

# The Impact of Cross-Race Mentoring for “Ideal” and “Alternative” PhD Careers in Sociology

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There is a long-term concern that members of under-represented minority groups are still being insufficiently mentored for academic career trajectories that are oriented toward scientific research, scholarly productivity, and the contribution of new perspectives to the work of science (Olson and Fagen 2007). There have been few systematic examinations of the effect of the race/ethnicity and gender of mentors on the career trajectories of minority scholars, and their inclusion or exclusion from disciplinary networks (Bonilla-Silva 2011; Turner, Myers, and Cresswell 1999). This gap exists, despite repeated calls for more “cultural competency” in mentoring (Davidson and Foster-Johnson 2001; Wilson-Ahlstrom, Ravindranath, Yohalem, and Tseng 2010). Further, although studies and disciplinary workshops focus on minorities who are still in graduate school, fewer examine new PhDs as they continue to make their way through the career pipeline— as they attempt to gain the social capital and resources to advance their careers and mentor the next generation of students.

### Background and Research Questions

The research discussed in this report, funded by the Sociology Program of the National Science Foundation,<sup>1</sup> compares the career trajectories through tenure of thirteen annual cohorts of PhD recipients who participated in the American Sociological Association’s (ASA) Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) with a largely-white doctoral recipient group that received the National Science Foundation’s Dissertation Improvement Grants in Sociology over a similar time period. We choose to follow the careers of these two groups of recipients because both programs are competitive and highly selective and both groups are trained for successful academic careers. As a third comparison group (and acting as a “control”), we also drew a random national sample of sociology PhD recipients from departments across the United States. All study subjects were awarded a PhD in sociology between the 1996-1997

<sup>1</sup> The views reflected here do not represent the views of the National Science Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> When cell sizes were large enough we examined white women’s mentoring role separately, but we did not find their influence on mentees’ careers to be significantly different from that of minority mentors of either gender in the multivariate analyses. We will attempt to expand cell sizes in future research reports, so that all mentors who are not white men do not have to be classified as “other.”

and 2008-2009 academic years. The study examines the role of mentoring in two types of careers trajectories. We label the first as an “archetypal” or “ideal” career (a tenured or tenure-track faculty position at a Research I institution) and the second as an “alternative” career (practice or teaching-oriented). These career types are discussed below.

In this report, we focus on the careers of the MFP fellows. We investigate whether:

1. MFP fellows are more likely than the other groups to expand disciplinary knowledge in the area of race and ethnicity and, if so, whether this research interest affects their careers;
2. MFP fellows, as compared to the other groups, achieve what is regarded as the archetypal or “ideal” career by the graduate programs that socialize them, or are more likely to have “alternative” careers; and whether
3. MFP dissertation advisors as graduate school mentors have a significant impact on MFP fellows’ careers.

While it would be useful to divide “minority” academic mentors by race/ethnicity and gender in order to examine the intersection of these social attributes in the mentoring process, some cell sizes are too small to permit this fine-grained analysis. White males were the dominant mentor category so we contrasted them with all others combined to assess the mentoring role.<sup>2</sup> As a separate note, we understand that the definition of “mentor” may vary for graduate students but for purposes of consistency we have defined them as the primary dissertation advisor.



## **MFP and the Diversification of Sociological Knowledge**

Through MFP, ASA has supported the development and training of minority sociologists for nearly four decades, with nearly 300 MFP alumni earning the PhD in sociology. These sociologists primarily have had substantive research interests in the areas of health, mental health, drug abuse, as well as race/ethnicity and gender within the context of structural inequalities and minority communities. Research on the social dimensions of mental health includes attention to prevention and to causes, consequences, adaptations, and interventions. This focus was encouraged and, in later periods, mandated by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) which funded the program through a series of training grants to the ASA through 2010. ASA also provided fellowships for minority scholars, through MFP, interested in other subareas or specialty in the discipline that were funded through contributions from ASA's sister association partners as well as many individual ASA members.

The original impetus for MFP was the severe underrepresentation of minority scientists in the sociology PhD pipeline. The relative lack of senior minority mentors was a reason that the MFP made extensive efforts to develop mentoring networks of peers within and across cohorts of fellows rather than relying solely on dyadic mentor-mentee relations. In contrast to MFP, the NSF Dissertation Improvement Grants from the Sociology Program do not emphasize cohort building and peer mentoring either within or across cohorts. Through mentoring and other forms of financial and non-financial support, the basic premise of MFP has been for talented minority doctoral candidates to complete their degrees, establish productive and meaningful careers and, ultimately, become senior scholars, mentors, and role models in the discipline. Since its inception in 1974, MFP has had significant success in diversifying the professional ranks of sociologists, especially those engaged in health and related areas of research. Many former MFP fellows have brought new perspectives to scholarly work about the intersection of race and ethnicity, immigration, health, education, community, identity, and social class. Many of these minority scholars, however, have not attained senior positions in what has long been viewed by the profession as the "ideal" career (Spalter-Roth and Erskine 2007).

In what follows we distinguish between "ideal" and "alternative" careers, describe the study design, present

the characteristics of the comparison groups, and analyze the impact of the race/ethnicity and gender of mentors for the careers of the three groups of PhDs.

## **The Notion of an Archetypal or "Ideal" Career**

In his 2004 ASA Presidential Address, Michael Burawoy said "there is one dominant career model in sociology consisting of standardized courses, regimented careers, lonely dissertations, and refereed publications—all captured on the ... CV" (Burawoy, 2005). This archetypal career path starts at a Research I graduate program, leads to employment in a tenure-track position and tenure at a Research I institution, involves scholarly productivity in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles and books as well as scholarly presentations and external grants—all leading to increasing prestige in the discipline. This "ideal" career path is assumed to be the model for graduate training and is promulgated in graduate programs as *the* career path into which graduate students are socialized (Golde and Walker 2006; Keith and Moore 1995; Pescosolido and Aminzade 1999).

In their applications to become an MFP fellow, many pre-doctoral sociology graduate students declare that they want careers consisting of teaching and research that follow this "ideal" career model. Some sociological literature, however, would suggest that MFP fellows may be either less likely to follow this archetypal career path or less successful at achieving it compared to a group of NSF pre-doctoral awardees. This is because of structural or relational factors such as Bonilla-Silva's "web of group affiliations" that may exclude minorities from professional and social networks that are crucial to success on this career path (Bonilla-Silva 2011). Minority candidates in the scholarly pipeline may not have similar resources, professional opportunities, supportive environments (especially if they are the only minority faculty member in a department), and protection from perceived negative behaviors as their white peers (Wilson-Ahlstrom et al. 2010). Alternatively, the emphasis for MFP fellows on health research may result in more "applied" careers than would an emphasis on other more traditional sociological topics.

## **"Alternative" Careers**

Research by Sweitzer (2009), based on interviews with 12 graduate students in business programs, found that these students are socialized to pursue professional careers that fit the expectations of their graduate

programs and their advisors, yet not all follow this archetypal pathway. Some of these students do not choose or cannot attain a career model that emphasizes “A-level publications and placement in a top-50 research institution.” To examine whether MFP fellows and members of the two comparison groups pursue the “ideal” careers that fit with their graduate school expectations or follow “alternative” career paths, we consider three types of “alternative” careers. The first is a non-academic or applied career that includes research positions, administrative positions, self-employment, and employment at non-profit organizations. The second is an academic career at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), or other minority-serving institution. And the third is a tenured or a tenure-track position at an institution of higher education other than Research I institutions (including other doctoral schools, master’s comprehensive, and baccalaureate-only schools, and two-year colleges).

We call these “alternative” careers because they do not reflect the archetypal or “ideal” career goals. These career paths may be choices for those who do not wish to pursue careers in the academy that emphasize extensive academic publication and grant-based research as criteria for advancement but may wish instead to pursue careers with stronger connections to teaching, applied research, public policy, sociological practice, or service to minority institutions. These options may be chosen because, as a non-random sample of the original MFP applications suggests, MFP fellows are likely to have backgrounds that include research or employment in areas including health care services, drug abuse, domestic violence, and AIDS prevention. They may wish to continue to serve predominantly minority communities with the added expertise of their doctoral-level sociological training.

### **The Role of Mentoring in Career Development**

Mentoring is viewed as a crucial part of the process of professional training and especially of increasing the number and proportion of under-represented minorities in the scientific workforce. Academic mentoring is designed to create conditions for success by expanding social capital, networks, and other resources that result in greater productivity and archetypal employment

(Chubin, DePass, and Blackus 2009; Green and Bauer 1995).

As noted, few studies examine the extent to which mentoring relationships are racially or ethnically matched or cross race/ethnicity and gender lines. One such study, by Patton (2009), of a group of African American women suggests that their success may be a result of having a same-race mentor, although white mentors are the norm. This is thought to be because of “cultural similarity” and the belief that mentors who “looked like them” would understand the issues and problems they faced in the higher education process. In addition, Patton suggests there is a desire for “psychosocial” relationships akin to mothering or friendships. She goes on to suggest that white mentors (especially white male mentors) concentrate on academic and professional activities and limit discussions to these issues. Patton refers to purely academic and professional mentoring as less than optimal for those who do not fit into a “male-oriented, competitive, individualistic profile” (p. 512).

In her study of sociologists, Dixon-Reeves (2003) reports similar findings. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that minority scholars search for racially or ethnically similar mentors other than their dissertation advisors who, even if they are not senior scholars or in the same discipline, will provide “culturally competent mentoring” (Davidson and Foster-Johnson 2001). It should be noted that these studies are based on a small number of non-representative interviews.

### **Study Design**

This research report analyzes the careers of a large number of graduates (532) from the three groups who were awarded a PhD in sociology between the 1996-1997 and 2008-2009 academic years and were employed in the U.S. in 2010. The MFP and NSF groups include the entire universe of those who obtained their PhDs during the study time period (108 MFP fellows and 266 NSF Sociology Dissertation Improvement Grant awardees). The third comparison group includes the 158 randomly drawn sociology PhD recipients from doctoral programs across the country during this time period.<sup>3</sup> We refer to

<sup>3</sup> Among those who were awarded a PhD in sociology between the 1996-1997 and 2008-2009 academic years, ten MFP fellows, 52 NSF awardees, and 42 randomly drawn sociology PhD graduates were not included in the analysis because they were either employed abroad, unemployed, or because their employment information was missing.

this group in this report as the “control” group. The study uses unobtrusive methods of data collection rather than low-response rate surveys or non-representative face-to-face in-depth interviews. The list of MFP fellows was compiled from the MFP database at the ASA Executive Office. The list of NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant awardees came from the NSF database of those grant recipients. For the MFP fellows and NSF awardees, only those who had finished the PhD by 2009 were included. The random sample of sociology PhD graduates was drawn from the lists in the ASA’s annual Guide to Graduate Departments in Sociology.

### **DATASET**

Demographic and institutional information on these PhD graduates, ASA section officership and 2010 employment information came from the ASA’s membership and NSF awards databases as well as on-line resources (i.e., organizational and personal web sites, including faculty curriculum vitae). Institutions of higher education are categorized using the 2005 Carnegie Classification codes. The terms Research-Extensive universities and Research I universities are used interchangeably. Data on post-PhD NSF awardees came from the NSF database of grant recipients. Names of the graduate-school mentors (the chair or the first listed co-chair of the dissertation committee), and other dissertation information (title and keywords) came from the ProQuest thesis and dissertation database.

Publication data were taken from faculty CVs published on-line and, when updated CVs were not available, from the on-line search engines Google Scholar and Google Book. Only books (authored or edited) and articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals were counted.

### **VARIABLES AND STATISTICAL METHODS**

This report includes both descriptive analyses and regression analyses with controls for key variables. We rely on multinomial regression in the analysis of career paths and logistic regression when dependent variables were binary (yes versus no answers). These include

analyses of whether PhD graduates included in the study are employed at Research I (Research-Extensive) universities, received post-PhD NSF grants, served as ASA section officers, and received tenure within seven years of attaining the doctoral degree. Poisson and negative binomial regressions are used to analyze faculty publication records.<sup>4</sup> Because we conduct cross-sectional analyses, reported effects do not imply causal relationships.

### **Results**

Table 1 shows that the three groups do not have the same characteristics. Members of the NSF awardee group are most likely to have attended a Research I institution, are more likely to be white, and to have graduated more recently than the other two groups. Because these characteristics may be related to the career trajectories and career success of PhD graduates independently of their group, differences found in the descriptive analyses should be interpreted with caution and compared to the findings from multivariate analyses.

### **MFP AND THE DIVERSIFICATION OF SOCIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE**

As noted above, one of the programmatic goals of MFP is to increase sociological scholarship on the intersection of race and ethnicity with gender, health, stratification, organizations, education, community, immigration, and identity. Table 1 shows that almost 70 percent of MFP fellows wrote their dissertations on some aspect of this intersection compared to 18 percent of NSF fellows and about 25 percent of the control group.<sup>5</sup> It may be that an even higher percentage of MFP fellows wrote dissertations in which race and ethnicity were major conceptual categories, because there is anecdotal evidence that some advisors may suggest that their PhD students “hide” the race and ethnicity aspect of their work in their dissertation titles for job market or other reasons.

That said, MFP fellows have broadened and enriched the study of health, illness, and mental health by adding racial, ethnic, social, geographic, and institutional

<sup>4</sup> Both the total number of publications and the total number of publications in top sociology journals are count variables, however, observations for the total number of publications are overdispersed with respect to a Poisson distribution.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the analysis of dissertation titles and keywords supplied by ProQuest database.

contexts. Included among their dissertations are cutting-edge research topics such as: “Race, Place, and Risk: Spatial Effects on Psychosocial Environments and Well-Being;” “The Politics of Metabolism: the Metabolic Syndrome and the Reproduction of Race and Racism;” “Hispanos in the Valley of Death: Street-Level Trauma, Cultural PTSD, Overdoses, and Suicides in North Central New Mexico;” “The Mental Health

Consequences of Racial Stratification among African-Americans and White Americans in Detroit, Michigan;” “The Intersection of Mental Health, Pregnancy and Race: A Contextual Investigation of the Relationships between Social Factors and Maternal Psychological Distress;” and “Sexual Orientation, Social Structure, and Adolescent Mental Health.”

**TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT OF 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE U.S. IN 2010 (N=532)**

	<i>Control Group</i> (%)	<i>MFP Fellows</i> (%)	<i>NSF Awardees</i> (%)
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:</b>			
Female	62.0	61.1	59.8
Minority <sup>a,b</sup>	22.2	100.0	15.6
<b>DEGREE INFORMATION:</b>			
PhD program at Research I institution <sup>b</sup>	69.6	81.5	97.7
PhD received in 2003-2009 (i.e., seven or fewer years since degree) <sup>b</sup>	47.5	56.5	72.2
<b>DISSERTATION TOPIC:</b>			
Race/ethnicity <sup>b</sup>	25.2	69.4	18.1
Gender	27.2	31.5	20.7
Health, healthcare issues <sup>b</sup>	20.3	39.8	7.1
<b>2010 EMPLOYMENT:</b>			
Tenured/tenure-track faculty position: <sup>b</sup>	61.4	60.2	71.8
Research I institution	15.2	11.1	36.8
Research-intensive, doctoral, masters, baccalaureate, and associate institutions	36.1	30.6	29.3
HBCU/HSI/MSI <sup>b</sup>	10.1	18.5	5.6
Non-faculty position:	27.2	27.8	22.9
Administrative positions in academia	1.9	1.9	2.3
Researchers (academic or other setting)	12.0	14.8	16.9
Non-academic positions	13.3	11.1	3.8
Non-tenured instructor <sup>b</sup>	11.4	12.0	5.3
<b>NUMBER OF CASES</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>266</b>

<sup>a</sup> Percentages were calculated based on 484 cases with 48 cases excluded because of missing information on race/ethnicity.

<sup>b</sup> Group differences are statistically significant at 0.05 level based on Chi-square test.

## THE PURSUIT OF "IDEAL" CAREERS

**Training, Employment, and Tenure at Research I Institutions.** Table 1 shows that NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant awardees (of whom almost 85 percent are white) are the most likely group to have followed the archetypal academic career path by 2010. They are the most likely to have started their careers by receiving their doctoral degrees at Research I universities (98 percent) compared with MFP fellows (82 percent). Both groups start out this advantage over the control group (70 percent). The majority of PhD graduates in all three groups moved into academic positions by 2010, but there are some pronounced differences—72 percent of NSF awardees did so compared to 60 percent of MFP fellows and 61 percent of the control group.

Table 2 indicates that of these academics, more than half of the NSF awardees (57 percent) had obtained positions at Research I universities by 2010. This is more than twice the proportion of either the MFP fellows (22 percent) or the control group (27 percent). By 2010, across all three groups, most academics had obtained tenure within seven years of their PhD—the archetypal standard. Only six percent of the NSF awardees lagged behind this standard compared to 12 percent of the MFP fellows and 18 percent of the control group.

**Publications.** Table 2 also shows that MFP fellows in academic positions in 2010 and similar members of the control group had a median number of three publications by 2009, two fewer than the median for the NSF awardees. The MFP fellows had a median of one publication before receiving the PhD as did the control group, one fewer than the median for the NSF awardee group. The proportion of MFP fellows in academia who had published at least one article in the top three sociological journals (the *American Sociological Review*, the *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*) was lower than the proportion of faculty with such publications in the other two groups—5 percent of the MFP fellows compared to 29 percent of the NSF awardees and 13 percent of the control group. We do not know if this is because articles were rejected or because MFP fellows did not submit to these top journals, thinking that they would not publish the type of research (substantively or methodologically)

they were doing and instead chose to submit to other journals. This comparison of publication records probably underestimates the differences between the NSF awardees and other groups because NSF fellows are professionally younger than the other groups and have not had as much time to publish.<sup>6</sup>

**Grants.** Ability to secure extramural funding is frequently used to evaluate success of PhD graduates in archetypal careers. At this point, we were able to examine post-graduate records of grant awards from the National Science Foundation (see Table 2). In the future we will also examine National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants because these grants are probably a better measure of MFP fellows' ability to secure extramural funding due to their greater specialization in health or mental health research funded by NIH. While relatively few members of all three groups received NSF grants post-PhD, NSF awardees were almost twice as likely as MFP fellows to do so and more than three times as likely as PhD graduates from the control group (17 percent, 9 percent, and 5 percent, respectively).

**Recognition.** Both NSF awardees and MFP fellows in academic positions were more likely than the control group members to gain recognition in the discipline when measured by whether or not they were voted by colleagues to serve as an ASA section officer (17 percent, 14 percent, and 7 percent, respectively). Here again, the younger professional age of NSF awardees may underestimate group differences in the likelihood of serving as an ASA section officer.

## "ALTERNATIVE" CAREERS

Of all MFP fellows and members of the control group employed in the United States in 2010, approximately 40 percent were either non-tenured faculty or still on the tenure track. In contrast only 28 percent of the NSF awardees were in this position (see Table 1). Those not tenured or on the tenure track were employed in administrative positions in the academy, as researchers in academic and non-academic settings, in other non-academic positions, as well as being non-tenured instructors. While both MFP fellows and members of the control group are twice as likely to be employed as contingent faculty as are NSF awardees (12 percent, 11

<sup>6</sup> About 15 percent of MFP fellows and 17 percent of the control group received their PhDs between 1996 and 1998 compared to about 2 percent of the NSF awardees. As a professionally younger group the NSF awardees have had less time to publish.

percent, and 5 percent, respectively), we do not view these as “alternative” careers. This is because multivariate analyses discussed below indicate that over time, all of those employed as non-tenured instructors tend to move out of these positions, and we do not think that PhDs choose to be in these positions.

Whether “alternative” careers are the result of conscious choices made by MFP fellows and other PhDs of color or are influenced by subtle forms of discrimination is difficult to know. We view non-academic positions, faculty employment at an HBCU or other minority-serving institution, as well as being a full-time researcher as potentially desirable “alternative” career choices for PhD sociologists. In our examination of the 2010 positions of MFP fellows, we find that about one in ten are in non-academic positions in an array of careers that are likely to be outcomes of MFP’s emphasis on research training in health and especially that of under-represented minority groups. As stated earlier, some of these research, applied, and policy positions are also consonant with MFP fellows’ pre-fellowship activities in the nonprofit and public sector. Former MFP fellows

are also significantly more likely to become faculty at HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions (19 percent compared to 6 percent of the NSF awardees and 10 percent of the control group). These may be non-archetypal career choices that reveal a professional and personal commitment to the well-being of minority group members and their communities.

### MENTORING AND CAREERS

In this section, we examine whether having a white male mentor compared to “other” mentors relates to specific aspects of an “ideal” or “alternative” career. As noted, there are relatively few senior minority scholars to choose from. Again, we note that these relationships cannot be viewed as causal; they may be selective because minority group members who wish to have archetypal or “ideal” careers may select white male mentors because of their presumed social capital and access to resources, or because no senior minority faculty are available.

Although the number of minority faculty members in positions to mentor graduate students remains relatively

**TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN TENURED OR TENURE TRACK POSITIONS IN 2010 (N=353)**

	<i>Control Group</i>	<i>MFP Fellows</i>	<i>NSF Awardees</i>
<b>2010 EMPLOYMENT:</b>			
Percent employed at a Research I institution in 2010	26.8	21.5	56.5
Percent behind on tenure (expected to have tenure if graduated in 2002 or earlier)	17.5	12.3	6.3
<b>SCHOLARLY PRODUCTIVITY:</b>			
Median of the total number of publications in 2009	3.0	3.0	5.0
Median number of publications during graduate school	1.0	1.0	2.0
Median number of post-PhD publications in 2009 <sup>a</sup>	2.0	2.0	3.0
Percent published at least one article in top three sociology journals after graduation	13.4	4.6	28.8
<b>NSF GRANTS AND ASA SERVICE:</b>			
Percent received at least one NSF grant after graduation	5.2	9.2	16.8
Percent served as an ASA Section officer	7.2	13.9	16.8
<b>NUMBER OF CASES</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>191</b>

<sup>a</sup> Eleven 2009 PhD graduates are excluded.



small, 25 percent of MFP fellows had minority faculty mentors who were almost equally divided among men and women (Table 3a). Looking just at minority PhD recipients, MFP fellows are twice as likely as minority NSF awardees and minority members of the control group to find mentors who might be what Patton (2009) calls “culturally similar” (data not shown).

### **MENTORING AND DIVERSIFYING DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE**

**Having a white male mentor is related to a lower likelihood of focusing on topics related to race and ethnicity.** Because one purpose of the MFP training grants from NIMH was to learn more about minority health, health disparities, and the social aspects of mental

health, MFP fellows were more likely than members of the other groups to write their dissertations on race and ethnicity issues, usually combined with health and gender issues (Table 3b).

All members of the MFP group employed in the United States in 2010 who had minority male mentors wrote their dissertations on topics that expand the discipline’s knowledge of race and ethnicity (although the cell size is very small). Almost three quarters of MFP fellows who had white female mentors (73 percent) wrote on these topics, as did 67 percent of those with minority female mentors. MFP fellows that had white male mentors were the least likely to dedicate their dissertations to race and ethnicity issues (57 percent). There are two possible interpretations of this latter finding. First, white male mentors may believe that writing about race and

**TABLE 3A. MENTOR CHARACTERISTICS FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE U.S. IN 2010 (N=532)**

	<i>Control Group</i> (%)	<i>MFP Fellows</i> (%)	<i>NSF Awardees</i> (%)
<b>ADVISOR'S MINORITY STATUS AND GENDER:</b>			
Minority female	3.8	11.1	1.5
Minority male	5.1	13.9	3.4
White female	31.6	27.8	31.6
White male	48.7	38.9	55.6
Unknown race/ethnicity	10.8	8.3	7.9
<b>NUMBER OF CASES</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>266</b>

**TABLE 3B. PERCENT OF PHD GRADUATES WITH DISSERTATIONS ON RACE AND ETHNICITY BY TYPE OF MENTOR FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE U.S. IN 2010 (N=532)**

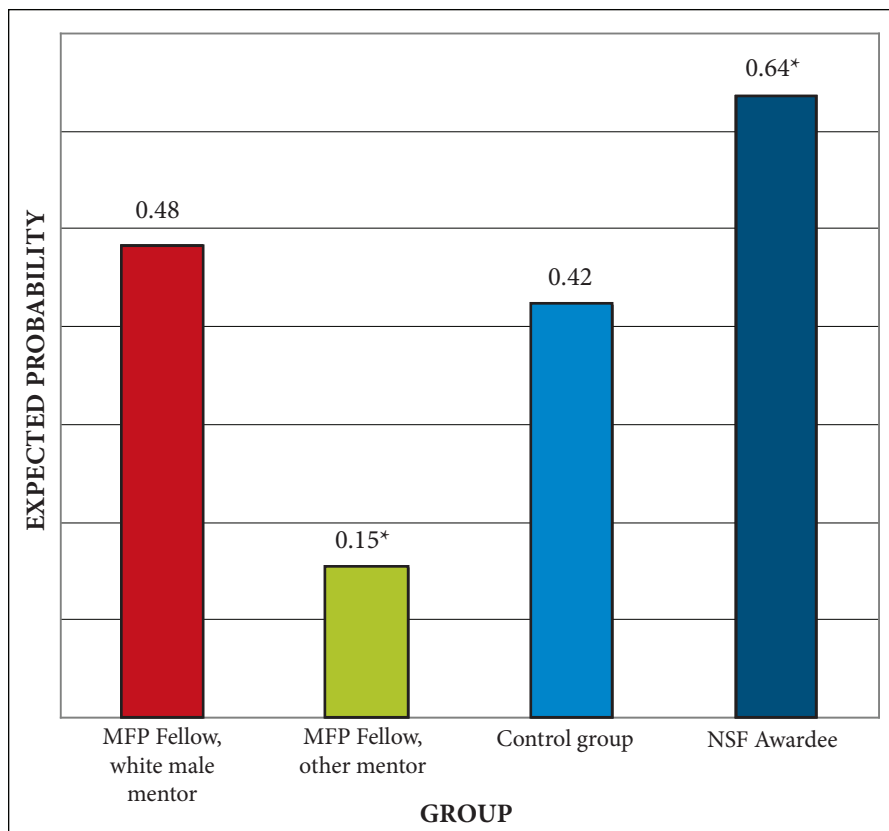
	<i>Control Group</i> (%)	<i>MFP Fellows</i> (%)	<i>NSF Awardees</i> (%)
<b>MENTOR'S MINORITY STATUS AND GENDER:</b>			
Minority female	33.3	66.7	25.0
Minority male	75.0	100.0	33.3
White female	34.0	73.3	14.3
White male	14.3	57.1	18.2
Missing advisor's race/ethnicity	17.6	66.7	23.8
<b>NUMBER OF CASES</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>266</b>

ethnicity issues will make it less likely that a minority student will achieve the archetypal career, or in other context, they may not feel that they know enough about these topics to head a dissertation committee. Alternatively, minority graduate students may seek out these mentors because they do not wish to do a dissertation on race and ethnicity topics and therefore want to select a mentor with different areas of expertise as their primary mentor.

### MENTORING AND “IDEAL” CAREERS

**For minorities, having a white male mentor is positively related to employment at Research I universities.** The descriptive findings showed that MFP fellows who pursue academic careers are significantly less likely than NSF awardees to obtain tenure-track positions at Research I universities after they complete their PhDs.

**FIGURE 1. EXPECTED PROBABILITIES OF HOLDING A FACULTY POSITION AT A RESEARCH I INSTITUTION IN 2010 FOR 1997 - 2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES, BY GROUP (N=353)**



Based on results from the logistic regression with robust standard errors. Control variables are set to sample means in these calculations and controls for missing data are set to zero.

\* Statistically significant difference from the control group (0.05 level, 2-tailed test).

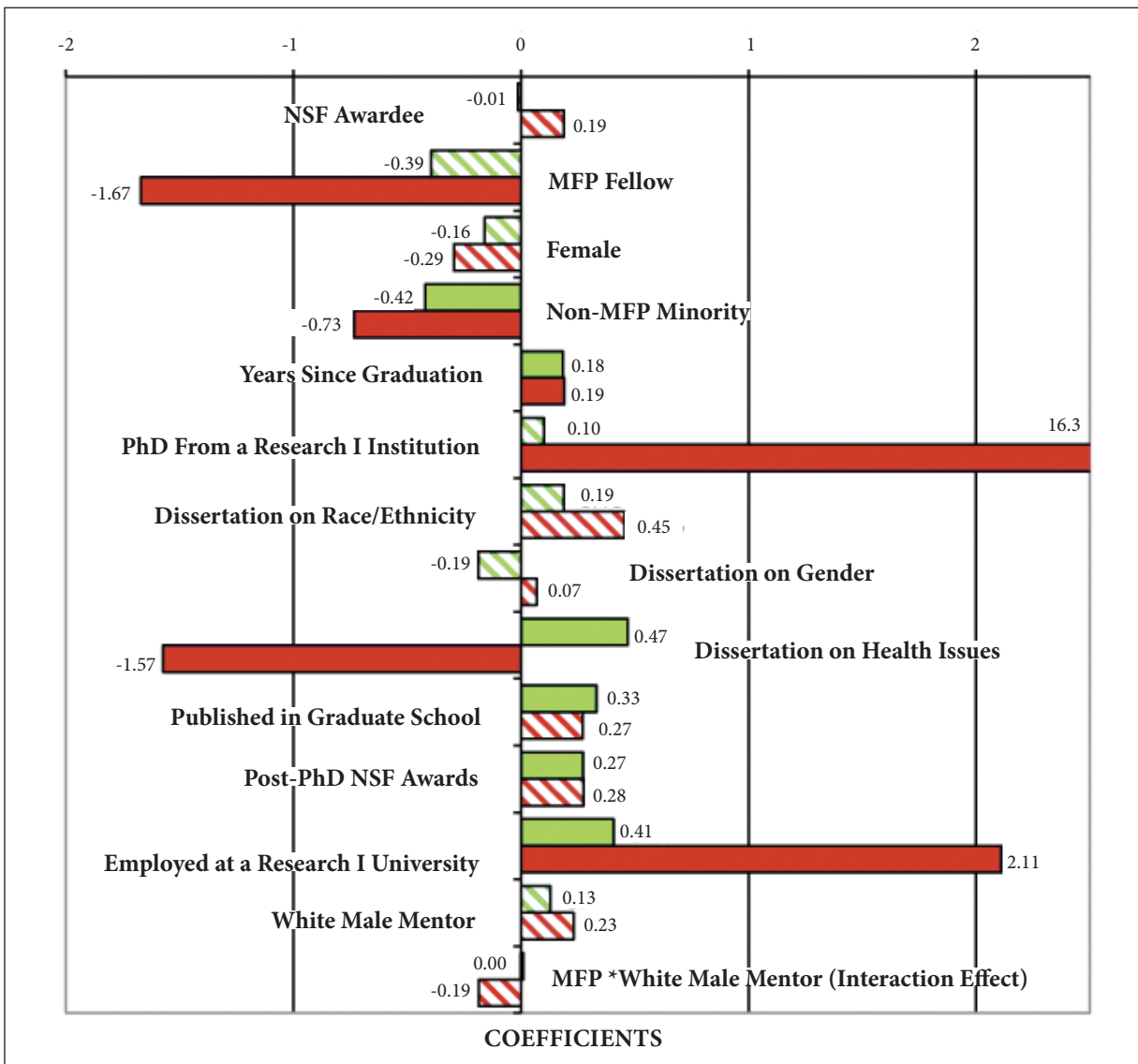
This finding is confirmed by the multivariate analysis (see Appendix Table 1). Holding other variables at their means, MFP fellows with white male mentors in graduate school are about three times more likely to obtain these “ideal” positions than MFP fellows without white male mentors, although still less likely to obtain positions at Research I institutions than NSF awardees (Figure 1). This finding suggests that MFP fellows may require the social capital that white male mentors can provide in order to obtain Research I positions.

**Employment at Research I schools is positively related to scholarly productivity, including publications in top sociology journals.** The descriptive findings showed that MFP fellows published somewhat less than NSF awardees but about the same as members of the control group. These group differences, however, are non-significant in the multivariate analysis shown in Figure 2. The results

show that factors other than group membership account for differential publication levels. Employment at a Research I university is significantly and positively related to publication rates, regardless of group membership. These institutions emphasize research and provide resources (such as research assistants and lower course loads) to encourage publication (the axiomatic “publish or perish”). Having a white male mentor in graduate school does not make a significant difference for MFP fellows’ publication rates, possibly because the social capital of white male mentors in graduate school may not independently impact scientific productivity in the form of publications once new PhDs are employed in Research I universities. Not surprisingly, being professionally older as an academic and having published in graduate school significantly increases post-PhD publication rates.

Part of an “ideal” career that leads to prestige within the discipline is publishing in top sociology journals (the *American Sociological Review*,

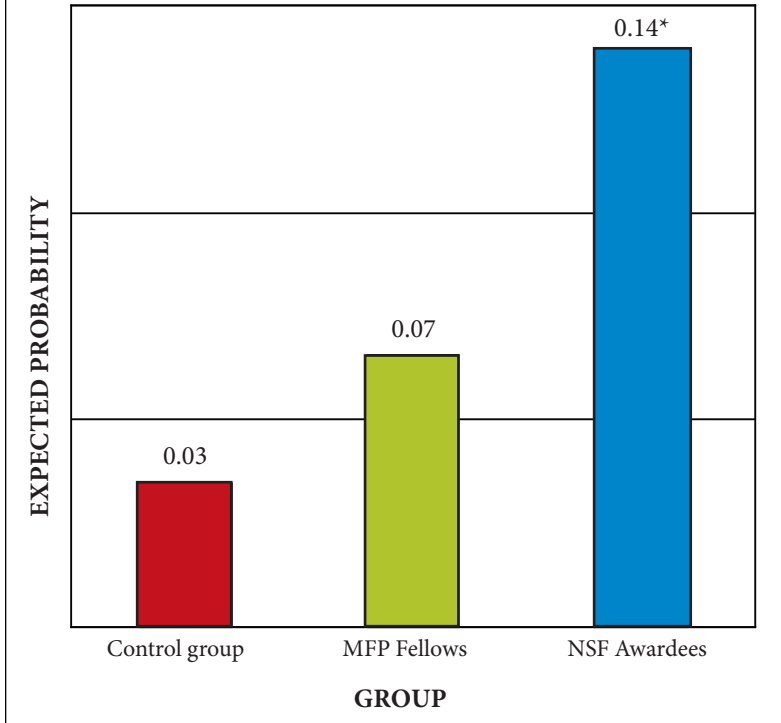
**FIGURE 2. COEFFICIENTS FROM THE REGRESSIONS ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POST-PHD PUBLICATIONS AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POST-PHD PUBLICATIONS IN TOP THREE SOCIOLOGY JOURNALS BY 2009 FOR 1997-2008 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN 2010 (N=342)**



**Legend**

- Total number of post-PhD publications in 2009 (negative binomial regression with robust standard errors, log pseudolikelihood = -760.2). Coefficients statistically significant at 0.05 level, 2-tailed tests.
- Total number of post-PhD articles in top three sociology journals in 2009 (poisson regression with robust standard errors, log pseudolikelihood = -176.9). Coefficients statistically significant at 0.05 level, 2-tailed tests.
- Coefficients not statistically significant at 0.05 level, 2-tailed tests. (Applies to all bars in the graph with a striped pattern).

**FIGURE 3. EXPECTED PROBABILITY OF HAVING RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE POST-PHD NSF GRANT AWARD FOR 1997 - 2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN 2010 BY GROUP (N=353)**



Based on results from the logistic regression with robust standard errors. Control variables were set to sample means in these calculations. Controls for missing race/ethnicity were set to zero.

\* Statistically significant difference from the control group (0.05 level, 2-tailed test).

the *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*).<sup>7</sup> Figure 2 shows that MFP fellows are significantly less likely than the NSF awardees or the control group to publish in these journals when controlling for other factors. As noted, this may be because MFP fellows are less likely to submit to these general sociological journals because they regard them as less likely to publish on topics that MFP fellows consider important to broadening the discipline. Nonetheless, research interests in race and ethnicity or gender neither increases nor decreases the likelihood of publishing in the three journals.

Having a white male mentor does not have a direct effect on publication record in these top general sociology journals. Employment at a Research I university does have a positive effect on publishing in these journals, and the impact is pronounced. Other significant factors include length of time post PhD and having received a PhD from a Research I university (both coefficients are positive and statistically significant). If resources permit, in future analyses, we will examine whether graduate school mentors publish with their former mentees—a measure of inclusion into scholarly networks.

**Employment at a Research I institutions is positively related to winning NSF grants.**

A relatively small percentage of sociology PhDs in our comparison groups received NSF grants after completing their degree. The multivariate analysis shows that both NSF awardees and MFP fellows are more likely to receive such grants than the control group, although the difference between MFP fellows and the control group is not statistically significant (see Figure 3). Having a white male mentor in graduate school does not have a significant effect on the ability to secure NSF funding (see Appendix Table 2). Predictably, employment at a Research I university and professional age are positively related to NSF grant awards, controlling for other variables.<sup>8</sup>

**Recognition for scholarly contribution to the discipline is positively related to seniority, publication records, and NSF awards.** Sections are constituent parts of the ASA intended to promote the common interests of ASA members in specific areas of sociology and to help more junior members of the profession integrate more easily into the ranks of scholars. Being elected a section officer may be interpreted as an acknowledgement of an ASA member’s scholarly and other contributions to a specific research area and of their potential for future contributions to the discipline. We did not find a significant mentor effect on this measure of recognition

<sup>7</sup> One limitation of this traditional definition is that these are all “general” sociological journals rather than specialized journals and our MFP group is trained overwhelmingly in health, illness, mental health, and health disparities for which there outstanding specialized journals in the social and biomedical fields.

(see Appendix Table 3). Compared to the control group, however, both NSF awardees and MFP fellows are significantly more likely to be elected as section officers when other statistically significant variables are controlled for (Figure 4). Three factors are positively related to the likelihood of becoming a section officer: seniority (years since graduation), total number of publications, and receiving post-degree NSF funding. Given the integration of MFP fellows into the MFP professional network from the very beginning of their fellowships and continuing thereafter, as well as their concentration in several specific subspecialties, they may have some advantage in achieving recognition within the Association without the intervention of white male mentors.

**PhD graduates who had white male mentors are more likely to be on track for tenure.** Figure 5 shows that having a white male mentor in graduate school has a direct positive effect on receiving tenure within seven years after graduating, while holding other variables constant. There is no statistically significant difference in the likelihood that NSF awardees and MFP fellows will receive tenure within this standard time frame compared to the control group. As expected, professionally older faculty are more likely to be tenured. Having more publications and having received NSF funding post-PhD are both positively related to being tenured. However, those employed at Research I universities are significantly less likely to have received tenure within seven years

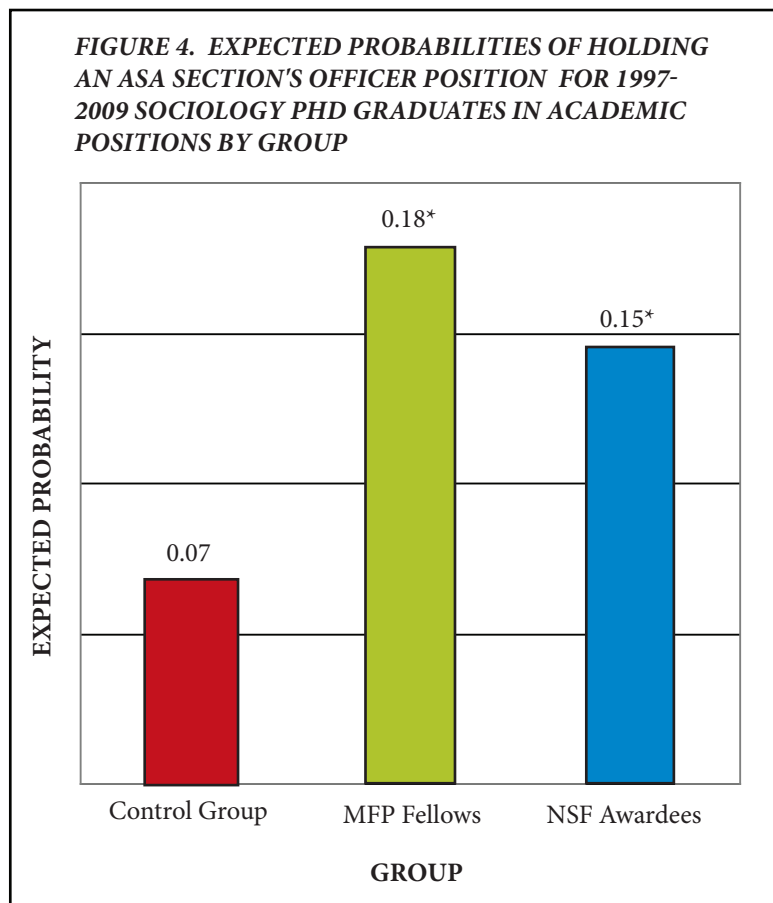
of their PhDs. This may be because it is more difficult to obtain tenure at Research I universities. Or, it could be because health-oriented scholars and minority scholars aiming for tenure at Research I institutions may be more likely to complete a post-doctoral appointment and lengthen their time to tenure. Given that mentors do not appear to have significant influence on the number of publications, NSF grants, or section officership, additional research will be necessary to understand their continued importance for the earning of tenure.

#### MENTORING AND "ALTERNATIVE" CAREERS

We have seen that more MFP fellows than NSF awardees or members of the control group work at HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions. And, we have seen that MFP fellows and control group members are somewhat more likely to be employed in non-academic positions than NSF awardees. What factors are related to pursuing these "alternative" careers?

**Graduate training at Research Intensive/ Doctoral universities and non-white male mentors are positively related to an "alternative" career trajectory.** MFP fellows are more likely than NSF awardees and equally likely as members of the control group to have "alternative" careers. NSF awardees are

**FIGURE 4. EXPECTED PROBABILITIES OF HOLDING AN ASA SECTION'S OFFICER POSITION FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS BY GROUP**



Based on the logistic regression with robust standard errors. Control variables were set to sample means in these calculation and controls for missing race/ethnicity were set to zero.

\* Statistically significant difference from the control group (0.05 level, 1-tailed test).

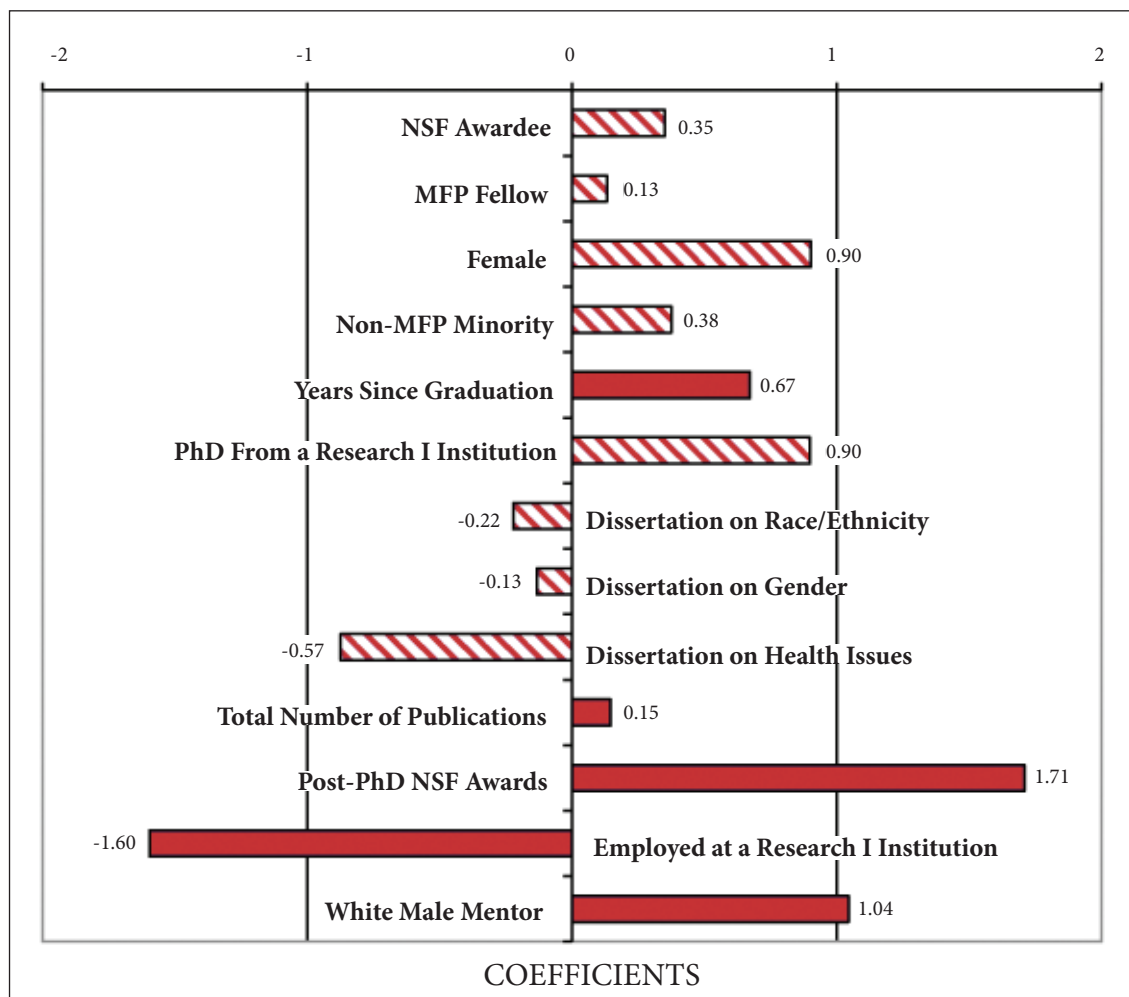
<sup>8</sup> We had to exclude from this analysis a control for type of PhD institution because none of the graduates of programs at Research-Intensive/ Doctoral institutions received NSF grants. Because the number of such graduates is not small in our sample (N=41), this fact most likely indicates a strong negative association between PhD programs at non-Research I institutions and obtaining extramural funding.

the least likely of the three groups to be in “alternative” careers, holding other factors constant. Having a white male mentor makes a difference in whether their MFP mentees get jobs at Research I institutions, but other mentors play a role in whether these MFP mentees pursue a career path “alternative” to the archetypal Research I job (Figure 6). The multivariate analysis shows that writing a dissertation on race and ethnicity and/or gender does not have a significant impact on career choice (see Appendix Table 4). Emphasizing health-related issues also does not significantly increase the chances of pursuing a non-academic career compared to a Research I career. Scholars

working on health-related issues are equally likely to pursue non-academic careers as they are to pursue academic careers at Research I universities, but they are less likely to pursue “alternative” careers at other types of academic institutions including HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions, as well as Baccalaureate-only and Master’s Comprehensive schools.

We would feel more confident in saying these “alternative” careers were clear choices if those who pursued these careers were as likely to have attended Research I universities for their graduate training

**FIGURE 5. COEFFICIENTS FROM THE LOGISTIC REGRESSION ON GETTING TENURE BY 2010 FOR 1997-2002 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS (N=140)**



**Legend**

■ Coefficients statistically significant at 0.05 level, 2-tailed tests.

▨ Coefficients not statistically significant at 0.05 level, 2-tailed tests.

Coefficients for missing race/ethnicity and publication data included in the models but not shown. Log pseudolikelihood = -54.849, Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.32.

as those who pursued archetypal or “ideal” careers. However, this is not the case. PhD graduates in our three comparison groups who obtained their degrees from Research/Doctoral rather than Research I institutions are significantly more likely to be employed on all three “alternative” career paths. Other sociological research has suggested that graduate students at non-Research I universities do not participate in the exchange networks (or “webs of group affiliations”) that result in positions at these institutions (Burris 2004).

**Conclusions and Discussion**

The purpose of this research report is to compare the career trajectories starting in graduate school for three

groups of scholars—MFP fellows, NSF awardees, and a randomly selected group of PhD recipients in sociology. We attempt to shed light on three issues—the expansion of sociological work on race and ethnicity; the pursuit of “ideal” versus “alternative” careers; and the impact of white male versus “other” mentors on career trajectories.

We find that compared to the NSF awardees, MFP fellows are more likely to write dissertations that expand sociological knowledge in the areas of race and ethnicity. This is not surprising given the purpose of MFP. MFP fellows are significantly less likely to have “ideal” careers and more likely to have what we have labeled as “alternative” careers, although they are less likely to do so than the control group. However, MFP fellows who

**FIGURE 6. EXPECTED PROBABILITIES OF PURSUING ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC CAREERS FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE U.S. IN 2010 (N=532)**



Based on results from the logistic regression with robust standard errors. Statistically significant controls for years since graduation, dissertation topic, total number of publications, and post-PhD grant awards were included in the model and were set to sample means in these calculations.

attended Research I universities, as with their white compatriots, are more likely to pursue archetypal or “ideal” careers. Not attending a Research I institution for the PhD is related to a lower likelihood of publishing in “top” general sociology journals, receiving post-PhD NSF grants, and to a greater likelihood of teaching at HBCUs and teaching-intensive schools.

For MFP fellows, having a white male mentor in graduate school is positively related to obtaining a position at a Research I university (presumably with lower teaching loads and additional resources that result in more publications and more grants than those at other types of schools). White male mentors who are employed at Research I universities are likely to have more social capital in the form of contacts and connections than minority male, minority female, and white female mentors and are more likely to be part of networks that “trade” their graduate students (Burris 2004). White male mentors at Research I universities may help MFP fellows on the trajectory to “ideal” careers, perhaps, especially if the MFP fellows do not emphasize topics of race and ethnicity in their dissertations. Having a white male mentor does not appear to have direct effects on other aspects of an archetypal career, such as publishing and the receipt of extramural grants, and it is less obvious who does help MFP fellows once those careers are started. Yet, having such a mentor in graduate school is significantly related to gaining tenure on time, when other factors are held constant.

Based on these findings, we are not convinced that “alternative” careers are always deliberately chosen instead of archetypal careers. The fact that MFP fellows who do not attend Research I graduate programs are significantly more likely to pursue “alternative” careers than the NSF awardees suggests to us that some MFPs may be experiencing exclusion from the “web of group affiliations” (Bonilla-Silva 2011) that provides opportunities to pursue the archetypal careers for which they are socialized. The data are simply not definitive about whether “alternative” careers are always a choice. Even if they are a conscious choice for some MFP fellows and other minority sociologists, more research is needed on the challenges, barriers, and exclusion processes that exist for members of under-represented minority groups both prior to and after earning the PhD.

Overall, these findings suggest that efforts to recruit minority scholars into archetypal careers should include recruitment at Research Intensive/Doctoral as well as Research-Extensive (Research I) universities. White male

mentors who have the social capital to help launch under-represented minorities into such careers in tenure-track positions at Research I institutions, with the attendant publications and grants that are significantly related to these careers, should make this capital available to minority graduate students and not discourage studying topics related to race and ethnicity, if students wish to do so. Broadening the field of sociology to include these topics was one important reason for the establishment of MFP and continues to be one of its purposes. These findings show the continued need for programs such as MFP that can increase the likelihood of career trajectories for minority scholars involving productive research as well as the mentoring of the next generation of sociologists. In addition, re-evaluating the importance of “alternative” sociological careers, without relegating any group of graduate students to this career track, may strengthen the discipline and its value to society.

As a program, MFP has tried through different mechanisms to connect senior MFP alumni with MFP fellows in graduate school, and to reduce potential early career isolation or exclusion and foster continuing research collaborations. We hope to investigate whether MFP networks “level the playing field” and overcome potential exclusion from other professional and disciplinary networks. Prospective research reports from this study will examine mentoring networks of both mentors and peers to explore whether the MFP idea of peer networking as a means of providing a different “web of group affiliations” works in practice.

We intend to examine the relationship between this “web of group affiliations,” scholarly productivity, and career advancement by measuring co-publications, co-presentations, and citation networks. We will explore whether mentors publish with their current and former mentees, and if race/ethnicity, and gender matter in that relationship. This research may help to explain the longer-term effects of mentoring by white male faculty. If time and funding permit, we also hope to add several additional cohorts to the analysis, as well as a larger group of non-MFP minority sociologists, because larger cell sizes could permit intersectional analyses of the impact of race/ethnicity, and gender of mentors, in addition to MFP fellows, for the career trajectories of minority scholars.



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**APPENDIX TABLE 1. COEFFICIENTS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS ON EMPLOYMENT AT A RESEARCH I UNIVERSITY IN 2009 FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN 2010**

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficients	Robust St. Errors	Coefficients	Robust St. Errors
NSF Awardee	0.936 **	0.307	0.878 **	0.297
MFP Fellow	-1.499 *	0.675	-1.310 *	0.606
Female	-0.137	0.277		
Non-MFP minority	-0.332	0.436		
Years since graduation (centered on year one)	0.031	0.041		
PhD from Research I institution	1.081 #	0.567	1.172 *	0.548
Dissertation topic on race/ethnicity	0.156	0.322		
Dissertation topic on gender	0.140	0.321		
Dissertation topic on health	0.804 #	0.416	0.778 #	0.416
At least one publication before graduation	0.787 *	0.321	0.789 *	0.311
White male advisor	0.175	0.296	0.176	0.285
Interaction: MFP Fellow*White male advisor	1.590 *	0.772	1.471 *	0.745
Constant	-2.181 **	0.766	-2.101 **	0.622
Number of observations	353		353	
Wald Chi-squared	76.78 ***		70.81 ***	
Log pseudolikelihood	-190.57		-191.68	
Pseudo R-squared	0.21		0.20	

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$  level, 2-tailed test; #  $p < 0.05$  1-tailed test.  
 Controls for missing race/ethnicity are included in the model but not shown.

**APPENDIX TABLE 2. COEFFICIENTS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS ON RECEIVING AT LEAST ONE POST-PHD GRANT FROM NSF FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN 2010**

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficients	Robust St. Errors	Coefficients	Robust St. Errors
NSF Awardee	1.384 *	0.585	1.505 **	0.573
MFP Fellow	0.924	0.857	0.379	0.669
Female	-0.371	0.379		
Non-MFP minority	-1.702 #	1.010	-2.119 *	1.026
Years since graduation (Centered on Year One)	0.231 ***	0.068	0.222 ***	0.067
Dissertation topic on race/ethnicity	-0.886	0.565		
Dissertation topic on gender	-0.089	0.456		
Dissertation topic on health	-0.950	0.830		
Employed at a Research I institution	0.790 *	0.399	0.750 *	0.360
White male advisor	-0.539	0.379		
Interaction: MFP Fellow*White male advisor	0.077	1.073		
Constant	-3.857 ***	0.836	-4.598 ***	0.767
Number of observations	353		353	
Wald Chi-squared	38.73 ***		28.14 ***	
Log pseudolikelihood	-107.27		-112.27	
Pseudo R-squared	0.18		0.14	

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$  level, 2-tailed test; #  $p < 0.05$  1-tailed test.  
 Controls for missing race/ethnicity are included in the model but not shown.

**APPENDIX TABLE 3. COEFFICIENTS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS ON HAVING SERVED AS ASA SECTION OFFICER FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN 2010**

	<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>	
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Robust St. Errors</i>	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Robust St. Errors</i>
NSF Awardee	0.786	0.519	0.857 #	0.507
MFP Fellow	1.000	0.870	1.107 #	0.586
Female	0.705	0.387		
Non-MFP minority	0.420	0.513		
Years since Graduation (centered on year one)	0.165 *	0.072	0.174 *	0.064
PhD from Research I institution	0.439	0.671		
Dissertation topic on race/ethnicity	0.379	0.444		
Dissertation topic on gender	-0.249	0.450		
Dissertation topic on health	-2.203	1.208	-2.102 #	1.123
Total number of publications (pre- and post-PhD)	0.054 #	0.032	0.053 *	0.027
Post-PhD NSF Award/s	1.111 *	0.452	1.032 *	0.426
Employed at a Research I institution	0.595	0.421		
White male advisor	0.144	0.420		
Interaction: MFP Fellow*White male advisor	0.099	1.031		
Constant	-4.989 ***	0.921	-3.755 ***	0.620
Number of observations	353		353	
Wald Chi-squared	57.18 ***		43.08 ***	
Log pseudolikelihood	-104.73		-110.32	
Pseudo R-squared	0.25		0.21	

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$  level, 2-tailed test; #  $p < 0.05$  1-tailed test.

Controls for missing race/ethnicity are included in the model but not shown.

APPENDIX TABLE 4. COEFFICIENTS FROM MULTINOMIAL REGRESSION ON TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT IN 2010 FOR 1997-2009 SOCIOLOGY PHD GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN U.S. IN 2010

Variables	Base Outcome is Academic at a Research I Institution							
	Academic at non- Research I institutions		Academic at HBCU, HSi, MSI		Instructor		Non-academic (research, administrative, self- employed, nonprofit, other)	
	Coeff.	Rob. SE	Coeff.	Rob. SE	Coeff.	Rob. SE	Coeff.	Rob. SE
NSF Awardee	-0.923 **	0.317	-1.229 **	0.467	-1.478 **	0.486	-0.827 *	0.342
MFP Fellow	1.345*	0.658	1.612 *	0.784	1.465 #	0.798	0.922	0.672
Female	0.204	0.267	0.303	0.374	-0.113	0.399	0.522	0.277
Non-MFP Minority	0.317	0.367	0.760	0.546	0.028	0.640	0.117	0.426
Years since graduation (centered on year one)	-0.026	0.038	-0.002	0.052	-0.126 *	0.057	-0.061	0.041
PhD from Research I institution	-1.715 **	0.655	-1.789 *	0.761	-2.514 ***	0.757	-1.442 *	0.649
Dissertation topic on race/ethnicity	-0.037	0.319	-0.161	0.460	0.371	0.448	0.023	0.317
Dissertation topic on gender	0.138	0.311	-0.368	0.424	-0.189	0.501	-0.388	0.335
Dissertation topic on health	-0.750	0.408	-0.584	0.513	-1.446 *	0.693	0.631	0.392
White male advisor	0.059	0.286	-0.613	0.453	0.089	0.466	-0.121	0.303
Interaction: MFP Fellow*White male advisor	-1.726 *	0.807	-0.251	0.903	-1.214	1.011	-0.961	0.777
Constant	2.428 ***	0.743	1.264	0.907	2.402 **	0.918	1.698 *	0.769
Number of observations	532							
Wald Chi-squared	127.12 ***							
Log pseudolikelihood	-723.47							
Pseudo R-squared	0.09							

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$  level, 2-tailed test; #  $p < 0.05$  1-tailed test.

Controls for missing race/ethnicity are included in the model but not shown.

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<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Format</b>
The Impact of Cross-Race Mentoring for "Ideal" and "Alternative" PhD Careers in Sociology	2011	PDF
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Paying Attention to the Master's Degree in Sociology	2009	PDF
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