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Source: *Sociological Forum*, MARCH 2019, Vol. 34, No. 1 (MARCH 2019), pp. 201-212

Published by: Wiley

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48558528>

REFERENCES

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Special Section: Outsiders in the Academy

Outsider Scholars and Outsider Sociologists

Vilna Bashi Treitler¹

If we take the time to look at the academy writ large and sociology as a discipline specifically, we can readily find the evidence to confirm a long-standing exclusion of certain scholars from the academic mainstream. This exclusion is especially evident in the case of scholars of color, but also includes women, nonelites (e.g., college and graduate students who lack academic social capital from elders who have been through it and could help), and those who wish to push for a more humanist scientific agenda over purist positivist science. Sexism and racism keep us from seeing the best of our ideas emerge to bring the discipline forward. As if the pursuit of good work and good works are mutually exclusive, an embrace of purist positivism leads us to shun antiracist, antisexist, nonhumanist science, labeling it “advocacy” or worse, “activist,” and conversely, ceding ground to those who wrap themselves in “objectivity” even as they may further regressive agendas. This article makes a case for the existence of an “outsider scholar,” and outlines sociology’s outsider problem. I argue that this problem endures at all levels of the academic endeavor, from undergraduate education all the way through to the ranks of administration. I conclude by offering remedies to lead us toward a more inclusive and social justice-oriented sociology.

KEYWORDS: academia; elitism; exclusion; racism; sexism; social capital.

INTRODUCTION

On October 21, 2017, Victor Nee, then president of the Eastern Sociological Society (ESS), released his list of Presidential Panels planned for the spring 2018 meetings. Matthey W. Hughey posted on Twitter (which also posted to his linked Facebook page) a screenshot of the web page of panels, along with the comment, “If you don’t see a problem here, you might be a part of the problem here.” The screenshot offered the marquis “*Presidential Panels* with leading scholars” (emphasis theirs), listing a highlight of the presidential panel offerings, noting a plenary with two additional scholars, and also Nee’s presidential address. Altogether in the panels, 14 scholars were named: 12 men and only 2 women; all are white save 2 black men;² and all but 3 scholars are from Ivy League institutions.³ In the spirit of full disclosure, I was then vice president of the ESS, and at the time the full roster of presidential panels were made public, I had not been consulted on the list of presidential panels nor invited to participate, although I was later invited to form a

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² Alejandro Portes is from Cuba and became an exile during the revolution that overthrew the dictator Batista and saw him replaced with Fidel Castro. People from Spanish-speaking countries comprise every race, and most Cubans in the United States are considered racially white, Portes among them.

³ See <https://twitter.com/ProfHughey/status/921744023030763520>.

panel. Normally, vice presidents work closely with presidents to form the conference program, so in my experience working with ESS, the process of putting together these panels and conference program was an anomaly.

While the controversy about ESS elitism spread across Twitter and Facebook over fall 2017, the Executive Committee was engaged in e-mail exchanges about the issue; I participated in this exchange. It centered on whether members of the Executive Committee were permitted to make public statements against the organization and whether/how it was being run. On Twitter, two sides of the issue were very publicly represented by Matthew Hughey on one and Richard Alba on another, who defended the program as tantalizing to younger scholars who would have their chance to engage with and hear from sociology's luminaries. In the end, it was noted that our bylaws have no prohibition against public statements by officeholders in ESS. Because I was vice president, people wanted to know my role in establishing the program, and I let it be known that I had not participated in the program's formation, which understandably was read as another form of academic exclusion. Nee invited me to put together a presidential panel, and I of course accepted the invitation, given the ongoing public controversy juxtaposing elitism and access. Assured that we as a body of scholars (and not just an Executive Committee) could and should discuss these ideas in the open, I sought to organize the panel around the obverse of elitism, sexism, and privilege and bring together scholars who would comment on that very issue. I soon learned that I was not the only one to think this way—Saida Grundy of Boston University had already begun organizing an Eastern Sociological Society panel in response to the controversy she saw happening on social media. I reached out to her, and we worked together to shape the Eastern Sociological Society 2018 presidential panel on "Outsider Scholarship, Outsider Sociology." Unfortunately, when we did get a slot, it was Sunday at noon, the very last session of the conference, and at the same time as another presidential panel (organized by Saskia Sassen). Still, I was glad, even honored, to serve the panel as a presider, and later I brought to the *Sociological Forum* editorial board the idea of gathering together the voices from the panel into the journal.

The panel—well attended given the constraint of the time slot—consisted of five scholars, three of whom offer papers here.⁴ Dr. Myron Strong was a last-minute addition to the panel (he is not listed in the final program) and spoke on the inequalities regularly faced by scholars at community colleges, who he argued are made so unwelcome that they generally avoid sociology conferences, to the detriment of the discipline, as they are the first point of contact for some of our best doctoral students, and they, too, are researchers! What struck me during his remarks was Strong's chagrin at our habit of looking first at one's name tag for their institutional affiliation to decide whether the person behind the tag is worth one's time. The paper he offers here asks us to understand community college scholars' unique position—they were trained just like the rest of us but, by choice or not, landed in careers more focused on teaching than publishing (although the research demands on them have been increasing). These scholars see very clearly how our devotion to

⁴ The author thanks Saida Grundy, without whom neither the 2018 ESS presidential panel "Outsider Scholarship, Outsider Sociology" nor this special section of *Sociological Forum* would exist.

institutional hierarchies and our devaluation of the teaching mission reify academic inequalities and cause us to fail to understand miss opportunities for us to make a difference as a cadre of scholars in a discipline that has important social justice value. In this same volume, Victor Ray takes Strong's argument a step further to critique the class stratification that seems built into a system of competition for tenure among ladder-rank faculty, one that even harms our graduate and undergraduate student populations. Ray appeals to us to be more reflective about our academic stratification systems. Finally, Matthew Hughey offers a controversial piece that presages a book on which he's working. He focuses here on racial disparities in academic collegiality. Having kept notes of his interactions with disciplinary colleagues, Hughey uses participant observation to report on what racially white colleagues say to him about nonwhite graduate students and professors when the latter are out of earshot. Two women scholars participated in the panel but were unable to provide papers in time to be included in this journal. Bandana Purkayastha (University of Connecticut) spoke of the ways we default to imperialist and colonialist thinking or fail to be nonhierarchically or postcolonially global in our quotidian scholarly language and in our analyses. Saida Grundy wrote about studying "up" in ethnography, noting disciplinary biases in studying the poor and oppressed in ways that presume their dysfunction and deviance, while simultaneously failing to look at more privileged groups with the same critical lenses. Their comments on the panel were thought provoking and prescient. To his credit, then Eastern Sociological Society president Victor Nee did come to the panel but arrived after the presentations and nearer to the end of our discussion, so he had missed the most critical dialogue with the audience about the state of the organization and the discipline. I presume and can only hope that the conversations about inclusion in the discipline continue, and I am grateful to Karen A. Cerulo, editor of *Sociological Forum*, for allowing these concerns to reach an even wider academic audience.

We are still wrestling with the ideas of outsider/insider, nonelite/elite, exclusion/inclusion in the Executive Committee and the wider membership of the regional conference that supports the *Sociological Forum* journal, but also in our discipline writ large, and in the academy as a whole. I write here about the reasoning behind the "Outsider Scholarship, Outsider Sociology" theme for the ESS panel, not only to let the reader know both the background to this collection of papers but also to explain that discussions about "diversity," inclusion, racism, sexism, elitism, and other issues relevant to the composition of our departments, conferences, and other academic gatherings are about real effects and current (not hypothetical) concerns. These problems are not new to sociology, as we have for the last 100 years fought over the exclusion of new and especially progressive ideas and the fate of paradigm shifters who wish to introduce them. (More on this later.)

WHAT IS OUTSIDER SOCIOLOGY? WHO IS AN OUTSIDER SOCIOLOGIST?

Racism, colorism, sexism, homo- and transphobia are normally at the top of the list when we think about exclusion, and we are not wrongheaded to try to be sensitive to their existence in our workplace relationships. The papers in this special

section talk about the kinds of exclusion that are not obvious in quotidian academic life—they appear as “natural” because of the everyday ways that the academy functions around elitism, “old boys’ networks,” and exclusion of the “other.” The authors give us lots of food for thought about how we organize academic life to make this kind of exclusion seem natural, so I leave that analysis to them. I thought it would be useful for me to use this introduction to remind the reader of the kinds of exclusion brought about by racism and sexism in the academy and delve deeper into what effects these two forms of exclusion have in shaping our workplaces and our work. (These days, I hear graduate students of color speak more about microaggressions—a word I detest—than macroaggressions, even though we can be sure that we certainly have not solved the problems of the latter.) So, below, I offer some details about the status of women and people of color in the academy to give some specifics about the state of underrepresentation of these groups and the causes of that underrepresentation, before narrowing the discussion to focus on the specific problems of sociology. As I conclude the article, I offer some recommendations on what we can do to make our classrooms, syllabi, graduate programs, departments, and conference meetings more inclusive.

WOMEN AND PEOPLE OF COLOR AS ACADEMIC OUTSIDERS

Women in science are doing better than ever before but still have a long way to go to be on par with the ranks, pay, prestige, and respect given to their male counterparts. Studies at all levels of interaction in the academy indicate our failure to treat women equal to men. Let us begin with representation: women are underrepresented in all academic ranks relative to their proportion in the population. Overall, women constitute 44.8% of all faculty in the institutions that responded to the latest survey of the American Association of University Professors. The nation’s most renown institution, Harvard University (n.d.), now has women in 30% of all tenure-track faculty positions (20% in the sciences and engineering)—up only 2% from the 28% women had in 2009. Of these women, 12.3% are full professors, and they make nearly \$6,000 a year less than the male full professors who, at 21.7% of all professors, are nearly double the proportion of women full professors (AAUP 2018). Why would representation be a problem? Perhaps it is because meritocracy is only an idea, for data show that the job market fails to value the smartest or most accomplished women. For example, data show that grade point average (GPA) in college has no impact on men’s job prospects, but women’s high GPA counts against them in the job market, and high-achieving women are especially penalized if they major in mathematics (Quadlin 2018).

At all levels, women would need to earn an extra degree (from graduate school all the way down to high school) to earn the same amount as a man—that is, a woman must graduate from high school to earn what a male dropout does, and a woman needs a master’s degree to earn what a man with a bachelor’s degree earns (Carnevale, Smith, and Gulish 2018). If a woman pursues graduate school, she will suffer greater risk of mental health ailments than her male counterparts, for 43% of women, compared to 34% of men, report suffering anxiety; 41% and 33%,

respectively, report suffering depression (Evans et al. 2018). The gendered wage gap begins with a woman's first paycheck and widens over her working life, reaching its widest discrepancy in a woman's early fifties—largely because men's earnings increase 87% over his working life, while women's increase only 51% (Carnevale et al. 2018).

Job prospects and earnings are not the only areas where sexism penalizes academic women. Women in the higher academic ranks are more likely than men to be partnered (59% compared to 17%) and therefore suffer the “two-body problem” of needing a job for their partner in order to be able to accept new posts (Fox 2005; Schiebinger, Henderson, and Gilmartin 2008) or suffer a lack of support for work-life balance issues (McCluskey 2016). And women professors suffer indignities even after getting coveted tenure-track posts. Male professors are asked to give twice the number of talks that women professors are invited to give (Nitttrouer et al. 2017). Women scientists are underrepresented among those scientists who have videos on YouTube (on just 32 of 391 of the most popular STEM-related channels), and for their trouble, they get more negative comments (14%) on their videos posted on YouTube when compared to male scientists (9%); worse, women also receive more comments of a hostile, critical, or sexist nature (Amarasekara and Grant 2018).

Women were reasonably or slightly overrepresented only among undergraduates (making up 54% of the student body) and in the University of California Office of the President (57%), where notably, the UC president is a woman (Bustillos and Siquieros 2018). We do have tools to improve gender inequity at our disposal, however. Note the changes that UC Irvine (UCI) saw in gender diversity after establishing the ADVANCE program in 2001, which designated 10 senior faculty to act as equity advisers in faculty searches: today, women are 34% of the faculty (an 8% increase, which compares favorably to the 5% increase noted in the UC system overall) (Stepan-Norris and Kerrissey 2015). Still, researchers in the United Kingdom report that it will take 40 years to close their 12% gender pay gap if the current pace of progress continues (Hall 2017).

As bad as all this is, women's representation is far greater than that of people of color. Of the 1.6 million faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions, 42% are white males, and 35% are white females; a full 77% of all faculty are white, while 3% each are black females and black males, 2% each are Latinas and Latinos (with the remainder being Asians and Pacific Islanders) (IES 2018). The numbers worsen if we look at full-time faculty, where 83% are white (56% white males, 27% white females), 4% black and 4% Latino (2% male, 2% female in each group), and 7% are Asian/Pacific Islander males; Hispanic females were less than 1% of the full-time professors (IES 2018). Things are somewhat better among the younger cohort of faculty, who as a group tend to be more diverse, especially in STEM fields, except where it comes to black faculty who are just as underrepresented among younger faculty as they are among the older ones (Li and Koedel 2017).

Representation matters. Several studies (conducted in the UK) have found that first, faculty failed to adjust teaching practices to students whose background and prior learning conditions do not fit the white and middle-to-upper class norms; further, tutoring sought out by nonwhite students show similar biases (Jabbar and Mirza 2017). When students seek out extra help, shouldn't we be able to provide it in unbiased form? Further, nonwhite college graduates are increasing in size relative

to their proportions in the population, and they need to see faculty and administrators of color in leadership positions on their campuses. The numbers of nonwhite administrators of those colleges have been rising slowly in number over the last 15 years, now 38.5% of the population, but only 14% of administrators in 2015, but this is higher than the 11% they represented in 2001 (Seltzer 2017). Nonwhite administrators are better paid where they are the least represented; this could be the result of strong efforts to recruit and retain them (Seltzer 2017).

Students are not blameless in aiding these unequal conditions. Note the result of a study of students participating in an experiment: asked to evaluate faculty CVs differing by race, sex, or discipline, undergraduates evaluated faculty of color as significantly less competent and less legitimate than white and Asian professors (Bavishi, Madera, and Hebl 2010). While the data on student evaluations show that they are unreliable indicators of teaching competence and are biased against women and faculty of color (see Huston 2005; Merritt 2012), the academy still relies on them in evaluating professors, and women of color are especially vulnerable to losing their tenure-track jobs on the basis of those evaluations. I've written elsewhere about the vulnerabilities of women of color in the academy, and how we faculty must stand up for them in our closed-door meetings whenever unfair evaluations take place (Bashi Treitler 2016).

We professors even rank our disciplines unequally. Specifically, we create a hierarchy of disciplines in accordance with their proportion of white faculty. "Certain fields of study—such as philosophy, for example—seem to ascribe an outsized value to brilliance, a trait generally considered innate rather than learned, among its scholars" and these are the same disciplines where "a marked lack of diversity. . . prevails" (Montañez 2018). It is imperative that we rethink what good scholarship means and decouple this from antiquated ideas about what a good scholar looks like.

SOCIOLOGY'S INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

We want to believe that scientists are properly trained and properly use the tools at their disposal to do high-quality research aimed at increasing our knowledge so that we can solve our world's most pressing problems. We want to believe that our institutions of higher education foster the best science and educate our young people in the ways of learning. We want to believe that peer review vets the bad work and promotes the good and that with our gatherings on review panels, journal editorial boards, scientific organizations and in creating elected offices that gather cadres of people to lead those organizations, we have established effective routes to disseminate the best scientific research findings. But are we correct if we presume that science actually works this way?

Aldon Morris would say that the historical record offers a resounding no, for it shows that we have forced sociologists of color to the margins of our discipline since the discipline was founded. Morris (2015) studied the life and work of William Edghard Burghardt Du Bois and showed Du Bois to be founding scientist creating the discipline of sociology. Du Bois, Morris shows, is the man responsible for the requirement that every top doctoral sociology candidate know statistics, the

original mixed-methods analyst, the top scholar (even by dint of sheer number of peer reviewed articles and books) of his time, yet he was barred from academic recognition and denied his place in the sociological canon. Du Bois is the ultimate outsider sociologist. He challenged the limiting views of the possibilities for African American life and success held by his contemporary Booker T. Washington and Washington's supporters in the Chicago School of sociology, and for his trouble he was excluded from departments and denied grants from sociology's gatekeepers. Trained at Harvard sociology (becoming the first African American to earn a PhD at Harvard) and at Humboldt University in Berlin (making him a contemporary of Max Weber), Du Bois wrote one of the first studies in sociology and afterward published dozens of peer-reviewed articles and developed both field and quantitative methods of data analysis. Despite these achievements, he was denied a tenure-track position at a top university. Du Bois built the first scientific school of sociology at Atlanta University and held academic conferences there. He wrote his seminal sociological field study, *The Philadelphia Negro*, two decades before the heavily lauded study *The Polish Peasant in Europe*, by William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki at the University of Chicago (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918–20). When Du Bois did this work, Robert Park had not even begun his work with Booker T. Washington, let alone taken up his post at the University of Chicago—yet Park was later credited as a founder of the discipline and a father of the study of American race relations. Du Bois, the foremost scholar on race in the United States and field scientist in the African American community, was denied grants to fund his research, but Swede Karl Gunnar Myrdal was instead given an unlimited budget to come from abroad to write a study of American racism. While Du Bois's example is a stark one, Morris is not the only one who sees that we might not wish to wholly invest in the idea that the path science takes is a fully meritocratic one. Morris shows that sociological theorists who have studied how science is made are not necessarily in agreement that the cream of our scientific top always rises to the top.

History teaches that American social science has fallen short of functioning as a democratic institution where intellectual merit would be the criterion required for scholars to enter the gates and enrich the stock of knowledge. The ugly realities of racism, sexism, and class bias have infiltrated American social science and stunted its growth. The field, including its social networks, is crucial to intellectual ferment and the building of theoretical schools. However, its institutional processes lose vitality when discrimination erects barriers preventing the circulation of ideas. (Morris 2015:223)

Alongside Morris, many other of our discipline's top scholars have spent decades offering critiques of the discipline with regard to our relationship to racial, ethnic, and gender inequality among our ranks. In 1987, Rita Simon noted that we fail to give enough attention to stratification, which really should be included in every curriculum and not be considered an “applied” area of research. James McKee (1993) diagnosed four beliefs among sociologists that preclude our fixing our own problems in the discipline: a widespread and strong belief in modernization/industrialization as bringing forth an inevitable melting of ethnicities such that we need do nothing but wait for assimilation to happen; a belief in black people as culturally inferior, a belief in a less prejudiced middle class, and a belief that the study of race relations is appropriately an “applied” study and therefore marginal to the “real”

science of sociology. Stephen Steinberg (2007) cautions that sociologists self-congratulate when we teach that race has no biological basis and is a social construction—and stop there, as if this achievement alone will eradicate racism. But Mary Romero, now president of the American Sociological Association (for 2018–2019), has been for some time critical of the ways we train sociologists to take on this important work. Back in 1998 (with Eric Margolis), Romero noted that there is growing interest in race/ethnicity in disciplines outside sociology and that we export our own students interested in these topics, leaving them to find courses in these subfields in ethnic studies, women's studies, and international studies departments (Margolis and Romero 1998). Romero and Margolis (2000) also showed that students interviewed report “curricula that are outdated, ignore race, are monocultural, and look better in the catalog than the classroom,” our faculty ranks are “top-heavy with older White males,” and further, we discourage students from pursuing what attracted them to the academy and our departments in the first place. Students find our commitments to diversity hollow when the curriculum focuses on the contributions of only white scholars. Worse, we actually racialize our students when they choose to study race, and we treat them as rude if they bring up concerns about racial issues pertaining to the departments in which they study. Margolis and Romero (2000:19) write:

Ph.D. programs in sociology do not appear to have yet been influenced by transformation projects that have been diversifying the curriculum and increasing multicultural requirements in undergraduate education. Rather than responding to demographic and educational changes, the discipline appears to be training the next generation of sociologists without regard to the job market or student populations. . . . The problem has three outcomes: first, given the transformation of the United States into a multicultural nation, and the significant issues and tensions raised by this ongoing pattern of social change, this lacunae points to a significant failing on the part of the discipline in terms of areas of investigation; second, the lack affects graduate students of color and EuroAmerican students who are being ill-prepared for the conditions under which they will live and work together; and third, this failure of emphasis by sociology may mean that bright students interested in these issues choose to go elsewhere, directly affecting the discipline's ability to reproduce itself.

Finally, reflecting on her 36 years of teaching sociology and membership in the American Sociological Association, Romero (2017:213) repeats her claim that “the integration of faculty and students of color in sociology graduate departments cannot be separated from the integration of race in the curriculum.” Further, while she notes that we have made progress in integrating the graduate student body, she also calculated that of the 133 programs in the 2016 *ASA Guide to Graduate Departments in Sociology*, one-third (45) do not offer Race & Ethnicity, or Race, Class, & Gender as specializations—she concludes, then, that we fail to diversify our curriculum even as our doctoral programs have diversified. In some obvious ways, then, the Outsider Sociologist problem is one of our own making, and we fail ourselves if we leave in place the structures that perpetuate it.

TOWARD A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIOLOGY

Sociology is the study of social groups and the stratified relationships among them, but sociologists are not immune from perpetuating the same -isms that are

our objects of inquiry—a wholly unsurprising conclusion. Some sociology departments, conferences, and editorial boards are facing up to elitism, racism, sexism, and classism, but our efforts in these areas are clearly far from enough. The #MeTooSociology hashtag calls attention to the sexism—and worse, sexual harassment and assault—that plague our research venues. And (as the Michael Kimmel case shows) even those who gained sufficient prominence and scholarly acclaim to become icons of the gender and sexuality subfield can be called to answer for their alleged misdeeds (Mangan 2018). The whole discipline suffers under immoral and discriminatory actions. Many scholars who could be taking up the mantle of sociology from the old guard abdicate instead because we have not gotten our house in order. As Eduardo Bonilla-Silva notes in his parting missive as he leaves the office of president of the American Sociological Association,

I want to especially thank those colleagues who came to this meeting after years of not attending the meeting. One of the reasons many of you told me you stopped coming to our meeting deserves attention. You told me that you dislike the elitist attitude of some members and how that flavors the interactions that transpire in the meetings and, thus, the general meeting's vibe (e.g. checking badges to see the academic provenance, attending receptions for the sole purpose of meeting "notables," etc.). I have witnessed this elitism in the past and think it has no place in sociology. It is my hope that all members, regardless of their institutional affiliation or standing, behave in an open and considerate way in the meeting. After all, we are all sociologists and our annual meeting should be a sociological celebration. We can change the culture of our meeting to make it feel welcoming to all who come. (Bonilla-Silva 2018)

It is not enough to leave the victims of unequal academic workplace relationships struggling for better conditions and hope for the best. We could all come together to make our working relationships more just, equal, and humane. In fact, it is in our interest to do so, because research shows that diverse workplace groups are more innovative, better at problem solving, and know that coming to consensus takes effort so we are willing to put in that effort to achieve these superior outcomes (Phillips 2014). There are many things we can do to improve our discipline's composition of faculty by diversifying it as well as call attention to the good works of underrepresented scholars. I mentioned several of these in my plenary address to the American Sociological Association in August 2018 in Philadelphia. I recount and add to them here:

- Teach about race, gender, sexuality, imperialism and colonialism, and social justice in our classes. That is, volunteer to teach classes on these issues, and in other related courses add materials that touch on these topics.
- Change your syllabi and the list of references in your published research. Cite black women; teach Stuart Hall's writings; add Du Bois to the canon.
- Require broad reading of the graduate students you advise or recommend to them professors whom you know have a reputation for inclusion. Make it so that students have other routes to becoming a broadminded scholar other than enrolling in your classes.
- Refrain from denying activism/"advocacy" as a path for your students, especially if your reasoning relies solely upon positivist frameworks of what science should be. Students come to sociology to make the world a better place and believe that we have the tools to help them in that work. Let's not teach them that they are wrong about us. Rather, help them to become the scholars they wish to be: ones

who can be given social science tools that can be used to make positive social change as well as scholarly publications.

- Use our regional and national associations to better welcome faculty and graduate students from underrepresented groups or who toil at nonelite institutions:
 - Organize panels to hear about inequities and ways to remedy them.
 - Choose to mentor graduate students and teach them how to present their work in regional or theme-specific conferences.
 - When you attend your next academic conference, if you find yourself unable to break the habit of eyeball surfing nametags, simply change what you do afterward. Silently read a name tag, but then audibly say hello and the person's name and quickly introduce yourself. It will make a world of difference to dispelling the feeling of hierarchy that leaves all but elite scholars feeling invisible, or worse, scorned.
- Tell your top administrators that couple-hiring is one of the best ways to increase gender and racial diversity among faculty and administrative ranks while at the same time increasing your institution's academic excellence (Schiebinger et al. 2008).

I truly love sociology because I believe it has a unique and rightful place in critiquing social life and giving us the tools to find ways to make our world a better place for all living things. To be effective in this goal, we have to be vigilant in doing more than droning on about social constructions. We must teach that the effects of racism and sexism are as real as the hierarchies on which these social constructions are based. We are scientists, yes, but as informed scholars who know how the world works, I believe we are morally obligated to eradicate prejudice and discriminatory actions wherever we find them, including on our own perch in the ivory tower.

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