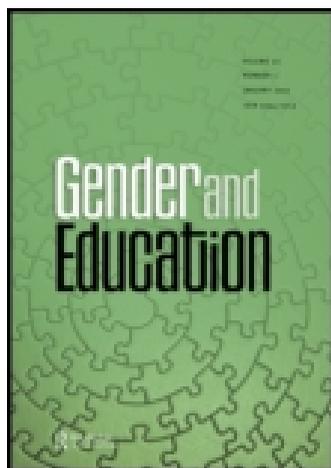


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'We need a woman, we need a black woman': gender, race, and identity taxation in the academy

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‘We need a woman, we need a black woman’: gender, race, and identity taxation in the academy

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In 1994, Amado Padilla used the phrase ‘cultural taxation’ to describe the extra burden of service responsibilities placed upon minority faculty members because of their racial or ethnic background. In this paper, we expand upon Padilla’s work and introduce the concept of ‘identity taxation’ to encompass how other marginalised social identities (such as gender, race and gender, and sexual orientation) may result in additional non-academic service commitments for certain faculty. Using qualitative interviews with faculty members at a large, public university in the Midwest, we examine identity taxation involving gender and the intersection of gender and race to demonstrate how women faculty (in general) and women of colour (specifically) feel their gender and racial group memberships influence their experiences in academia.

Keywords: cultural taxation; academia; gender; race; intersectionality

Once almost entirely dominated by men, academia has slowly become an environment that women have begun to access in larger numbers. In fact, in certain fields, such as nursing, education, and social work, women are the majority, both as students and as faculty members (National Center for Education Statistics 2004; National Science Foundation 2006).¹ However, some research suggests women are still highly underrepresented in male-dominated disciplines such as law, medicine, and the natural sciences due to subtle sex discrimination and a perception that ‘the perspectives of privileged White males are the embodiment of science, medicine, law, or literature’ (Benokraitis 1998, 19; Ward 2008). While there are more women in academia now than ever before, female faculty tend to lag behind their male counterparts in terms of productivity, recognition, and compensation (Samble 2008; Sonnert and Holton 1995; Ward 2008; Xie and Shaumann 2003). One possible source of this disparity is the extra burden of service, advising, and mentorship expectations that are disproportionately assigned to female professors (Aguirre 2000; Haag 2005; Samble 2008). Such obstacles have also been documented among faculty of colour who may experience emotional and psychological distress as a result (Aguirre 2000; Johnsrud and Sadao 1998; Ruffins 1997; Segura 2003; Smith and Witt 1993; Stanley 2006; Turner 2003). Amado Padilla introduced the concept of ‘cultural taxation’ in his 1994 article, ‘Ethnic

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Minority Scholars, Research, and Mentoring: Current and Future Issues', to describe the unique challenges 'ethnic' graduate students and scholars face when attempting to conduct race-based research.² Padilla defined cultural taxation as:

the obligation to show good citizenship toward the [academic] institution by serving its needs for ethnic representation on committees, or to demonstrate knowledge and commitment to a cultural group, which may even bring accolades to the institution but which is not usually rewarded by the institution on whose behalf the service was performed. (1994, 26)

To better illustrate his concept of cultural taxation, Padilla provided examples such as being called upon to: serve on affirmative action or similar committees, translate (non-English) documents, be the 'expert' on issues of diversity, and educate members of the racial majority. Padilla explained that cultural taxation was a particular problem for ethnic scholars who often felt additional expectations were placed on them by departmental colleagues or university administrators who assumed ethnic scholars were best suited for mentorship of minority students and membership on diversity-related committees.

Although Padilla's original concept of cultural taxation referred to faculty of colour, we argue that female faculty of any race experience a similar taxation due to their gender. Therefore, we aim to expand Padilla's definition of cultural taxation to include other historically marginalised social identities (e.g., gender, sexual orientation) by adopting the term 'identity taxation'. Identity taxation occurs when faculty members shoulder any labour – physical, mental, or emotional – due to their membership in a historically marginalised group within their department or university, beyond that which is expected of other faculty members in the same setting. This additional labour might differentially influence a faculty member's academic productivity and social integration within an academic department or institution. In this paper, we explore identity taxation as it applies to women faculty. Using data taken primarily from 32 in-depth interviews with women faculty of various ethno-racial backgrounds at a Midwestern public research university, we show how these women experienced 'gendered' identity taxation. We argue that some women faculty experience various forms of identity taxation due to their intersectional identities and discuss how this taxation may negatively affect their promotion and tenure advancement. Thus, our exploration of identity taxation in this paper not only contributes to existing literature on cultural taxation, but also demonstrates how social identities beyond race influence faculty experiences in academia.

Women in the academy

There is a lack of consensus about how well represented women are in the academy. Despite optimistic views that women's representation as professors would rise with their increased attainment of undergraduate and graduate degrees, empirical studies undertaken in the 1990s did not see the dramatic increase expected (Calasanti and Smith 1998; West 1995; Winkler 2000). Yet women faculty members' representation has been steadily growing since that time, such that women represent 44.6% of faculty members at post-secondary institutions (National Center for Education Statistics 2006a).³ However, women faculty are still a minority in the natural sciences, representing only a quarter (25.5%) of natural science professors, and just 8.5% of engineering faculty (National Center for Education Statistics 2006b). In addition, because women are often dispersed into male-dominated research groups, their increased presence in

a science department may not resolve diversity-related issues, unless the underlying structure of the workplace is transformed at the same time (Etzkowitz et al. 1994). Like faculty of colour, women in academia, especially those in the natural sciences, often lack the complex networks that their (white) male peers enjoy and they struggle to gain legitimacy and authority in their field (Aguirre 2000; Schick 2002; Smith and Calasanti 2005; Winkler 2000; Yoder and Aniakudo 1997). In addition, female faculty seem to be burdened with a disproportionate share of committee membership responsibilities, which has facilitated differential tenure promotion rates for women relative to their male peers (Porter 2007; Turner 2002). Because women faculty also often feel a more personally motivated desire to increase diversity, the impetus to accept service invitations is especially high for them (Olsen, Maple, and Stage 1995).

On the other hand, quantitative results using more representative samples have found mixed results regarding gendered discrepancies in service loads at universities and colleges. While studies conducted in the 1980s found that women were on more university-wide committees than their male peers, more recent studies have found less divergence (Bellas and Toutkoushian 1999; Olsen, Maple, and Stage 1995; Porter 2007; Turk 1981). However, in a recent study conducted among faculty at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Misra et al. (2011) demonstrated that women faculty at all ranks spend more time on mentoring and service to the university. This gender difference was especially notable in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields and among associate professors.

The lack of consistency in these findings may mask three important phenomena that might influence the women faculty in our sample. First, while there is not a consensus about whether women faculty have more committee/service responsibilities than their male counterparts, there is some evidence that they are disproportionately asked to sit on diversity-related committees, which involves more 'invisible' work than other committee memberships (Porter 2007; Seifert and Umbach 2008; Trower and Chait 2002). In addition, most of the research on female faculty members' service load neglects a central feature of the academic environment – discipline. There is strong evidence that disciplinary contexts affect service loads greatly (Seifert and Umbach 2008). Finally, while many studies have separately explored how race and gender influence the professional and personal lives of women faculty and faculty of colour, fewer studies have examined the interaction between race and gender to explore the intersectionality of these two social groups (Essed 2000; Kobayashi 2002; Mirza 2009; Monture 2010; Smith 2010; Vakalahi and Starks 2010). While disciplinary context is an important consideration, exploration of race and gender among faculty in all disciplines (female- or male-dominated) will be important for learning more about identity taxation with regard to gender and the intersection of race and gender for all female faculty. For example, a woman of colour as a numerical minority in a (white) female-dominated discipline may have experiences similar to those of a woman (of any race) in a (white) male-dominated discipline. Thus, it is imperative that future studies on differential amounts of service consider the actual amount of time faculty spend on service, the number and types of committees on which they serve, the impact of female representation, and the intersection of race and gender in various disciplines.

'Multiple marginality'

For faculty with intersectional marginalised identities such as being female and a racial minority, issues of cultural taxation also have a significant effect on the quality of their

academic and personal lives (Bronstein 1993; Ford 2011; Stanley 2006). This is especially true for women in male-dominated disciplines such as the natural sciences. In recent years, the development of social theory on intersectionality has allowed for more thorough discussions of how being a woman of colour creates nuanced experiences and interpretations of the social world (Brah 2001; Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins 1998; hooks 1990). Women who are 'double minorities' face issues that white women and male faculty of colour do not have to confront in departmental settings, such as the pressure to be a symbolic role model for female and minority students; increased visibility and bodily/presentational concerns; and isolation from collegial networks and departmental/institutional support (Aguirre 2000; Essed 2000; Ford 2011; Kobayashi 2002; Smith 2010; Turner 2002). Rather than having additive or multiplicative effects, race and gender are 'simultaneous and intersecting systems of relationship and meaning' (Andersen and Collins 1992, xiii). Thus, as members of two minority groups, they experience additional identity taxation, beyond that of either female faculty or faculty of colour. To explore identity taxation further, especially amongst women faculty of colour, we turn to the interviews collected for the Faculty Members and Diversity Classrooms Project.

Methods

Data for this analysis come from a collaborative project at a large, predominantly white Midwestern public university which sought to explore the ways in which faculty members' social identities impact their experience at the university. Faculty in the sample were identified and recruited in one of two ways. First, respondents were contacted and asked to participate if they had been awarded distinguished teaching or service honours from the university. Subsequent subjects were recruited via snowball sampling, using colleagues' recommendations of highly talented faculty members who are committed to issues of diversity. Our goal was not to gather a representative and generalisable sample; rather it was to find a rich and sophisticated set of respondents to speak about diversity, pedagogy, and the academic experience. These recruitment techniques resulted in a sample of 66 interviews that was diverse in terms of gender (34 men and 32 women), race (18 white faculty, 20 African-American faculty, 13 Asian/Asian-American faculty, nine Latino/a faculty, four Native-American faculty, and two Arab-American faculty) and discipline (26 social science faculty, 22 natural science faculty, and 18 humanities faculty). The response rate was 90.4%. In this paper, we focus mainly on the interviews with the female faculty.⁴ Of the women in this sub-sample, nine are white, 10 African-American, seven Asian/Asian-American, four Latina, two Native-American and one is Arab-American. Finally, the disciplinary backgrounds of the female faculty members are quite balanced: 10 are in the humanities, 10 are in the natural sciences and 13 are in the social sciences.

Participants were interviewed for roughly one to one and a half hours using a semi-structured format. Interviews were conducted by several graduate students and the two faculty project directors, and were cross-racial/ethnic whenever possible. The primary goal of the Faculty Members and Diversity Classrooms Project was to examine how race and ethnicity influenced teaching experiences and relationships with colleagues in the university setting. However, over the years, as the project developed and interviews were conducted, the team's focus shifted from an emphasis primarily on race and ethnicity to how other social identities in addition to race and ethnicity affected faculty members' experiences. Thus, the final interview protocol centred around six

major themes: (1) personal racial/ethnic biography; (2) teaching biography or academic career path; (3) pedagogical approach to teaching and learning; (4) views of the impact that faculty's social identities had on their approaches to and experiences with students and classroom teaching; (5) racialised/gendered experiences with their peers, departments and the structure/culture of the university; and (6) views of diversity in higher education. The format of the semi-structured interviews allowed all of the interviewees to touch on the same themes, but it also gave them flexibility to follow the lead of the interviewee in a more conversational format.⁵ All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for thorough data analysis with the rare exceptions of those interviewees who requested that it not be.⁶ Our analytic strategy involved open and focused coding (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). Specifically, we began with a close reading of each transcript in which we first noted recurring themes. We then used the qualitative software program, NVIVO, to code each transcript. For this paper, we generally focused on the responses to the questions about the interviewees' experiences with their peers, departments, and the culture of the university, but we did not limit our analysis to those sections – also noting any other places in the interviews that seemed relevant. Finally, we chose a fairly conservative coding strategy, only identifying peer-to-peer conflicts or additional work expectations as raced or gendered if the respondent identified them as such.

'Gendered' identity taxation

Though all respondents were not specifically asked to reflect about how gender had affected their experiences in academia, issues related to gender and identity taxation were mentioned in many interviews with faculty in departments in which they were likely to be under-represented. Interviewees in the natural sciences, where there is the greatest disparity in the proportion of male to female faculty, were the most likely to describe experiences of gendered identity taxation.⁷ In female faculty members' narratives of gendered identity taxation, three major themes emerged, all of which were echoes of accounts by faculty of colour (see Joseph and Hirshfield 2011). First, female professors felt that they were expected to be the 'token' women in department meetings and public gatherings. Second, female faculty members were expected to take on a greater proportion of the mentorship and advising of female students than their male colleagues. Finally, female faculty members, especially those in the natural sciences, encountered prejudice and discrimination from male colleagues who questioned their intellectual abilities and skill. Like faculty of colour, women faculty described these as unfair burdens that affect their time, emotional health, and productivity.

Female faculty as tokens

When asked how their race affected their experiences as faculty members, several of the female interviewees (without prompting) discussed their gender instead of, or in addition to, their race. This was most common for white women professors in the natural sciences. For example, Susan described the effect her gender had on the isolation she felt in her department. She explained, 'I'm down here ... I'm in no group because of ... I came a long time ago and there were no women. I was the, one of the first tenured women in science, at the university ever. And I learned to survive by myself' (White, #118). Faculty members in the natural sciences were much more

likely to bring up women's increased departmental service or committee burdens than were faculty in other departments. Due to the low number of women in these departments, women natural scientists feel they are asked more often to serve on committees or attend departmental functions than are their male counterparts. In fact, Michael (#163), a white natural scientist, described a long, fruitless search for a woman who could be present during a meeting with a provost and explained that they eventually 'settled' on having a female secretary attend to represent women at the meeting.

Notably, female faculty rarely complained about the overburden of service responsibilities that were placed upon them and took for granted that these expectations were normal. For instance, Helen, an Asian professor in the natural sciences said,

All female faculty are asked more than male faculty to participate on things like panels, service and things of this nature. MLK Day for example. So, the female faculty are asked disproportionately to do these things. And, by and large, most of us agree to do it every time ... as schedules allow. (Helen, Asian, Female, Natural Sciences, #120)

Women in the natural sciences seldom protested the extra work expected of them by service-related demands. However, the time and energy these women expend on such activities reduce their research productivity, which may negatively influence their tenure prospects. Faculty of colour have similar experiences relative to their white peers in academic departments and also feel overburdened by a departmental need to have diverse representation (Joseph and Hirshfield 2011). The consequence for both groups is that their higher service load and committee work are rarely considered in promotion and tenure decisions. Thus their academic productivity may be unfairly compared to their (white and male) colleagues', who have had fewer service obligations.

Female faculty as advocates and mentors for female students

While the female professors interviewed for this study rarely objected to these invitations to serve on multiple committees, they seemed slightly more displeased with the expectation that they mentor and advise female students. Carol, a white faculty member in the natural sciences, explained that her male peers neglected women students. She exclaimed, 'They say they don't like talking to the female students and they'll send female faculty to talk to them. I'm always supposed to be serving them [female students] because we're women' (#159). Ellen described the additional pressures of mentorship with a bit more humour, saying:

The one thing I can say is many of my colleagues who aren't willing or are less willing to deal with many issues of diversity, be it gender or racial or socioeconomic ... will send those issues to me. I've dealt with a number of them. And I would rather have that happen than to have them either totally dismiss them offhand ... or not deal with them. Be nice if they try a little bit on their own, but ... at least ... they do know that there are people around who can help. (Ellen, White, Female, Natural Sciences, #160)

In this case, Ellen is more concerned that issues of diversity be dealt with rather than focusing on how the burden of dealing with such issues falls unequally on her shoulders. In addition, though she is white and does not study race or diversity, she is expected to act as a diversity advocate simply because, as a woman in the natural sciences, she is a minority. The assumption that she must therefore be sympathetic to, and knowledgeable about, the experiences of students in other minority groups

because of her one minority group membership is curious, and perhaps unfounded, yet was commonly described in our sample.

Another white female natural scientist, Susan (White, Female, Natural Sciences, #118), feels that her additional mentorship responsibilities are acceptable, but is uncomfortable about discussing issues of gender in the classroom:

Interviewer (I): Do you talk about being a woman in your classroom?

Respondent (R): I try not to because I've had so many people come and say, 'Gee, what is it like to be a woman natural scientist?' And I don't do woman natural science, I do general activities. There's no such thing as woman natural science. I try to stay out of that.

I: Okay. How does staying out of that potentially impact those students that feel...?

R: I'm happy to talk to women and minorities. And I'm... and we do talk about what it's like to be a scientist, but I don't do it from... it's one on one.

I: Uh-huh. You do that one on one.

R: We have so few women, it's not a problem.

Susan makes it clear that she does not wish to be pigeon-holed as a 'woman scientist'. It is also important to note that Susan's obvious desire to keep gender and the particular experiences of women in science out of her classroom is perhaps an attempt to maintain an 'objective' and 'neutral' class and teaching style as much as possible. Since programmes to increase women's representation in science are common, women scientists often feel a need to prove their merit and demonstrate their success in academia without affirmative action or consideration of gender. Within the classroom, this means avoiding any apparent partiality towards female students. Unfortunately, the consequence of pedagogical choices to avoid seeming biased is that male students in the natural sciences often have no idea about how gender might affect their female peers' experiences in science. Thus, they may be less understanding and accommodating to gender differences later in their careers.

Prejudice about female faculty

A final, more subtle form of gendered identity taxation faced by the female faculty in this study was the prejudice they faced from their older male peers. Interestingly, this prejudice or discrimination was often identified by male interviewees describing their female colleagues, mainly in the natural sciences. Michael (#163), a white faculty member in the natural sciences, discussed this prejudice in his role as a mentor, explaining that he spends a fair amount of time talking to one of his more conservative colleagues about what he perceives as insensitivity to their female peers. Similarly, George described the discrimination that one of his female colleagues faced from men in his department (Asian-American, Male, Natural Science, #158). He partially attributed her lack of power to her small stature and retiring manner, which made her a prime target for such behaviour. Women also notice their lack of power in their departments. Ellen, a white natural scientist, explained that while she does not feel like her authority is purposely undermined, 'if a male colleague says the same thing [as I do], the student or the colleague will certainly believe it more from the male' (#160).

Snide comments about women were also described by other faculty in the sample. In response to a question about what brings up racial issues among her colleagues, Helen (Asian, Female, Natural Sciences, #120) responded:

Respondent: Gender issues [come up] more than racial issues, I would say.

Interviewer: Okay. What brings them up?

R: Characterisation of response to issues. A female is characterised in a much more hysterical or emotional fashion than a male, when in fact our department has a history of a few male professors actually coming to fisticuffs after a faculty meeting. This was years ago, but I mean, the point in my telling you the story is that the behaviour on the male side has been historically much more extreme than the female side, and yet, very often, there's a strong gender identification.

In this case, prejudice about women's emotionality persists in Helen's department, despite evidence that supports the contrary. Unfortunately, these beliefs about women appear to be fairly widespread. As Howard explained,

I mean, you have to, I do have to recognise and say, way up front, we're talking about a discipline that has been white, male, and in the country, male, male . . . Our department just tenured one of the first women to come through the ranks. We had hired some people externally before. And we aren't isolated. [Another university in the Midwest] tenured one of their first women to come through the ranks a couple years ago. For the first time in the history of the university. And so, for the record, I have certainly been part of a part of very uncomfortable conversations in my department. Given attitudes and prejudices that I have to say mostly my older colleagues have. And not just in my department. I mean, within the natural science community. . . (Howard, White, Male, Natural Sciences, #111)

While women in natural science departments may not always have to deal with overt prejudice and discrimination, colleagues' negative attitudes, snide comments, and harsher evaluations that often are the by-product of such beliefs causes an additional burden of time and emotional energy beyond that expended by their male peers.

Identity taxation in the intersection of race and gender

Due to their double minority status, female faculty of colour experience a particularly large burden of identity taxation in academia. Women of colour in this sample reiterated similar types of identity taxation to those described by their white female and male non-white peers, such as increased pressure to represent diversity as tokens, advocates, and role-models. Women of colour also revealed an additional barrier particular to their experiences as double minorities: specifically, dealing with (negative) stereotypes portraying them as maternal or nurturing. Thus, while these faculty must cope with similar forms of identity taxation as white female and non-white male academics, women of colour must also cope with a type of identity taxation that is uniquely their own.

Female faculty of colour as diversity representatives

Because they are members of two under-represented groups in academia (faculty of colour and female faculty), as well as the even rarer combination of the two, women faculty of colour feel especially overburdened by service demands on their time. Women of colour in our sample said that they sometimes feel their utility in their department boils down to their gender and race, so much so that their identity as a faculty member is almost negligible. When asked how her race was important in her experience as a professor in her department, Camille, an African-American professor in the humanities replied,

Um, wanting a black face, or a face card of any kind. I mean, I've had people say to me things like, you know, 'Could you have dinner with this job applicant? We need a woman,

we need a black woman'. That's from a particularly insensitive secretary. (Camille, African-American, Female, Humanities, #132)

While colleagues are not generally this explicit in their categorisations of female faculty of colour, several of the minority women in this sample described moments when they felt that their presence was desired simply for the diversity they represented.

Women faculty of colour are also often expected to represent and advocate for minority groups that they may or may not be members of. In other words, it is as if departmental colleagues assume that personal experience from having membership in one disadvantaged group translates into experiential knowledge of all minority groups. This assumption is understandably frustrating for women of colour, who are faced not only with mentoring and supporting members of the two (or more) disadvantaged groups to which they belong, but also with additional historically disadvantaged students. Brenda, an African-American professor in the humanities, best articulated this dilemma, saying:

I know things that have to do with women, and being a black woman, I'm pretty good at that. But I don't know what it's like to be a lesbian woman, or somebody going through a transgender change. Or to be a woman with profound disability issues, or a man with that. I said, I don't know what that's like . . . Because I find sometimes they look to me as being the specialist, not just because I'm the teacher, but well, you've got one minority or two minority things going. You must just [laughs] . . . have the insight to them all. (Brenda, African-American, Female, Humanities, #153)

While women of colour in the sample frequently cited their desire to support and advise students, they sometimes feel that this commitment to advocacy and mentorship is overly taxing, and the additional burden of being the 'expert' on minority groups is an additional responsibility that they are uncomfortable taking on.

The responsibility to represent and advocate for diversity was not always characterised as negative, however. In fact, several female faculty members described the excess travel and work required of them because of their visibility as role models to younger women of colour as logical, and at times, a source of pride. For example, Sharon, an African-American natural scientist, explained:

I do think that other people think that my race is important and the other people I [laughter] am thinking of are sort of senior people in the field and some of them are also sort of termed under-represented minorities. And they really feel that is very important being an African-American woman and being a rarity in the scientific community that I go out and do my share of recruiting and, you know, being a role model and I agree with them. I think there is a certain responsibility for that. And I definitely get the sense that there are other people out there who, you know, sort of have their eye on me because I am African-American and a female and want to make sure that, you know, there are young girls who know that. There's somebody at [this Research I University] who looks like you who's doing this job. (Sharon, African-American, Female, Natural Sciences, #161)

While the extra mentoring and recruitment associated with these identities is considerable, these faculty members seem to feel that it is their responsibility to continue in the fight for diversity, despite possible adverse effects on their productivity and/or qualifications for promotion. Interestingly, few of the faculty members in this sample described any positive effect that their presence or recruitment might have on non-minority students. In fact, they often imply that their efforts to increase diversity only

impact women of colour. This is best exemplified by Joyce, an African-American natural scientist, who said,

I do think I'm probably a role model for students of colour, particularly women of colour. I think that other students probably see me as a . . . as a faculty member. And some people see me first as a person of colour and second as a faculty member and may or may not grant me respect that they would otherwise. (Joyce, African-American, Female, Natural Sciences, #138)

Regardless of the effects that women faculty of colour have on students and peers, the time and energy involved in their position as role models is substantial and is a significant form of identity taxation that should be both recognised and rewarded.

Female faculty of colour as mothering figures

Women of colour in this sample were also much more likely than others to talk about being expected to nurture or 'mommy' their students, and at times felt that this expectation was a burden. Some female faculty members embraced the gendered and racial norms that they believed allowed them the freedom to be nurturing to their students. For example, Marcia, a Latina natural scientist, feels that her gender and race allow her to act in a specific way with her students, and are the reason that she is such a popular advisor. She explains:

There's an expectation that women are going to be more receptive to kids. And I think it's a combination of gender and race, and I'm a very huggy person, and I'm very touchy-feely. So I'll have this session with a student that might sort of be kinda tense or something, and at the end we'll like, . . . big hug. And people come and tell me that they got their scholarship and they wanted me to know . . . big hug. I'm the only professor that gives big hugs. (Marcia, Latina, Female, Natural Science, #113)

Marcia feels that it is her identity as a woman of colour that has both created and allowed a space for her non-normative hugging behaviour to evolve. However, other female faculty members tended not to view the expectation to nurture that they felt from others in such a positive light. For example, Phyllis, an Asian-American professor in the humanities, described her frustration with the demands that she felt her Asian-American students placed on her:

What the Asian-American students expect from me is very different. It's almost opposite from what the white students want. The Asian-American students want kind of . . . they see you as kind of like a big sister or a mother or some kind of maternal figure who's going to kind of allow them to explore their ethnic identity. So they want affirmation from you, yeah. And they may not want you to challenge them on their sexual politics or on their politics in general or their conception of themselves, or their relation to other Asian-American groups . . . Which is what I kind of perceive to be my goal [laughs]. So sometimes I feel like I'm betraying them in a way because I want to get them to see things in a broader perspective. (Phyllis, Asian-American, Female, Humanities, #147)

In this instance, Phyllis feels uncomfortable with the expectations of her Asian-American students, who she thinks ask for emotional support, rather than the intellectual and critical stimulation she wants to provide. These students turn to her as an assumed 'sympathetic' professor who they believe understands their background and viewpoint, yet her gender

is clearly a part of this expectation. As a woman she is placed into a nurturing familial role beyond that of normal advising and mentorship. Winifred, an African-American social scientist, described an exchange she planned to have with a student who she felt had acted disrespectfully toward her because of her gender and race:

And so we're going to have to have a little confrontation, she and I, today. Because people do assume, particularly with African-American women, that we are 'da mamas' and some of them go so far as to say things like that. And I say, 'I'm not your mother. I'm a warm person, I'm a kind person. But I'm not your mother and I don't want to be...' (Winifred, African-American, Female, Social Sciences, #136)

In Winifred's view, stereotypes about African-American women have created a space in which students grant her less authority and respect than they do her white, male peers. In these cases, additional time and energy must be spent creating new strategies to achieve and maintain students' respect.

Familial and nurturing imagery is not solely a problem that applies to interactions with students, however. One of the most striking examples described by a respondent occurred in an interaction with a fellow faculty member in Camille's (African-American, Female, Humanities, #113) department:

Respondent: And, I think what also frustrated me was that my undergraduate chair at the time, who was a man of my age, a white man, whom I'd gone through tenure with, came up with the bright idea, since this woman was [in my department], of coming up with a kind of a memorial book . . . So, he wanted moi to email the entire undergraduate population in the department, and to basically be the conduit for this.

Interviewer: Why you?

R: Exactly. I said to him, 'I'm not the black mammy in this situation', I said, 'You are the administrator, it's your job. I'm dealing in the classroom with these things, you know?' And, I didn't tell him to fuck off, but it was there. He was quite shocked.

For Camille, this request suggested that both her gender and race shaped her colleague's expectations of her. She also felt the role her colleague hoped she would fill was culturally insensitive, insulting, and job-inappropriate. The emotions that such interactions generate for faculty and any service obligations that are part and parcel to these cultural stereotypes add an unfair and unequal load of time and emotional energy to female faculty of colours' work experience. Consequently, current structures of tenure and promotion do not acknowledge these burdens of identity taxation.

Conclusion

The academy is theoretically designed to reward competition and individual achievement and based on a system in which each participant is given a fair chance to meet the goals and requirements to get promoted and get tenured (Gunter and Stambach 2003). Unfortunately, in practice, there are many barriers to success in the academy, in the form of various kinds of explicit and implicit discrimination. For women faculty, these may include isolation in sub-disciplines and work-groups, lack of networks, and perceived lack of authority. An additional barrier, we have argued here, is identity taxation. Acknowledging that identity taxation exists and creates inequality for faculty who are often asked and expected to devote more time to mentorship, departmental service, and emotional labour (than their peers) means that we can be less insensitive and subsequently more fair in granting tenure and promotions.

This analysis of identity taxation contributes to previous literature on women faculty in the academy and to the general literature on identity in the academic workplace. By linking these literatures, we can more clearly determine the common themes, strategies, and subsequent policies that should evolve. Our findings highlight the importance of using an intersectional, qualitative approach. While existing quantitative studies regarding faculty experiences documented some of the broad trends of overcommitment for faculty of colour and women in various disciplines, these studies have overlooked many of the more subtle narratives regarding the difficulties of dealing with prejudice and the issues surrounding the negotiation of intersectional identities in academia. The Faculty Members and Diversity Classrooms Project, which did not originally focus specifically on gender or on other social identities, also demonstrates the need for additional research studies (qualitative and quantitative) that focus more comprehensively on identity in academia, especially on the intersections between identities, to better understand the nuances of identity taxation. In this way, researchers can begin to answer some important questions about identity taxation. For example, which identities cause identity taxation? Does a social identity have to be minority or tokenised to be 'taxed'? What are some ways that people avoid being taxed? Are there specific departments or institutions that have begun to recognise this inequity and respond to it? How can departments or institutions create environments that are safe spaces for all faculty regardless of their various identities? How can tenure and promotion practices reward service obligations, especially those that engender identity taxation?

We have previously identified cultural taxation as a relevant issue for faculty of colour (Joseph and Hirshfield 2011). In expanding our analysis (and terminology) to encompass additional taxation of white women faculty and women faculty of colour, we have demonstrated that identity taxation is a common problem for many faculty members in their day-to-day experience of academia. Thus, as researchers continue to identify and describe identity taxation and its effects, we must be careful to pay attention to its negative consequences, in terms of faculty members' physical condition, academic success, and emotional health. Finally, it is imperative that the academy begin to recognise and take into consideration how identity taxation may affect the productivity of certain faculty members when hiring/tenure decisions are made. This is particularly important as universities and departments make efforts to recruit and retain minorities (on the basis of gender and/or race) among their faculty. Despite minimal numerical gains made in recent decades among American faculty, the inability to better understand the marginalising experiences of some faculty may undermine future progress in diversifying the professoriate.

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Notes

1. The distribution of women in the fields of nursing, education, and social work are as follows: nursing (graduate students 64%, professors 96.7%), education (graduate students 65%, professors 66%), and social work (graduate students 74%, professors 55.8%).
2. Although Padilla does not explicitly define his use of the term 'ethnic' in his article, we interpret 'ethnic' as referring to graduate students and faculty of colour in our work.

3. This number drops to about 41.6% if you remove two-year colleges.
4. While most of the data in this paper are taken from the subsample of female faculty members, there were also several male faculty members who commented on issues related to identity taxation for their female colleagues. Their views are included in our findings.
5. Thus, respondents were not consistently asked about the effects of social identities other than their race.
6. In those cases, extensive fieldnotes were taken during and after the interviews.
7. Notably, white faculty members in the humanities and social sciences, even those who were asked specifically to reflect upon the influence of gender on their relationship with faculty peers and departmental relationships, did not describe experiences of gendered identity taxation. Faculty members of colour in the humanities and social sciences who spoke of gendered taxation also spoke simultaneously about the influence of race. These findings will be discussed in the next section. Thus, the quotes from this section come from interviewees in the natural sciences, as they identified gendered taxation as an issue in their departments.

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