in Higher Ed*).

## PRESENTATIONS

Armstrong, Anita H. and C. M. Glass. 2011. Making the "Good" Professor: Does Graduate Mentoring Promote Equality in Academia? *Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Seattle*.

Glass, Christy M. and A. H. Armstrong. 2011. When Do Employers Discriminate against Mothers? Toward a Theory of Context. *Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Seattle*.

Malin, Stephanie A. and A. H. Armstrong. 2010. Bringing Women into the Fold: The Advance Programs' Semi-Formal Mentoring Within the University. *Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Oakland*.

Armstrong, Anita H. 2010. How Gender "Neutrality" Stifles Institutional Change. *Intermountain Graduate Research Symposium*.

Armstrong, Anita H., Callister, R. R. and S. A. Malin. 2008. "Instituting Change Within the Institution: Gender, Mentoring, & the Blindness of Neutrality." *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Boston*.

Armstrong, Anita H. 2005. "Doing Gender, Doing Time: Parolees' Attempts to Negotiate the 'Dance of Power & Control' on the Outside." *American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Toronto*.

Gibbs, Benjamin G., Bahr, S. J., Armstrong, A. H., Harris, P., and J.K. Fisher. 2005. "Failing Parole: An Exploratory Study of Parolee Success and Failure in the Utah Prison System." *American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Toronto*.

Armstrong, A., C. Kramer, S. Bahr. 2004. "Prisoner Reentry and Community Resources." *Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco*.

Armstrong, A., B. Gibbs, S. Bahr, 2005. "Barriers of Reentry: An Exploratory Study of Parole in the Utah Prison System." *Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Portland*.

## SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Distinguished Graduate Student Paper Award, Pacific Sociological Association 2011  
*Making the "Good" Professor: Does Graduate Mentoring Promote Equality in Academia?*

School of Graduate Studies Dissertation Fellowship, \$5000 2010-11  
*Competitive award designed to provide additional support during semesters used to work on the writing of the dissertation.*

Center for Women & Gender Studies, \$500 Research grant 2010

Graduate Instructor of the Year 2010  
*College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences*  
*(\*Finalist for Robbins Award, a university-wide award for graduate instructors).*

Center for Women & Gender Research Grant, \$500 2010  
*Awarded to individuals conducting research in gender studies. Monies used to support research.*

Dean Gary Kiger Scholarship, \$4500 2010  
*Support for graduate student program completion.*

Earl A. & Carmen D. Fredrickson Graduate Scholarship, \$1000 2008-09  
*Support provided to students who demonstrate quality academic achievement and superior potential. Preference is given to graduate students with interest in gender research.*

Joseph A. & Grace W. Geddes Research Scholarship, \$4500 2006-07  
*Recipients must be pursuing a graduate degree in sociology and demonstrate competent scholarship and a sound character.*

## MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Member of American Sociological Association 2003 – present  
 Member of Pacific Sociological Association 2003 – present  
 Member of American Society of Criminology 2005 - 2006