

## INTRODUCTION

### From People to Policies: Enduring Inequalities and Inequities for Women Academics

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Historically, public discourse has framed higher education as fundamental to individual advancement, intellectual development, skill building, employment potential, personal growth, character development, and social maturity. U.S. higher education has been a location for enlightened dialogue and a locus for social change including emancipation, civil rights, peace, and other justice movements. As such, the U.S. system of higher education has been and continues to be foundational to civil society and democracy. But, the academy is a changing institution: increasingly under threat from corporatization, magnified pressure for research and grants to fund faculty salaries, a reduction of faculty autonomy and academic freedom, a decrease in full-time faculty lines and reliance on contingent positions, minimization of shared governance, and legislative intrusions that primarily target social science and humanities disciplines. Fortunately, the academy is changing in positive ways, too: diversity is increasing, interdisciplinary efforts that dislocate historically entrenched intellectual divisions are being fostered, and innovations in pedagogy and research continue. These revolutionary transformations, positive and negative, can foster uncertainty, suspicion, hostility, increased workloads, and other challenges for those in academic settings. Negative outcomes trickle down to those who are either newest in the system or least powerful: women, people of color, contingent faculty, or other perceived outsiders.

Within that framework, this book explores the contemporary challenges facing women faculty in U.S. higher education. The chapters provide research and theoretical insights on workplace inequities, inequalities, and challenges. Case studies, coupled with resources and suggestions for action, are designed to help individuals navigate difficult situations. Our guiding questions include the following:

- What do women academics classify as challenging, inequitable, or “hostile” work environments and experiences? How do these vary by race/ethnicity, rank, sexual orientation, or other social locations?
- How do academic cultures and organizational structures work independently and in tandem to foster or challenge such work climates? How does the academy legitimize barriers faced by women faculty?
- What explains the lack of change in academia regarding the challenges academic women face?
- What actions can institutions and individuals—independently and collectively—take toward equity in the academy?

Though we focus on women faculty, these issues are not “women’s issues”; they are relevant to the academy, its members and constituents, and beyond. As West and Curtis (2006) argue: “The barriers for women in higher education not only raise questions of basic fairness, but place serious limitations on the success of educational institutions themselves” (4). The academy reflects societal biases and hostilities (Chesler, Lewis, and Crowfoot 2005). Yet, it could direct social change too. Our biographies, experiences, and training in feminist scholarship compel us to disrupt complacency among those who might claim that things are “better” or “good enough.” The academy is not yet equal or equitable; our work is not done. Robbins and Kahn (1985) compel us all to consider our involvement:

Although many problems specifically affect women—such as the feminization of poverty, battering, and sexual harassment—the problem of discrimination in academe is uniquely ours, and particularly ironic in a community that prides itself on its principled stands and values. We are the perpetrators as well as the victims, the people who deny that discrimination exists as well as those who experience and document it. (8)

We concentrate on women faculty to highlight the “shared challenges women have faced and continue to face in patriarchal contexts while acknowledging how race, social class, and other identities intersect and interact with sex and gender and contribute to shaping one’s professional status in profound ways” (Allan 2011, 3). But, we emphasize intersectionality (e.g., Collins 1990), despite limitations of existing research and language. As Aguirre (2000) argues, neither the term *women faculty* nor *minority faculty* refers to homogeneous populations. Yet, these categories facilitate analytic comparisons and broader patterns of experiences. When data or theory permits, we compare and contrast the experiences of women of color faculty (e.g., Latinas, Blacks, American Indians, Pacific Islanders, Asians) with those

of white women faculty.<sup>1</sup> To deepen our understandings of the experiences of diverse women academics, we explore underexamined identities such as lesbian, feminist, and married or unmarried. We hope this approach discourages readers from conceptualizing specific issues as relevant only to women of particular statuses (e.g., white, heterosexual).

Attention to women's access to and representation in U.S. higher education has a long history, dating to 1848 and the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, where, in drafting the Declaration of Sentiments, reformers objected to women being barred from "facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her."<sup>2</sup> Between the 1800s and the mid-twentieth century, women's access to higher education was uneven and fraught with struggle (see Aleman and Renn 2002). The late 1960s brought women's university commissions, and similar groups, focused on women's issues in higher education and on specific campuses or within national organizations (Allan 2011). Such commissions sought to assess the status of women on a campus and make recommendations to remedy problems, including women's representation in different areas (e.g., administration; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [STEM] fields); sexual harassment; pay inequality; advancement; tenure; safety; family policies and resources; and representation in the curriculum (Allan and Hallen 2011; Glazer-Raymo 1999). These issues, exposed in the initial commission reports in the 1970s, remained evident into the 1990s and continue in the early twenty-first century (Allan and Hallen 2011).

By the 1970s issues of sex discrimination in higher education became major federal policy issues (Robbins and Kahn 1985) that culminated with legislation and policy efforts to remedy bias and discrimination against women. Spanning 50 years, these include the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Education Amendments of 1972, the Vocational Education Act Amendment of 1976, and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (see Allan 2011). Some discrimination and bias required "affirmative action" to overcome limited inclusion of women and minorities (i.e., "compensation, correction, and diversification," Glazer-Raymo 1999, 201). For example, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 codified the tenets of the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*, (1954) while Title VI and Title VII protected women and racial or ethnic minorities (and religious affiliation) from discrimination in employment, and reaffirmed equal opportunity employment in sectors receiving federal aid (see Glazer-Raymo 2011). Additionally, this legislation established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which now oversees Title VII, the Equal Pay Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Glazer-Raymo 2011). Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (arguably the most

impactful piece of legislation for women in higher education to date) provided legal protection to women and girls from kindergarten through postsecondary education. It included a stipulation that encouraged programs or institutions receiving federal aid to take “affirmative action” to address conditions resulting in women’s differential participation in education. George H. W. Bush signed the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which “upheld affirmative action as a remedy for ‘intentional employment discrimination’ and ‘unlawful harassment in the workplace,’ extending compensatory damages to include sex and disabilities, in addition to race or national origin, and permitting punitive damages against offending organizations” (Glazer-Raymo 2011, 358).

Diversification of U.S. higher education has been controversial and continues to find its way into the Supreme Court (see Chesler et al. 2005; Glazer-Raymo 2011). Even with diversity programs, tolerance trainings, and affirmative action initiatives, progress for women and minority faculty has been uneven, benefiting white women, as a group, the most (Aguirre 2000). Part of the reason for the tempered successes of minority faculty, and minority women specifically, has been persistent stereotyping and assumptions of tokenism. Aguirre (2000) notes, “Ironically, affirmative action initiatives that were designed to increase the representation of women and minorities in the faculty ranks have resulted in an environment in academia that isolates rather than incorporates women and minorities in the academic culture” (2). He suggests that enduring social forces within the academy, such as resistance to diversification and widespread reluctance to discuss ongoing discrimination against women and minority faculty, serve the interests of white men and some white women. Despite significant legislative remedies, the attrition of well-trained, skilled, and valuable faculty often results from such enduring inequalities within the academy.

## **Books About Women Academics**

We can trace research on U.S. women faculty to Jessie Bernard’s (1964) *Academic Women*. Since then books, articles, conference sessions, and entire conferences have explored the status of academic women—sometimes specific to disciplines, other times more broadly. An exhaustive review of this literature is beyond the scope of this introduction, though a handful of texts are worth noting as we trace this literature. Some texts take an all-encompassing approach (Aleman and Renn 2002; Bank 2011). Others focus on specific issues in academe, such as work/family concerns (Bracken, Allen, and Dean 2006; Connelly and Ghodsee 2011), women’s exclusion from knowledge production (May 2008), and faculty incivility (Twale and De Luca 2008). Despite the historical silence on the issues faced by academic women of color,

recent scholarship attends to the structural and cultural aspects of the academy that produce inequity despite imperatives for diversification and equality (e.g., Aguirre 2000; Niles and Gordon 2011), the underrepresentation and resiliency of Black women in higher education (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, and Harris 2012; Mabokela and Green 2001), and the tensions or possibilities of allied relationships among women academics (Dace 2012).

Several texts focus on changing the academy's structures and cultures by incorporating feminist perspectives or interventions (e.g., Allan 2011; Morley and Walsh 1995, 1996). Glazer-Raymo's (e.g., 1999, 2008) influential texts on women and higher education provide evidence of women's progress in higher education and document persistent barriers to their full equality and equity. The aforementioned texts, and others (e.g., Brown-Glaude 2009), focus primarily at the organizational level of the academy, offering recommendations for and examples of institutional change, as well as ways to increase enforcement of existing laws and policies intended to ensure equity. Other texts provide advice to help individual women academics with workplace challenges (e.g., Caplan 1993; Collins, Chrisler, and Quina 1998; Toth 1997<sup>3</sup>). Some focus on minority populations' unique experiences (Rockquemore and Laszloffy 2008), speak to new faculty issues (e.g., Boice 2000; Lenning, Brightman, and Caringella 2010), or offer advice for administrators (e.g., Crookston 2012).

Another subgenre explores the "leaky pipeline" of women from STEM degree programs and careers in the STEM fields.<sup>4</sup> This scholarship centers on the limited and partial successes of legislation and affirmative action and locates women's attrition from or rejection of academic careers within an array of structural and cultural circumstances including "chilly climates," overt discrimination, lack of mentoring and role models, inadequate work-family policies, and other accumulated disadvantages. The expansion in research on women's underrepresentation in STEM fields has produced many excellent books, too numerous to list comprehensively (e.g., Bilimoria and Liang 2011; Bystydzienski and Bird 2006; Etzkowitz, Kemelgor, and Uzzi 2000; National Research Council 2007; Rosser 2004; Stewart, Malley, and LaVaque-Manty 2007; Xie and Shauman 2003).

A watershed moment in the awareness of continued bias and discrimination of women faculty (with an emphasis on STEM faculty) came with the 1999 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) report, showing that MIT's tenured women faculty in the sciences experienced marginalization and salary, space, and resource inequities. Further, their experiences worsened as they advanced. All had prominent careers: Forty percent held membership in the National Academy of Sciences and/or the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Thus, the argument that gendered inequities resulted from poorer performance did not hold.

In contrast, the report showed that MIT's *early-career*, pre-tenure women faculty felt supported by their colleagues and were optimistic about their careers. The concern was that, over time, unconscious and subtle discrimination stalled, or made difficult, the careers of women scientists and engineers. The authors wrote: "Discrimination consists of a pattern of powerful but unrecognized assumptions and attitudes that work systematically against women faculty even in the light of obvious good will" (MIT 1999, 11). One key finding—that micro-inequities and subtle forms of bias are "what discrimination looks like"—ignited research on gender (and race) inequity in higher education, much of which was done under pressure from women faculty across the country (see Roos and Gatta 2009). National attention grew toward developing understandings of the structural (macro) and interactional (micro) practices that hampered women academics' careers. For example, in response to the MIT report,<sup>5</sup> in 2001, the National Science Foundation initiated the ADVANCE grant program to improve the representation and experiences of women and minority faculty by attending to the climate in academia, lack of diversity, and "pipeline" issues.

Thus, equality and equity in academia are not new research topics. What is new and significant about ADVANCE and similar initiatives is their concerted, often funded effort to give attention to complex, intersecting factors, such as the relationship between institutional structure and culture at micro and macro levels that create inequity and inequality for academic women. Recent scholarship exposes enduring aspects of discrimination against women and draws attention to shockingly low numbers of tenured women in specific disciplines (e.g., some STEM fields). Further, it documents and helps us understand patterns of stratification remaining in the U.S. system of higher education. For example:

- Women's lower salaries (compared with men counterparts), as well as their overrepresentation in lower ranks and at less prestigious institutions, confirms persistent *vertical* segregation in the academy.
- Women's overall representation in STEM disciplines is lower than in social sciences, education, or humanities, reflects *horizontal* segregation.
- Women's and men of color's representation in all levels of the academy (e.g., students, faculty, administration) are disproportionately low.

## Gender Segregation in the Academy

Women continue to make notable gains in higher education according to recent U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education (IPEDS) data (2011–2012).

However, women are outnumbered by men at *all* ranks at *all* four-year institution types (i.e., public, private for-profit, private not-for-profit), yet women outnumber men at *all* two-year institution types (public, private for-profit, private not-for-profit) (see Table I.1). That is, men faculty outnumber women except at the least prestigious institutions, with the fewest resources and lowest salaries (and at the ranks of assistant professor, instructor, and lecturer).<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, within those two-year private nonprofit institutions, men outnumber women at the *highest rank* one can achieve: full professor.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) reports that men outnumber women two to one at the rank of full professor across degree-granting institutions (Curtis 2011). Danowitz and Agans (2011, 317) suggest that the “gatekeeping process” to achieving full professor is “more unyielding for women.” Additionally, men, the majority of whom are white, overwhelmingly fill the power structure of the academy, including administrators, trustees, presidents, provosts, and chancellors (Chesler et al. 2005; Curtis 2011; Danowitz and Agans 2011; Glazer-Raymo 2011). This disproportionate leadership occurs even though more white women and faculty of color are in the “pipeline” than ever before (Aguirre 2000; Allan 2011).

The “cohort effect” suggests that these disparities result from women and people of color being newcomers to academe and that we need to wait for them to rise through the ranks before seeing the effects of the previous decades’ recruitment and retention efforts. (For a review of the glass ceiling and cohort

TABLE I.1.

**Full-Time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions by Gender and Type of Institution**

<i>Type of Institution</i>	<i>No. of Men</i>	<i>No. of Women</i>
Public 4-year	223,503	158,648
Public 2-year	51,258	61,983*
Private 4-year	147,043	106,962
Private not-for-profit 4-year	138,887	99,332
Private for-profit 4-year	8,156	7,630
Private 2-year	5,178	7,044*
Private not-for-profit 2-year	618	1,027*
Private for-profit 2-year	4,560	6,017*

*Note.* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2011–2012. Human Resources component, Fall Staff section. Based on Table 286.

\* = type of institution where women outnumber men.

effects on faculty salaries see Prokos and Padavic 2005.) Marschke et al. (2007) challenge this notion by demonstrating that without any kind of intervention (in hiring, retention, or promotion) to increase the numbers of women faculty at the research-intensive university they studied, there would never be numerical equality between men and women. With a hypothetical intervention to ensure “equal hires” and “equal exits” (i.e., equal hiring, advancement, attrition, retention, and retirement), the faculty would still need *57 years* to reach simple numerical equality. Using a dramatic hypothetical intervention where only women are hired and attrition rates are equal, the faculty would reach numerical equality in 11 years. Such policy intervention would be illegal, of course. However, their analyses illustrate that colleges and universities must adopt and enforce policies to ensure equitable recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty, among other measures, if we are to ever reach parity.

Although the vertical segregation described previously explains a significant portion of the salary gap between men and women faculty, the research attributes some of the gap to the persistent sex segregation in some academic disciplines (e.g., Bellas 1993; Roos and Gatta 2009). Women faculty are concentrated in disciplines such as education, in health fields, and in some humanities but are far less represented in the natural sciences or engineering. This horizontal segregation translates into significant salary differentials because faculty in the latter disciplines have higher salaries than those in the former. Salary data for 2011–2012 showed that newly hired assistant professors in computer science earned just over \$74,500, and in engineering, \$78,650. The same cohorts in education earned just over \$55,600, and in liberal arts/humanities, just shy of \$53,000 (unweighted averages; College and University Professional Association for Human Resources 2012). Although men *and* women in the lower-paying fields earn less than their peers in higher-paying fields, women’s salaries are lower within all disciplines (Bellas 1993). That is, even if women “choose” higher-paying disciplines, they would likely earn less than similarly situated men.

The distribution of men and women at different institution types matters, too. According to AAUP’s salary data (2010), the gap between men’s and women’s salaries was smallest at two-year colleges, where women earned 95.9% compared with their men peers (who earned less than their peers at four-year institutions). The pay gap was largest (78.3%) at doctoral-granting universities and was present at each faculty rank and at all institution types. In addition, the academic pay gap has hovered near the same level, about 80% overall, since the 1970s (Curtis 2011). Despite the range of variables that might explain existing or historical salary disparities between men and women (e.g., rank, discipline, educational attainment, institution type), “research specific to newly hired faculty confirms a wage gap for women



faculty that is unexplained by other factors” (Porter et al. 2008, cited in Allan 2011, 114). Even detailed and complex analyses that account for such variables still generate an “unexplained” salary gap:

Although it is not appropriate to attribute [the] remaining differential to discrimination on the basis of this evidence alone, the statistical analyses clearly leave a series of questions unanswered: . . . Why are women less likely to obtain full-time tenure-track positions? Why are they less likely to be employed in research universities? Why do women faculty generally spend more of their time on student advising and committee service than do men? Why do positions in the disciplines in which women faculty are concentrated generally pay less? Why are women less likely than men to earn tenure and promotion to full professor? Why do they earn less on average at every rank than their male counterparts? If we are to achieve equity for women faculty, it is necessary to confront each of these questions at the local level, and to devise more effective strategies to remove the disadvantages for women that persist even after decades of effort to remove them. (West and Curtis 2006, 12)

And while we should consider the array of factors that attempt to explain differences in men’s and women’s positioning in the academy, we should be leery of explanations that reduce complex issues to individual women’s “choices.” Curtis (2011) argues:

Suggesting that women “choose” employment that is less remunerative implies that all career options are equally open to them. . . . The reality faced by women in academia, as in other professions, is that their “choices” are constrained by limited career options, socially gendered roles on the job and in the home, and by “simple” economics. (7)

National-level data illustrate how academic career pathways remain stratified by gender, race, and class, reflecting broader societal stratification. This is noteworthy, in part, because access to higher education is a primary means of class mobility and attainment of increased power and status. The lack of diversity in faculty ranks indicates blocked opportunity structures, antithetical to the values of the academy and U.S. society. Faculty of color constitute just 19%–20% of the faculty at public and private four-year and public two-year institutions. They comprise 32.5% of the faculty at private two-year institutions (see Table I.2), even though people of color attain PhDs at a higher rate than is reflected in faculty ranks (Aguirre 2000).

Although these snapshots of the academic “pipeline” are relevant, a “body count” (Martin 1994) cannot tell the entire story because equal numerical

**TABLE I.2.**  
**Full-Time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions**  
**by Race/Ethnicity and Gender**

	<i>% of All Faculty</i> (N = 1,523,615)	<i>% of All Women</i> <i>Faculty</i> (N = 734,418)	<i>% of Women of</i> <i>Color Faculty</i> (N = 139,178)
Black women	4.0	8.4	44
Hispanic women	2.1	4.4	23
Asian women	2.6	5.4	29
Pacific Islander women	0.1	0.2	1.2
American Indian/Alaska Native women	0.3	0.5	2.7

*Note.* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2011–2012. Human Resources component, Fall Staff section, Table 287. Figures exclude nonresident aliens (where race/ethnicity data are not collected), two or more races, and race/ethnicity unknown categories.

representation is not equity. Aggregate data cannot capture the many aspects of academic inequity (Monroe et al. 2008; Turner 2002). First, a critical mass of women in previously men-dominated fields is important; however, it is insufficient to shift inequitable academic cultures (Frehill 2006; Rosser 2004). Second, aggregate data do not expose the homogeneity of women in academia. For example, the lack of representation of women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or first-generation students, or the overrepresentation of women from dominant categories (e.g., heterosexual, able-bodied, white). The legacy of racism in academe “pervades the curriculum, pedagogy, structure of departments and disciplines, formal and informal relationships among participants, and decision making about hiring, promotion, and retention” (Chesler et al. 2005, 19). A more nuanced picture of women’s representation in higher education requires us to address intersectionality. Third, raw numbers can present the image that the problem of equality of opportunity is solved, depending on which numbers are examined. For instance, the National Education Association’s (2012) *Higher Education Advocate* cites National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education 2011–2012) data showing that between 1989 and 2011, the increase in full-time women faculty across all types of public institutions (e.g., two-year, four-year) was 98.3%. The increase across all types of private institutions (e.g., two-year, four-year; for profit/not-for-profit) was 83.4%. The largest increase in women faculty occurred in doctoral private institutions (223.1%) and doctoral public

institutions (189.2%). Some could interpret this as evidence of bias against men (see Evers et al. 2006, cited in Allan 2011). However, such assertions suggest a limited understanding of the issues, because aggregate numbers do *not* reveal the ways inequality and inequity persist.

## Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

We and many of our contributors identify as feminist scholars who recognize problems of equity as gendered. We interpret individual actions, attitudes, and experiences as well as institutionalized structures, policies, and procedures within their specific social contexts. These contexts are imbued with the dynamics of power and privilege, often difficult to recognize. Using feminist frameworks means that we aim for “social change while also emphasizing women and gender as key analytic categories” (Allan 2011, 18). As sociologists, we (and many of our contributors) seek to understand the well-documented patterns of gender inequality as outcomes of institutional and cultural arrangements existing within a particular historical time and geographical place, rather than as a collection of individual experiences that just happen to be alike. Mills (1959, 8) argues that we can only begin to understand “issues” and find their solutions by taking this approach. Individuals can take actions to alleviate their “personal troubles,” but those are stopgap measures. To eradicate the “issues” for the thousands of women academics in U.S. higher education, academic structures, cultures, and climates must change.

What does it look like to apply feminist sociological frameworks to understanding gender inequality in the academy? For example, when women scientists who leave the academy are characterized as “choosing” motherhood over science (e.g., Ceci and Williams 2011), feminist sociologists would critique the shortcomings of such individualistic explanations. Instead, we focus on the structural and cultural context in which people make decisions. To highlight the need for more complex understanding of seemingly personal issues,<sup>7</sup> sociologists might deliberately add quotation marks to the word *choice*. When women leave their careers in academic science (or other workplaces), it is often because of inadequate family-work-life policies (Goulden, Mason, and Frasch 2011; Hochschild 1997; Mason and Goulden 2002, 2004; Perna 2005; Williams 2005), or because of (real or perceived) penalties for using existing policies (Schneider 2000). For example, university policy may allow flexible office hours, but departmental cultures that require “face time” at the lab or at late afternoon meetings might compel a new, untenured faculty member to “choose” to remain in the office. Many

women, particularly in the obstinately sex-segregated fields of engineering, computer science, and physics, have struggled with an “old boys’ club” (De Welde and Laursen 2011; Hewlitt et al. 2008; Rosser 2004; Still 2006), a lack of mentoring (De Welde and Laursen 2008; Fox 2003), and a lack of networking opportunities (Clark and Corcoran 1986; Sonnett and Holton 1995). Additionally, they face unequal rates of hiring and promotion, allocation of resources, and opportunities to participate in workplace decision making (Aguirre 2000; Wenzel and Hollenshead 1994). These issues can be exacerbated for women of color (e.g., Aguirre 2000; Davis 1985; Turner 2002).

When women academics decide to leave the fields in which they have invested considerable time, energy, and money, as well as significant aspects of their identities, it is with consideration of these accumulating constraints, considerations that men, particularly white men, generally, do not have to make (Valian 1998).<sup>8</sup> By using a feminist sociological framework, we might consider why women, but not men, have to “choose” between family and career. Or, why men scientists do not leave careers (in the same numbers as women) when they have children. Beyond the actual birth, men are equally capable of raising children and many would like to do so. Feminist sociologists would analyze the cultural pressures or structural barriers that create such gendered patterns.

To understand people’s “choices,” we must understand their contexts—contexts structured by unequal power relations between actors. As Bird (2011, 202) suggests, “women-centered” explanations for gender inequality and inequity in academe persist and can obscure the structural and cultural barriers that provide greater explanatory power for individual “choices” that occur as part of larger patterns (i.e., not just one woman, but many). Thus, she calls for increased dissemination of research findings about these barriers and how to transform them. We take up this call.

### *Theories of Gendered Organizations*

Our work draws from Acker’s (1990, 1998) theory of gendered organizations. She argues, “To say that an organization, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine” (Acker 1990, 146). Thus, the structure of an organization and its culture reflect society’s gender (and other cultural) ideologies. Further, gender is an essential element of the “organizational logic” (Acker 1990, 147) of work organizations: The practices, attitudes, values, and guiding principles of

organizations all contribute to the “ongoing processes of creating and conceptualizing social structures.” However, as Bird (2011) argues, “This is not to say that bureaucratic work structures are inherently gendered, always gendered to the same degree, or invariably masculinist” (204; see also Britton 2000). But, as Acker (1990, 147; 1998) suggests, the “gender substructure” of organizations reflects the societal gender (and race) inequalities and reproduces and institutionalizes them (see also Martin 1994; Roos and Gatta 2009). Applying these ideas, we conceptualize colleges and universities as gendered organizations (e.g., Bird 2011; Martin 1994); within them, faculty roles are gendered, and hierarchies of inequality are reproduced in part because “bureaucratic organizations and institutions themselves [like higher education] provide the legitimizing scaffolding” (Roscigno 2011, 364).

The gendered division of academic labor persists across disciplines and organizations. The labor of service and teaching is not easily quantifiable; thus, it often goes unnoticed, and women faculty “perform a disproportionate share of academic departments’ care work and emotion labor” (Bird 2011, 204). Despite their necessity, academic organizations typically undervalue teaching and service, resulting in status, pay, and promotion disparities between women and men academics (Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, and Agiomavritis 2011). Another result is little diversity among those who have the authority and power to develop and implement institutional policies and practices and shape organizational cultures toward greater gender equality (Acker 1998; Bird 2011; Martin 1994; Roos and Gatta 2009).<sup>9</sup> Institutional policies that ensure equitable treatment of campus members must be developed with diverse experiences in mind. Otherwise, they reflect what those in power deem important or relevant, which may not reflect the experiences of those different from them (i.e., women and minority faculty). We see strong evidence of this in the current attention toward developing family-friendly policies. Throughout the academy’s history, men administrators have had families, generally with wives/partners caring for them and their homes. Such administrators might not have considered the need for on-site day care, stopping the tenure clock, part-time or flexible schedules, or other family-friendly resources. As more women enter higher administration, these job-related needs enter mainstream conversation. Although research shows that many men chairs and deans support these policies (Marjukka Ollilainen, personal communication, 2012). In sum, as Bird (2011) argues:

The segregation of academic disciplines and institutions, the construction of faculty and administrative roles in ways that are more consistent with men’s lives, and the maintenance of evaluation processes that disproportionately value the disciplines and activities that men dominate are all

examples of how university structures and associated cultures and practices are gendered. (208)

Thus, we frame the academy, and colleges and universities within it, as gendered organizations imbued with gendered barriers toward advancement (Bird 2011; Valian 1998). Additionally, they reflect “incongruous gendered bureaucratic structures” (Bird 2011) because the formal and informal norms of colleges/universities and departments can conflict, partly resulting from the decentralized decision-making structures within academe. Bird (2011, 205) explains, “Incongruous, gendered bureaucratic structures produce ambiguities for individual faculty members regarding the extent to which one should follow university and departmental formal guidelines versus informal norms.” For example, we see “structural incongruencies” between what departments value and what university mission statements declare as important (206)—disjunctures between structures (e.g., formal policies) and cultures (e.g., beliefs, values, norms) or climates (e.g., behaviors and informal practices). Roscigno (2011) describes this as the “decoupling between what organizations profess to do and how they actually operate” (360), which allows those in positions of power to legitimize discriminatory actions by “invok[ing] structure in a way that reifies hierarchy” (365). Furthermore, incongruity exists between the ascribed peripheral roles for women and minority faculty (i.e., service) and the stated expectations for scholarly productivity (Aguirre 2000). These inconsistencies allow for subtle discrimination or unconscious bias against women academics. They impact interactions and decision making, creating uncertainty about what constitutes valued work. These practices accrue and contribute to “accumulated disadvantages” (Clark and Corcoran 1986; Valian 1998) and “mechanisms of inequity” (Roos and Gatta 2009) that stall and slow women’s careers.

### *Structure, Culture, and Climate*

Our conceptual framework includes an emphasis on *structure* (i.e., the unique organizational arrangements of the academy) and *culture* (i.e., the norms, beliefs, and values of academic institutions). Also, we incorporate *interactions and practices*—and the dynamic and dependent relationships between transitory members of the academy (e.g., students, contingent faculty) and stable ones (e.g., administrators, full-time faculty). The relationship between academic structures and cultures is reciprocal and interactive (Hermanowicz 2005). Researchers may separate structure and culture for analytical purposes (as we do); however, in reality, these components work in tandem at micro (individual or small group) and macro (institutional) levels to shape our interactions and our understanding of social phenomena.

Although “the structure” of the academy is not monolithic, we can generalize about how academic careers and faculty life are organized (e.g., attainment of advanced degrees; ambitions for tenure; and core faculty responsibilities of teaching, research, and service). And yet, the structure of academic careers is changing dramatically across the United States because of sweeping and aggressive fiscal changes. The impact is greatest at public universities, historically funded largely by state and federal monies. Like no other time in our history, we are witnessing a growing trend in the corporatization of U.S. higher education, or “academic capitalism” (Metcalf and Slaughter 2011; Rhoades and Slaughter 2004). As state and federal investments in postsecondary institutions decline, we see increased attention on research and teaching with *commercial* potential. These forces create a “regime” that coerces academics’ involvement in the global market and their dependence on private funding (Metcalf and Slaughter 2011, 15). The pressure on academics to attract external funding marginalizes and situates as less “valuable” disciplinary fields with lesser potential for partnering with industry and other profit-making ways. Further, financially driven relationships influence what subjects are taught and studied so that what is most profitable becomes equated with what is most important (e.g., national emphasis on STEM degree attainment). Pressures to serve the private, corporate good, as opposed to the public good, now extend to *all* disciplines through increasing exposure to market forces, such as through the intense marketing of distance/online education and through prepackaged curricula created primarily to generate revenue (Metcalf and Slaughter 2011).

Academic capitalism is gendered, creating “conditions within colleges and universities that allow men to recapture some of the historic privilege they have derived from higher education . . . [and] recasting the value of higher education in the process” (Metcalf and Slaughter 2008, 81). That is, the merit and value of academic work shifts from being determined within the academy, which has become increasingly diversified, to being determined by (and in) the economic marketplace, which continues to be dominated by men and masculine ideals.

Decreases in federal agency support (e.g., the National Science Foundation) intensify competition between faculty (Aguirre 2000) and increase reliance on private industry funding. These trends shift where the value of knowledge production is determined, and by whom. Rather than being evaluated by peers, outside the reach of the state or marketplace, the market determines and regulates knowledge production based on what is profitable (Metcalf and Slaughter 2008, 2011). This dynamic changes the core values of the academy and undermines it as a locus for innovation, change, progress, and ideas. Furthermore, the increased reliance on external funding for salaries, historically supported by the state as an investment in the public good, requires faculty to assume another responsibility, increasingly emphasized

above teaching or research. Such changes create uncertainty for faculty and deepen historical divides between the physical and social sciences (the latter are funded less, historically), and between other fields such as business or engineering and education or the humanities.<sup>10</sup> These trends illustrate ways that we can speak, generally, about the structure of faculty careers.

Exploring the structure of academic careers is relevant because of assumptions that the academy is neutral and nondiscriminatory—a bureaucracy in the ideal sense (Weber 1949). Academics (and others) may operate under the assumption that it is, perhaps, the last bastion of true meritocracy where merit and peer-reviewed tenure and promotion policies and procedures guarantee reward for those who follow them. Policies presumably curtail discrimination and typically offer channels for redress for those who experience unfairness or discrimination. However, academic structures are not immune to unfair or illegal practices. How these inequalities manifest is typically less blatant than in the past, when, for example, mainstream universities and colleges barred women and people of color. Rather, “a meritocratic discourse *incorporates gender-blindness* in the name of fairness” (Acker and Armenti 2004, 19; emphasis added), which effaces important consequential differences in faculty lives. In addition, implicit bias enters into evaluation processes (e.g., Bird 2011). For example, if someone’s advancement is “slow,” evaluators might assume the candidate lacks dedication, has low productivity, or cannot succeed. Though this might be the case for some, these assumptions are applied to women faculty more than men, to mothers more than nonmothers, and to women of color more than white women (see Part Three of this volume). In fact, those in positions of authority and power draw on the presumably neutral policies and procedures to enact what Roscigno (2011) calls “symbolic vilification” (e.g., where women and minorities are considered as problematic or less creditable in the structure) and “symbolic amplification” (where institutional/organizational policies and practices are used to legitimize hierarchical and, thus, unequal practices) (362–364).

Finally, as Twale and De Luca (2008) suggest, the structure of the academy, with its focus on faculty governance and decisions made by committees, is especially ripe for “incubating” hostility, bullying, secrecy, marginalization, and harassment. Institutional structures unwittingly create and perpetuate silence about these problems by not having adequate policies, or by discouraging, dismissing, or minimizing incident reports. Silence can result from powerlessness, denial, embarrassment, fear of retaliation, or lack of knowledge about what actions to take (Twale and De Luca 2008). Though remaining silent is a survival strategy for some, it allows injustice to foment and become embedded in the institutional culture.

The cultures of academic careers are more diverse than the structures. Cultures vary from institution to institution, and across institution types



(i.e., research universities, community colleges, liberal arts colleges) (see Hermanowicz 2005). *Academic cultures* are closely linked to the structure of the academy in that cultures are imbedded, difficult to change, and reflective of the values expressed by institutions. Academic cultures can exacerbate the negative aspects of academic structures, or they may respond in ways that benefit faculty experiencing workplace hostilities. However, even when policies change, cultures can respond slowly.

*Campus climates* are microlevel work environments that differ across (and within) institutions; are imbedded in cultures; and are reflective of broader social, economic, and political contexts. Climates are even more idiosyncratic and shift more quickly than structures or cultures. They are more malleable and subject to shift such as when leadership changes occur. Individuals' perceptions of their organizational culture and structure, along with their shared/collective experiences, constitute climate. In other words, a culture reflects and includes the values of an organization and its structure and is more enduring (Allan 2011). Climates have to do with current, perhaps transitory, organizational practices.

We can better understand the context of academic careers—and universities—as gendered organizations within the institution of higher education by examining structures, cultures, climates, and the relationships among them. Individuals experience discrimination or bias within a structural context permeated by an institutional culture and an immediate climate. As Roscigno (2011) argues, “Historically and culturally proscribed hierarchies become inscribed in bureaucratic structures, practices, and internal dynamics” (360). This book contributes to the extensive body of research documenting the struggles and some successes of academic women within these milieus. We explore structural and cultural aspects of the academy that continue to be biased against academic women in direct, indirect, obvious, and subtle ways. We envision our book as a toolbox to be used for creating greater equality and equity in the U.S. higher education system. By examining problematic workplace situations and how women faculty navigate them, we hope to begin shifting the enduring aspects of academic cultures that drive chilly climates, discrimination, harassment, marginalization, and other challenges facing women academics. Thus, this book fundamentally is subversive because it “repositions women from victims to change agents” (Morley and Walsh 1995, 3).

## Background of the Project

For more than a decade, we have been members of Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), an academic organization dedicated to improving women's lives, creating feminist social change by maximizing networking opportunities

for women sociologists, and applying sociological insights to all aspects of society.<sup>11</sup> In 2007, as part of our service to SWS, we joined a newly formed committee for academic justice (CAJ). The CAJ collects and analyzes data regarding issues confronting women in higher education (i.e., inequitable university policies, race/gender/sexual orientation–based discrimination, bias in teaching evaluations). The CAJ’s goal is, in part, to create a more just academy that reflects the democratic ideals of the academy.<sup>12</sup> In 2007, we offered a workshop on navigating inequitable and challenging work situations. To explore this terrain, we put out a “call for experiences” on the SWS Listserv.

We asked members to submit their experiences, in confidence, for use as case studies. We removed identifying information (e.g., names, geographic location) and together with workshop participants analyzed narratives and developed concrete, appropriate actions for each situation. In keeping with our committee’s goal of creating academic justice, we went beyond suggesting interpersonal solutions and proposed “action” at the organizational and extraorganizational levels of colleges and universities. We realized that a broader audience might benefit from hearing about women’s experiences and exploring strategies to manage them. Thus, this book project was born.

## **Method and Methodology of the Project**

We placed a “call for experiences” similar to that on the SWS Listserv in approximately 80 electronic venues (Listservs, e-mail, organizations’ newsletters, etc.) representing diverse U.S.-based academic disciplines using the CAJ’s comprehensive list of academically oriented women-focused organizations, which we expanded (see Online Resources, this volume). Our goal was to shed light on topics that have remained largely invisible and give voice to women academics who have, perhaps, been silent (or been forced to be quiet) about negative work-related experiences.

We developed an online instrument that allowed for anonymous submissions. After obtaining consent, we culled lengthier narratives from our previous workshops and our online instrument as representative of areas of concern for each part of the book. Given the sensitive topics within these illustrative case studies, we took cautions to obscure any identifying details (e.g., removing university name, changing personal names, changing specifics of discipline or rank). However, most of each narrative remains unchanged.

We position ourselves as insiders of this community and claim our positionality as academic feminists who have experienced bias, discrimination, hostility, and silencing.<sup>13</sup> These experiences shape what we see as important to study. Feminist standpoint epistemology, or the valuing of women’s situated knowledge, has guided our project from its inception. We believe

that women's perspectives on their own experiences, conveyed through their interpretation of events, offer valuable empirical and theoretical insights for feminist research (Harding 1987, 31). As Narayan (1992) suggests, "[A] fundamental thesis of feminist epistemology is that our location in the world as women makes it possible for us to perceive and understand different aspects of both the world and human activities in ways that challenge the male bias of existing perspectives" (256). Standpoint epistemology should not be interpreted as an attempt to essentialize women or reify gender as a priori, suggesting that all academic women have homogeneous experiences. Instead, the communal experience of academic women, situated as such, provides a window into the conditions of their experiences. Our differences are as important as our similarities. And, we do not discount the possibility of alternative or competing explanations of accounts. We recognize that women can have positive and fulfilling careers in academe, unencumbered by negative experiences. It is precisely feminist change within (and outside) the academy that allows for women faculty to have affirming experiences. Exploring where inequality and inequity persist directs us to areas within academic structures and cultures that need our attention. We focus on providing a space for our respondents to tell their stories as they experienced them, in their words, and with their framing. We offer an analytical context to situate these narratives and suggest action steps to help women academics, and their allies, to navigate similar situations and to create change, broadly, within the academy.

Examining narratives, independently and as part of a greater set of data, allows us to appreciate the complex ways women faculty handle bias, discrimination, or other forms of workplace inequity. Further, it helps us understand how power manifests and operates, structurally and culturally, even as individuals resist, adapt, and respond to it. To date, our call for experiences has yielded 68 distinct "narratives" from women academics in 35 different disciplines, constituting our "case study database" (Yin 2009). In the introductions to Parts One through Four of the book, we feature select narratives and "Academic Women's Voices" sections as evidence of some experiences. Parts One through Four each conclude with a case study from our data that is coupled with action steps for women academics in similar situations. Part Five concludes with four real-world case studies illustrating successful, feminist institutional transformation. Because we cannot include all the experiences submitted by our participants, we analyzed the narratives systematically for themes by a process of inductive theory building (Esterberg 2002). We categorized sections of respondents' submissions with our initial categories of "hostile climates" determined, in part, from the literature on women in the academy, including:

- Sexual harassment and discrimination
- Hostility in the classroom
- Incivility, bullying, and mobbing
- Hostility to women's race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and feminist pedagogy or research
- Work and family conflicts
- Gendered and racialized expectations for service and "emotion work"<sup>14</sup>
- Pay equity and other disparities in work-related resources and compensation

However, people's experiences are rarely neatly catalogued. In reviewing the narratives for themes, we discovered nuances in experiences that we had not anticipated, and we used them to develop new categories. This process required subsuming some categories within others and developing new ones in an iterative coding process that allowed us to capture the complexity of individual narratives while finding broader patterns across them. We created a matrix of categories, placing excerpts of data into those categories. Then, we further considered the relationship between the categories given the data within them (see Miles and Huberman 1994).

No one book can cover the diversity of academic women's experiences. Space limitations have prevented us from addressing ageism, postdoctoral experiences, classism, and women faculty at for-profit institutions or community colleges. Additionally, we were unable to explore in depth the positive experiences of many women faculty, which research tells us are prevalent (e.g., Harvard COACHE climate survey). Nor could we address the experiences of women staff, undergraduates, or administrators; academic institutions outside of the United States; or men's experiences in the academy. However, this volume presents an important "slice" of academic life.

## **The Structure of the Book**

The first four parts of the book emphasize challenges facing U.S. women faculty that emerge from intersecting structures, cultures, and climates. Each of these parts opens with an introduction that intersperses narratives from our data with summaries of the part's chapters. In keeping with our book's toolbox approach to change, a case study from our data ends each part (there are four case studies for Part Five) to provide a sense of the costs that our study participants—and women academics throughout the United States—face as a result of inequitable workplaces. The case studies to Parts One through Four conclude with action steps that academics in similar situations—and their allies—can use. We intend them as starting points for action, not

exhaustive lists. To avoid redundancies, and because the situations in our case studies overlap, we distribute our recommendations across the case studies.

Despite the resources and advice that we provide and that exist in other books, on websites, and via organizations, we acknowledge that some battles are not winnable. Many of the suggestions that we make are about, for example, putting policies into place to educate, protect, and prevent discriminatory and hostile situations from happening. But casualties occur. If you (or someone you know) are navigating a challenging workplace situation, we recommend reading each case study to identify the most appropriate steps and resources.

Part Five, “Tools for Changing the Academy,” includes chapters that illustrate the need for broad, complementary approaches to creating change along with step-by-step ways to assess and correct the equity issues on your campus. This part ends with examples of recent, successful change initiatives from universities in the United States that we hope will inspire strategic interventions on your campus. The book ends with a list of resources that we compiled for faculty, administrators, and practitioner-researchers seeking to create a more inclusive academy. The online resources feature more than 100 organizations, groups, committees, and sources for information from a wide variety of disciplines as well as umbrella organizations.

We and the chapter contributors are hopeful not only that this book will result in institutional change but also that it will provide a sense of solidarity for women faculty who are experiencing (or have experienced) challenging, hostile, or biased academic environments. You are not alone! The narrative excerpts and case studies reflect the voices of academic women—and there are many—who stand with you. (Many academic men support you too.) We hope this book provides you with concrete ways to survive, or even thrive, in your current situation.

## Notes

1. We follow Crenshaw (1991, 1244), who argues that minority categories denote cultural groups (e.g., Black, Latina, Asian) and thus constitute proper nouns requiring capitalization. Equally, “white” and “women of color” are not specific cultural groups; thus, we do not capitalize them. However, perspectives on this differ. The editors respected contributors’ decisions regarding which conventions to use.
2. From The Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony Project at Rutgers University: <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html>
3. Toth (2008) includes advice to men.
4. For a critique of the “pipeline” metaphor see Furhmann et al. (2011) and Xie and Shauman (2003).
5. See [www.advance.cornell.edu/documents/CU\\_ADVANCEprop.pdf](http://www.advance.cornell.edu/documents/CU_ADVANCEprop.pdf).
6. One curious exception occurs in four-year private for-profit institutions, which have more men lecturers than women.

7. Ceci and Williams (2011) state that choices may be “free or constrained,” but they take for granted that it is about “motherhood”—why not a “parenting” choice? Their more sociological analysis can be found in Williams and Ceci (2012).
8. Drawing attention to men as a group does not mean that men cannot be allies. Many men are supportive allies and individual women can engage in hostile behavior. Our intention is to examine the *systems* that benefit particular categories of people; in this case, men. The flipside to men’s privilege is that women, as a group, are disadvantaged.
9. Of noteworthy difference are historically Black colleges and universities (Martin 1994), tribal colleges and universities, and Hispanic-serving institutions.
10. This shift is part of a larger assault on intellectualism, a topic beyond this book’s scope.
11. See [www.socwomen.org](http://www.socwomen.org)
12. See [www.socwomen.org/academic-justice](http://www.socwomen.org/academic-justice)
13. Our current workplaces are not represented in any of the case studies, narratives, or other examples of “hostility in the academy” in this book.
14. See Hochschild, Arlie Russel. 1979. “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure.” *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3):551–575.

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