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Hegemony within Student Affairs: The Interpretive Nature of College Student Development Theory

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Hegemony within Student Affairs:
The Interpretive Nature of College Student Development Theory

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate Division of
Social and Cultural Foundations of Education

College of Education

DePaul University

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

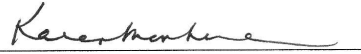
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I approve the master's thesis of Marissa L. Lucchesi, entitled *Hegemony within Student Affairs: The Interpretive Nature of College Student Development Theory*.



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Abstract

Hegemony within Student Affairs: The Interpretive Nature of College Student Development Theory

Marissa L. Lucchesi

This study examined college student development theories taught in a higher education master's program at a major Midwestern university. The purpose of this study was to examine if college student development theories possess underlying assumptions that are hegemonic. It was apparent through this research that college student development theory does contain hegemonic assumptions, which ultimately impacts the work between student affairs practitioners and students. This study particularly focused on the impact of practitioners' use of hegemonic theory when facilitating identity development for student growth and empowerment.

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Introduction

Student affairs (SA) professionals hold the unique position of serving as a liaison between students and administrators on college campuses. They are able to utilize a variety of programs and development tools to supplement students' academic endeavors, many of which challenge students to see beyond what they are capable of achieving inside the classroom. College student development theory is a foundation of the profession and is often used to encourage students to develop confidence in who they are by reflecting on the experiences they have had.

In *The American College*, Sanford (1962) writes:

When we consider some of the common features of the freshman's situation—his absence from home, the academic requirements and expectations, the presence of a student society and culture to which he must adapt himself—it seems that we are justified in thinking of his entrance into college as bringing about a developmental crisis. (p.266)

At traditional universities, students choose to enter societies that are completely new to them—ones in which they are removed from legal guardians, have higher standards and expectations for academic coursework placed upon them, and are thrust into student culture that is fluid and constantly allows for new discoveries and self-explorations. These societies often reflect and uphold ideologies and values that define the larger society in which they are nestled, such as the neoliberal influences in American society.

Four decades of neoliberal policies [which] have resulted in no gains in people's incomes (except for the rich), increased economic inequality, global warming, and environments replete with

toxins and in which species diversity is declining, and a school system in which the emphasis on test preparation undermines students tackling meaningful questions. (Hursch, 2011, p. 16)

Whether they realize it or not, college students in today's society are products of their environments well before they step foot on campus. Students are increasingly feeling the impact of global warming and the destruction of the earth's resources while at the same time preparing to enter a "developmental crisis" that they've been prepped to deal with through "test preparation" that "undermines students tackling meaningful questions"(Hursch, 2011, p. 16). Due to their unique position on these traditional campuses, SA practitioners have the responsibility to recognize where students are coming from and help them wrestle with these "meaningful questions" in intentional and structured ways through the use of services, programming, and mentoring.

One tool practitioners use to provide students with opportunities to wrestle with meaningful questions is student development theory. Student affairs administrators typically use these "developmental crises" as opportunities to help students achieve one of the purposes of collegiate schooling: to create healthy, socialized adults capable of succeeding in the workplace and "engaging with meaningful questions." These tools were developed through the research of Arthur Chickering; he serves as a foundational theorist to the student affairs profession and has continually influenced the way administrators support students through their journeys in achieving such educational purposes.

Since 1969, SA professionals have turned to Chickering's theory of seven vectors of development not only to support students throughout their journeys, but also to develop programming and events that enhance students' development of the self. Evans et al. (2001) write, "Chickering's seven vectors, as described in his revised theory, present a comprehensive picture of psychosocial development during the college years" (p. 67). This well-meaning foundational theory of the profession also possesses a hidden agenda that many administrators innocently miss. In the effort to help students come to terms with their social identities and reflect on the experiences they have lived, practitioners

often fail to realize they are reproducing cycles of oppression on college campuses through the transmission of hegemonic values.

Eisner (1994) notes, “As Bourdieu (1997) has written, the school is essentially an institution whose mission is cultural reproduction” (p. 74). If indeed schools are conduits for cultural reproduction, it is important to understand the role of the SA professional in supporting the process. One way to do so is to return back to the roots of student affairs, when student development theory was first seen as a tool to aid students in developing the self while working towards the “betterment of society” (American Council of Education, 1937, p. 39). More recently, however, Chickering (2010) argues that the betterment of society is no longer a priority in higher education; he claims:

The larger issues of interdependence, identity, purpose, meaning, and integrity have been eclipsed by short-term goals oriented toward a well-paying job upon graduation. If they [students] are going to pay all that tuition and accrue substantial debt, they have no time for long-range goals and more fundamental outcomes. (p. 5)

In the face of the rising tuition costs and with students believing that a college education will lead directly to employment upon graduation, conversations about contributing to the betterment of society and self-development are now an undervalued component of collegiate education.

These realities are symptoms of a much larger problem. In *The Right Wing Attack on Critical and Public Education in the United States: From Neoliberalism to Neoconservatism*, Saltman (2009) writes:

...the cultural aspect of privatizing education involves transforming it on the model of business, describing education through the language of business, and the emphasis on what has been termed ‘ideology of corporate culture’ that involves making meanings, values, and identification compatible with a business vision for the future. (p. 4)

As college becomes more and more about guaranteeing students a job once they graduate, the purpose of higher education is changing to represent the “ideology of corporate culture.” The way students are learning to make meaning of the world around them and potentially their own identity development is being seen through the lens of “a business vision for the future.” If student affairs has evolved in an environment that reflects these developing ideologies, does student development theory reflect these ideologies as well?

Instead of empowering students to think critically about their developing identities, many professionals simply help students come to terms with how their experiences or crises shape their lives. Often too little is done by practitioners to examine the forces at play that reproduce inequalities for students. This paper critically examines the role of hegemonic ideologies within the practice of college student development theory at traditional four-year institutions and how practitioners can identify and actively disrupt cycles of oppression through the use of college student development theory. I assume college student development theory is inherently a positive learning tool to use while working with students but stress the incorporation of a social reconstructionist ideology into the ways college student development theory is practiced by administrators. Administrators have an average of four years to teach students critical thinking skills and help them develop a sense of empowerment in their identity. “For four years they have in their hands young persons who are or can be relatively isolated from the rest of society, and who are still open to influence by instruction and example” (Sanford, 1964, p. 10). Practitioners must recognize the privilege and responsibility they hold while working with students in such a potentially isolating time in their life. One way to do so is by understanding the history of student affairs, thinking critically about its most popular theories, and considering how its original purpose still inspires our work today.

Merriam (2002) writes “those who engage in critical research frame their research questions in terms of power—who has it, how it’s negotiated, what structures in society reinforce the current distribution of power, and so on” (p. 327). By examining Chickering’s (1969) development theory and who it best serves through a critical lens, I will begin to unravel the symbolic power structures behind the theory, illuminating ways in which we serve as pipelines to promote oppressive hegemonic influence onto our students. In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu (1991) writes:

Symbolic power is a power of constructing reality, and one which tends to establish gnoseological order: the immediate meaning of the world (and in particular of the social world) depends on what Durkheim calls logical conformism, that is, ‘a homogenous conception of time, space, number and cause, one which make it possible for different intellects to reach agreement.’ (p. 166)

Written theories of student identity theory development represent “symbolic power.” They are ways in which practitioners over time have “constructed realities” for student development as a way to understand the processes students go through as they experience college. Bourdieu highlights Durkheim to argue the point that symbols, or words, allow for “different intellects to reach agreement.” This idea of logical conformism is inherently subjective and defined by the parameters of the people who are conceiving what they see as “reality.” This “homogeneous conception of time, space, number and cause” already sets the stage for practitioners to understand identity development with a narrowed understanding of the realities a student is experiencing and additionally empowers practitioners to interpret student development theory how they feel is necessary in order to support a student through their experience.

While examining symbolic power in college student development theory, I will address that it is often invisible. Practitioners may take Chickering’s (1969) theory or Erikson’s (1968) theory, for example, and apply them in ways they feel are objective. “For symbolic power is that invisible power which can be

exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 164). It is imperative that, when working with language that defines a profession like college student development theory, practitioners constantly recognize their subjectivity in such acts. In *On Democracy*, Chomsky (2003) writes, “...to know a language is to have mastered a system of rules and principles.... At the heart of language, and much of human action and thought, is a system of mental representations and computations” (p. 67). Therefore, this paper will uncover college student development theory as a system of mental representations and computations that reflect a specific set of beliefs and ideologies.

The conclusion of this paper will call on practitioners to learn to critically understand the principles and rules that form the foundation of college student development theory. Practitioners must be willing to recognize the “mental representations and computations” insinuated in the practice of the student affairs profession. This critical examination of power in the language of college student development theory will set readers up to analyze the purpose of higher education, as well as the history of the student affairs profession. Readers will then be challenged to determine how they can utilize their role as a practitioner to disrupt a culture of oppression that appears to encompass many of these theories.

Revealing such painful truths will hopefully plant seeds for future research and discussion that will empower practitioners to make positive changes in their environments. As Eisner (1994) claims, “Critical theory is aimed at emancipating those affected by the schools from the school’s debilitating practices” (p. 73). As a social reconstructionist, my subjectivity will most certainly reveal itself in how I assess my research outcomes. Stanley (1992) writes, “By its very nature, [social reconstructionists believe] education is a part of the total process of socialization into culture” (p. 11). Because of this, I

take the position that anything students experience on their campus of higher education should ultimately train them to take on a responsible role as a member of society.

This study is significant because it speaks to the challenge Tanaka (2002) brings forth in “Higher Education’s Self-Reflexive Turn: Toward an Intercultural Theory of Student Development.” Tanaka writes:

Now is a good time to make ‘power’ a formal category of analysis in higher education research by including it in survey instruments. This means examining what counts as knowledge on a campus and whether that process is friendly or unfriendly to a student’s multiple cultures. (p. 268)

This paper meets Tanaka’s challenge assuming college student development theory counts as “knowledge” on traditional campuses and assesses the power structures behind the theories.

Another reason why this study is significant is because the purpose and face of higher education, according to students in the U.S., is changing. In 2011 the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute released “The American Freshman: National Norms for 2010” (see Appendix 1). The report surveyed 201,818 first-time, full-time, first-year students from 279 baccalaureate colleges and universities to determine perception of various social identities and political and economic realities. Of the students surveyed, 72.7% agreed strongly or somewhat that the “chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one’s earning power. In addition, 84.7% of students claimed that the “ability to get a better job is the chief benefit of a college education.” This drastically impacts the ways in which students allow themselves to grow and develop while in college and thus impacts the ways in which administrators can use theory to support and challenge them. This paper will critically examine the impact of using traditional development theory with students who assume the main purpose of a higher education is to “increase one’s earning power.”

This paper will provide an overview of Chickering's (1969) and Erikson's (1968) development theories in order to provide examples of how college student development theory can be interpreted in ways that show that their hegemony only oppresses students' identity development. "Foucault argues that there are not objective and universal truths, but that particular forms of knowledge, and the ways of being that they engender, become 'naturalised' in culturally and historically specific ways" (Abes, 2009, p. 144). While Chickering's (1969) theory has served as a "universal truth" over the last 50 years, it is time for SA practitioners to think critically about the culture they reinforce when facilitating something as powerful and potentially beneficial as identity development. Decades of critical research has analyzed and revealed logical conformism within higher education and criticized specific student development theories, so in this paper I hope to bridge the two topics in order to examine how student development theories serve to reinforce hegemonic practices within traditional institutions of higher education.

A Set of Terminologies to Engage with Critical Education

Student affairs. While student affairs has a documented history, and its purpose has changed over time to meet the needs of universities, this section will define the profession of student affairs according to Bloland (1991). Dugy and Gordon (2011) cite Bloland's definition as "university staff" who "intentionally introduce proactive programs called interventions, to promote development; and the nature and content of these interventions and the outcome could be specified by designing them in conformance with an appropriate theory of human development" (p. 68). I am choosing to replace "intervention" with "involvement" in this thesis to recognize the evolving nature of the SA profession as no longer needing to treat all student engagement as "intervention." Rather, I am highlighting the ability of professionals today to be proactive in their efforts at promoting identity development within the field of student affairs.

Identity. In “Identity Development Theories in Student Affairs: Origins, Current Status, and New Approaches,” Torres, Jones, and Renn (2009) write, “Within the student affairs literature, identity is commonly understood as one’s personally held beliefs about the self in relation to social groups (e.g. race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation) and the ways one expresses that relationship” (p. 577). Generally in student affairs, identity is understood as one’s understanding of the self and also one’s understandings of the self in relation to social groups. Torres et al. continue thus:

A key middle stage in ego identity development is the adolescent identity crisis, and because the vast majority of college students at the time were adolescents, Arthur Chickering (1969) focused on this stage to propose seven “vectors” specific to college student identity within the Eriksonian stage of identity crisis. (p. 579)

Since we are focusing on identity development and Chickering’s (1969) perception of the term and how he envisioned it should look in practice, this article will use the term identity according to how Chickering used it throughout his theory and how it is interpreted by Torres et al.

Theory. Jones and Abes (2010) examine the meaning of theory in “The Nature and Uses of Theory” and cite Rodgers’ (1980) definition to explain that theory is “a set of propositions regarding the interrelationship of two or more conceptual variables relevant to some realm of phenomena. It provides a framework for explaining the relationship among variables and for empirical investigations” (p. 151). Theory serves as a way to examine the relationship between variables in phenomena and provide a basis for understanding and conducting empirical studies. This definition is also emulated by Kerlinger (1979), Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998), Strange and King (1990), and Knepfkamp (1982). It can inspire the ways in which administrators understand the direct impact of their work with students, plan intentional interventions and programming, form partnerships, and develop strategic plans. Anfara and Mertz (2006) also add that “to understand a theory is to travel into someone else’s mind and become able to perceive reality as that person does” (p. xiv). Not only can it serve as a way to justify the ways

practitioners advise and mentor students, it also helps them potentially understand the struggles a student is experiencing when s/he goes through a developmental crisis.

Jones and Abes (2010) caution administrators to remember that theories are also interpreted by those who use them (p. 151), arguing that theories are interpretations, which are then understood in different ways by different people. Therefore, while student development theory provides administrators with a basis and common language for understanding a student's lived experience, it also provides space for administrators to interpret a theory and use it to define a student's experience.

Theories provide an overarching perspective about a certain trend or phenomena.

Moreover, they offer ways to communicate about students among other professionals and provide a common language within a community of scholars (Knefelkamp, 1982, p. 380) that enables educators to talk with students about salient developmental issues.

(Patton et al., 2007, p. 40)

It also provides a common language within the community of student affairs to help practitioners discuss development and identity salience.

Critical. The purpose of this article is not simply to discuss identity or development theories, rather it is to turn a critical eye upon Chickering's (1969) theory and examine ways in which SA practitioners use it to reinforce hegemony. For the purpose of this paper, *critical* "...focuses on the ways in which current practices serve power or wealth and contribute to injustice or inequality rather than social hope" (Williams, 2012, p. 2). The term *critical* in this work will focus on how Chickering's theory can be interpreted as a contributor "to injustice or inequality rather than social hope."

Just as identity development is a process of interpretation, the ways in which we understand it as student affairs professionals are also interpretive. We must look at historical pieces of the student affairs profession and key college student development theories such as Chickering's (1969) to help us

understand the ambiguous journeys of our students. Doing so requires a critical eye—what are the hidden messages of our profession? How does theory impact our actions and understanding? Why are specific words used? Oftentimes practitioners meet with students and help them analyze every detail of an experience or decision in order to help them move forward. We must be willing to do the same with ourselves and with the structures we have in place in order to be successful. The critical nature of this paper is meant to help practitioners develop a critical eye and devise questions to ask when examining the history of our profession and the theories that guide our work in identity development.

Methods

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the role of hegemonic ideologies within the college student development theory taught in courses of student affairs at traditional four-year institutions and to highlight how practitioners can identify cycles of oppression that are embedded in existing theories and programming. Student development theories and historical documents introduced during a course at a major Midwestern university are the focus of this thesis; I selected particular theorists as characteristic of those who are frequently used to educate the next generation of student affairs practitioners. This foundational knowledge was selected using several strategies.

The primary student affairs documents I selected as data to help me determine the founding nature of the profession are the American Council of Education's (ACE) 1937 and 1949 documents, titled "The Student Personnel Point of View," referred to herein as SPPV 37 and SPPV 49. These two documents were selected because they are specifically highlighted in the class syllabus and discussions within a course at a major Midwestern university as key documents in the student affairs profession.

To supplement these documents, I also decided to include Arthur Chickering's (1969) student development theory because my coursework highlighted his research and listed him as a significant contributor to the field. In addition, I informally questioned several practitioners within the division of

student affairs at the same major Midwestern university about their academic background, particularly about their knowledge base in that background. They notified me that Chickering was studied extensively within their student affairs administration courses during their master's of higher education administration coursework. I used five main resources to inform my understanding of Chickering's work and thus create a substantial amount of data to review and critically examine. I coded these documents by looking for statements and words that reflected perspectives of SPPV 37 and SPPV 49 and also read these documents to provide myself with an understanding of the theories presented in this paper.

Part One

Orientations of Student Affairs within Higher Education and within Critical Theory: The Foundations of a University Education

In *A Place Called School*, John I. Goodlad (1984) illustrates that the purpose of education is the following:

(1) academic, embracing all intellectual skills and domains of knowledge; (2) vocational, geared to develop readiness for productive work and economic responsibility; (3) social and civic, related to preparing for socialization into a complex society; and (4) personal, emphasizing the development of individual responsibility, talent, and free expression. (p. 37)

Goodlad first argues that schooling is about creating academics, students who are able to perform intellectually and possess domains of knowledge. Second, students are to prepare for productive work lives and "economic responsibility." Third, students are to become socially and civically oriented into a "complex society," and finally, students are to develop a sense of "individual responsibility, talent, and free expression." All of the aforementioned learning objectives refer to teaching students how to correctly function in a "complex society" and understand their responsibility to contribute to society as

an individual. Ultimately the ideology behind Goodlad's statement promotes individualistic ideals of success.

Rudolph (1962) supports Goodlad's (1984) perspective that a university education should prepare students to function with economic responsibility. He claims the following:

Inevitably the American college would face up to the self-made man on his own terms and in the process discover a new purpose. In the end, it became necessary to argue and possible to prove, on the basis of selected individuals, that going to college was a way of making more money than if you did not. (p. 65)

The idea of becoming a "self-made man" and using college as a way "of making more money than if you did not" promotes the idea that college provides students with a means to become more economically competitive. It removes any notions of engaging in academia for the purpose of civic engagement. This purpose of higher education set the stage for practitioners within student affairs to face the unique American challenge of working with students who are actively experiencing a disconnect from their surrounding communities by training them to compete in a society that emphasizes individual economic success.

Michael Stephen Schiro (2008) also acknowledges that the purpose of schooling can be primarily individualistic in his book *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns*. Schiro claims that "the goal of education is the growth of individuals, each in harmony with his or her own unique intellectual, social, emotional, and physical attributes" (p. 5). This ideology certainly compliments Goodlad's (1984) statement that education should be about "personal" development. In learner-centered education, Schiro argues that the goal is about developing "harmony" with one's "own" attributes.

In regards to ensuring that students achieve the learning objectives outlined by Goodlad (1984) and Schiro (2008), faculty and administrators must give learners access to the resources they need. Another purpose of schooling, according to SPPV 49, is to simply give students access to the resources they need in order to become productive members of society. In regards to job training, it states that “the college has a responsibility to see that these students have access to accurate, usable information about opportunities, requirements, and training for various occupations appropriate to their possible levels of vocational preparation” (American Council of Education [ACE], 1949, p. 25). In this sense, a purpose of a university education is to act as a transitory phase in which students simply consume the information they need to be successful in their next step of life. It is seen as a training ground for vocational preparation, not actually as a site of learning, conscientious struggle, or community building.

Kodama et al. (2002) argue that individualistic education transcends preparing students for economic stability by impacting the ways in which students understand racial identity. They write, “This may relate to a cultural value on education (Hune and Chan, 1997; Wong and Mock, 1997), perceived by many Asian Americans not only as an economic necessity but also as the primary vehicle by which to achieve success in a racist society (Hune and Chan, 1997)” (p. 51). Kodama et al. argue that a purpose of higher education should be to train students to survive and be successful within racist societies and that tailored college student development theories can serve as a vehicle to initiate and achieve such a purpose. This type of argument creates a mindset that enables members of an oppressed identity to survive in a privileged society and thus places the ownership upon individual students to learn how to survive in an oppressive society.

The authors cited in this section appear to agree on the idea that a purpose of a university education is the growth of the individual student in relation to the self and one’s place in society. Goodlad (1984) reveals that students should use their self and place in society, and that they should use

their education to prepare themselves for a “complex world.” While Rudolph (1962) writes of the “self-made man” who goes to college to “make more money than if you did not” attend college. Schiro (2008) argues that the purpose of a university education is about developing harmony with one’s attributes. Kodama et al. (2002) promotes this ideology in order to argue that students should go to college in order to learn how to survive in racist societies. All of these arguments are made after SPPV 49, which argues that college should be seen as a training ground for professional vocation. This literature highlights three themes as the purpose of a university education. According to this literature, the purpose of a university education is about developing strategies for individual success, learning to reinforce existing structures in society, and using one’s education as a training ground to uphold individualistic ideologies that will compete against others. The next section of this paper explores the role of SA practitioners in reinforcing individualized development of students on traditional campuses.

The Foundations of Student Affairs within a University Education

After reviewing and analyzing 13 foundational documents that argue the purpose of student affairs within college environments, including SPPV 37 and 49, Evans (2001) is left wondering about the following:

...lack of attention to concepts from political science, anthropology, sociology, communication, and other disciplines that would seem to have additional and important ideas to contribute. Particularly in light of the rapidly changing demographics of higher education and the global perspectives institutions must consider, cultural perspectives from anthropology, principles of cross-cultural communication, and group dynamics and group process variables discussed by sociologists would seem informative. (p. 4)

Evans argues that the field of student affairs should integrate a greater diversity of academic fields into research in order to “inform” how we respond to “rapidly changing demographics of higher education.”

Evans questions how the field of student affairs might be different if it incorporated more schools of

thought from the humanities into its core structure, especially given the “rapidly changing demographics of higher education.” The author also raises an idea that the foundations of student affairs do not currently prioritize “cultural perspectives...cross-cultural communication...and group dynamics.”

Evans (2001) was also concerned about the development of the “whole student,” his or her obligation to society, and the responsibility of student affairs to emphasize such learning. He claims:

The 13 statements of philosophy we examined have guided student affairs practice and preparation for over 60 years. In reviewing these works, we are left with the feeling that the student affairs field has known what it is about since its inception. Student affairs professionals' responsibility to insure the total development of all students by creating supportive and responsive environments in collaboration with their faculty colleagues remains as vital a goal now as it was in 1937. Although the field's knowledge base has increased and the language used to describe its mission may have changed, its overarching goals remain constant and provide a clear and critical direction as higher education enters the new century. (p. 4.)

Evan’s argument reveals an interesting shift in the literature that discusses the purpose of higher education. While arguments from the previous section encourage that the university act as a training space for students to learn how to survive in a complex world through the use of vocational preparation, when examined from an SA perspective we see a stronger value on developing the students’ whole self as a way of learning to survive in an ever-changing global environment. This argument is further exemplified when looking directly into the foundational literature. For example, SPPV 37 (ACE, 1937) claims:

...one of the basic purposes of higher education is the preservation, transmission, and enrichment of the important elements of culture: the product of scholarship, research,

creative imagination, and human experience. It is the task of colleges and universities to vitalize this and other educational purposes as to assist the student in developing to the limits of his potentialities and in making his contribution to the betterment of society.

(p. 39)

“Preservation, transmission, and enrichment” of cultural values serve as a backbone for the profession, placing administrators in the unique role of helping students develop the “limits of their potentials” while also developing a strong understanding of the culture and society they are preparing to actively enter. The idea of aiding students in reaching the “limits of their potentials” incorporates the development of the students’ whole self while also promoting their responsibility to the “betterment of society.”

The idea of the “betterment of society” appears to be where literature regarding student affairs in higher education differs. While some founding documents of the profession define contributing to society as finding a good job and taking care of one’s family, Giroux and Searls Giroux (2006) argue that SA practitioners should challenge students to learn how to engage with issues of “democracy, equality, and justice.” They write:

Finding our way to a more humane future means educating a new generation of scholars who not only defend higher education as a democratic public sphere, but who also see themselves as both scholars and citizen activists willing to connect their research, teaching, and service to broader democratic concerns over equality, justice, and an alternative vision of what the university might be and what society might become” (p. 248.)

Giroux and Searls Giroux encourage educators to act like student affairs practitioners and take a step back and recognize that the purpose of schooling is inherently a political construction. The authors reveal that foundational documents like SPPV 37 and 49 look at university education as a training

ground for future roles in the current structures of society. Giroux and Searls Giroux encourage administrators to examine the larger role that a university education plays within a democracy and how they can aid students to critically think about how the experience they are gaining within their four years will impact efforts towards “equality, justice, and an alternative vision of what society might become.” This newer literature connects the profession more deeply to the institution as an academic sphere, rather than its isolated role in preparing students for life after graduation.

Giroux and Searls Giroux (2006) argue that a purpose of student affairs within higher education is to encourage a justice and future-oriented mindset within students. This belief in the purpose of student affairs in education moves administrators beyond what they are capable of achieving in a learner-centered environment and encourages them to view the purpose of education from a different point of view. As Rudolph (1965) states, “When college presidents thought of their students they were reminded not of society’s obligation to young men but of the obligation of young men to society” (sic) (p. 59). Students need to experience and understand the impact of their identity as college students and utilize their responsibility to contribute to the betterment of society. This argument identifies a responsibility of the SA profession to provide spaces for students to develop a deep connection to their communities and their peers.

Giroux (2010) certainly channels Dewey (1930) in his writing about creating spaces for critical civic participation. Giroux writes that education should “provide students with the habits of mind and ways of acting that would enable them to identify and probe the most serious threats and dangers that democracy faces in a global world dominated by instrumental and technological thinking” (p. 20). At the most basic of understandings, Dewey encourages administrators to foster an environment of curiosity on college campuses where students can examine threats to democratic environments. Sanford (1962) supports this notion by claiming the following:

When we are talking about the freeing of impulse it seems well to keep constantly in mind the fact that the child is curious and filled with wonder, that the inclinations are often pretty well knocked out of him by the discipline and learning processes that are considered necessary to getting him into college, and that it is up to the college to try to restore to the fullest possible extent his natural inquisitive inclinations. (p. 272)

In this sense, an additional purpose of schooling within the perspective of student affairs is to “restore” students’ “natural inquisitive inclinations.”

Gilligan (1981) took Sanford’s and Dewey’s appreciation of curiosity and further applied it to a purpose of schooling, which is to instill elements of morality within students. She writes, “If the aim of higher education is to develop the life of the mind, then such education, in its entirety, bears a clear relationship to the pattern of moral development” (p. 155). Gilligan argues that a purpose of higher education is to develop intellect, which in turn develops a greater sense of morality and thus connection to community. Doing so would begin the foundation for enlightenment and democratic engagement, for which Giroux and Searls Giroux (2006) argue.

Developing notions of morality as a purpose of a higher education can also lead to respect and appreciation of diversity. Arthur (2011) writes:

In addition, as ever-higher percentages of students go on to college, colleges and universities have come to serve important socializing functions for a broader swath of young people. We look to colleges and universities to teach students how to write and speak formally, how to work in teams with others, how to manage an independent life, and most relevant for this research, how to cope with diversity. (p. 10)

Within the SA literature, college becomes less about socialization skills to properly attain a vocation and make proper “lifestyle choices” and becomes more about learning to work in groups while assuming a

vocation and how to “cope” with diversity. The term “cope” is significant when analyzing identity development within a student affairs perspective. What is the symbolic power behind using the term “cope” when discussing identity development within student affairs? While I mentioned before that words are subjective and hold mental representations, as Chomsky (2003) notes, it is interesting that the terms cope and diversity are used in the same sentence. What does it mean to cope? Perhaps it means to understand that an experience and the emotional response it elicits exist, but not to overcome it or acknowledge it as an identifying factor in one’s life. This definition of the term “cope” releases a significant amount of ownership over the process of understanding diversity within identity development. It also encourages students to remain complacent with their current experiences and understanding of diversity. This idea promotes an eternal present, an environment that cannot or should not be changed, simply because “coping” is good enough. It is a powerful use of language that removes ownership of or possibility for change within the student affairs and the student development world. This idea promotes the foundations of student affairs as a place to foster curiosity and engagement while remaining complacent with existing hegemonic structures of society at the same time.

As values towards fostering curiosity, morality, and democratic justice seem to have taken root within the SA perspective throughout the past 50 years, Sanford (1962) continues to highlight the subjective nature of these goals:

For values to become internalized they must be reflected on, and made the object of the individual’s best efforts at judgment and decision-making; they must find their way into the personality structure through the activity of the conscious and developed ego rather than through automatic conditioning or unconscious mechanisms. One moves beyond the authoritarian position by developing a truly individual, enlightened conscience; and this, we have argued, is a major educational goal. (p. 263)

Ultimately, Sanford believes a major purpose of a college education is to develop a “truly individual, enlightened conscience.” The next section of this paper will delve deeper into the literature and attempt to define what it means to have an “individual enlightened conscience.”

College Student Development Theory: Trends in the Literature

The first theme I discovered upon coding trends was a movement from the term “student development theory” to “identity development theory”, although the terms were frequently intermingled. This examination was coupled with a movement to examine student development theory with a critical theory perspective. Torres et al. (2009) take a critical stance against development theory and claim “student development theory in general has been slow to move in a direction that considers relationships between power structures and the fluidity of development” (p. 16). This statement indicates a consideration of the relationship between institutional power structures of universities and their impact upon student development, but there is still no agency given to SA practitioners to facilitate that impact. The final trend I noticed in the literature was that most researchers placed a positive value on fostering the holistic development of students, indicating that while student development theory was being examined from a critical perspective, the learning outcomes for student development on college campuses was still largely about the holistic development of the student. What “holistic” meant to researchers, however, was widely debated.

The shift from student development theory to a focus on identity development appears to acknowledge an examination of the power structures that exist in student development theory. Postmodern theory provides a critical lens through which to take a closer look at traditional ideals of college student development. In Abes, Jones, and McEwen’s (2007) *Reconceptualizing the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity: The Role of Meaning-Making Capacity in the Construction of Multiple Identities*, the authors reveal the following:

Of particular relevance to our reconceptualization of the model of multiple identities is the postmodern perspective of queer theory, which suspends the classifications of lesbian, gay, bisexual, masculine and feminine (Tierney & Dilley, 1998)...the failure to study identity as difference implies a unity in identity that overlooks variations within identity, such as race and class. (p. 3)

Taking a specific postmodern, identity-based perspective towards student development is a recurring theme throughout the literature, and Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) adapt this position from critical queer theory.

Abes (2009) connects her critical queer perspective of student development theory to the concept of Anzaldua's (1987) discussion of "borderlands" in "Theoretical Borderlands: Using Multiple Theoretical Perspectives to Challenge Inequitable Power Structures in Student Development Theory." She writes, "I applied, in the context of student development theory a hybrid theoretical perspective of sorts by working in the borderland between two existing theoretical perspectives, queer theory, and constructivism" (p. 141). In this article student development theory is critiqued through a queer constructivist lens. Abes expresses that this perspective "changed my way of thinking about the research process in general and the nature of student development theory in particular, especially as it relates to addressing how inequitable power structures have shaped student development theory" (p. 141). Abes uses the lens of queer constructivism to critique student development theory as a way to read between the lines and examine what student development theory truly claims.

Tanaka (2002) also takes a poststructural perspective in "Higher Education's Self-Reflexive Turn: Toward an Intercultural Theory of Student Development." He examines theory to understand how "knowledge about culture is mediated by power" (p. 268). He uses a poststructuralist critique of student development theory "as a reflection of both the systemic and discourse-based notion of power indicated by Foucault (2011) and of the meaning that comes from feeling a fundamental

interconnectedness with other human beings as advanced by Kondo (1990). While this perspective alludes to a reconstructionist perspective of student development theory in his allusion to “fundamental interconnectedness”, Tanaka instead focuses on his poststructuralist viewpoint to highlight that “in making the power dynamics of knowledge systems less opaque, poststructural theory thus reveals how culture, power, and knowledge are intertwined whenever monological (e.g. Western, straight, and male) frames of reference attempt to speak for all cultures” (p. 269). This viewpoint indicates a desire to unearth structures of power within student development theory rather than focus on how student development theory is prevented from forming “interconnectedness” through systems of power.

There are a few connections in the existing literature that connect college student development theory and critical theory. Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) use the perspective of critical feminist literature to argue that college student development theory can serve as a “framework of intersectionality that recognizes how socially constructed identities are experienced simultaneously, not hierarchically” (p. 2). This brings to light the idea that college student development theory can be combined with identity-based development theory in order to enhance the holistic development of the students the theories aim to serve.

The bridge between critical theory and student development theory is further defined as a road to holistic development by Tanaka (2002). He writes “under a new intercultural framework, the interactions between student, college, student major, family, and close friends and society are all considered important” (p. 284). Student development that encourages students to examine their surroundings in relation to life events and the people influencing them can be fostered within them. In this sense, Tanaka differs from Kodama et al. (2002) because Tanaka maintains a close connection to student development theory, rather than separating from it completely and focusing more on strictly identity development-based theories instead.

Chickering (2010) also explores the connection between critical theory and development theory as moral component. Of the current challenges American society faces, he writes:

...these are problems of moral development, character building, social responsibility, and civic engagement. Certainly the higher order cognitive skills required to see through the mis-and dis-information, and to examine our complex issues with the critical judgments they require, are necessary. But they are not sufficient. That thinking, and resulting judgments, must be anchored in clear recognition of their fundamental and moral implications concerning human dignity and well-being. (p. 5)

For Chickering, the connection between critical engagement and student development theory boils down to questions of morality and social responsibility. He argues that critical thinking skills are necessary to engage with today's ills but are not sufficient enough unless they are deeply connected to a person's sense of self and responsibility to community. Chickering puts the responsibility upon the student to develop a deep connection between the self and morality but does not assess how morality plays a role at the institutional level, where practitioners are administered responsibilities that promote ideological expectations. Chickering leaves readers wondering what the responsibility of the institution is, if individuals are responsible for establishing a connectedness between morality and the self.

In conclusion, consistent findings within the current literature are geared towards a specific critical understanding of student development theory (i.e. critical race perspectives, critical queer perspectives, critical feminist perspectives) that moves away from general college student development theory and instead focuses more upon specific identity-based theories. These efforts inform how students perceive their development while experiencing college and also how administrators tend to interpret general student development when working with students, but none of the literature identifies hegemonic ideologies beyond racism, sexism, and hetero-normativity.

Holistic development appears to be the bridge that connects college student development theory and critical theory together throughout the literature. In it, holistic development is referred to passively as the cultivation of intersecting identities, appreciation of intercultural development, and holistic development. This bridge challenges readers to consider how college student development can serve as a way to inform how a “critical” identity can encompass the holistic development of a student (i.e., moral, social, psychosocial, etc.). Therefore, the literature promotes holistic development as an end goal of college student development, which empowers students to learn how to think critically about their surroundings and the relationship between their identity and their peers. This is a powerful conclusion for the end goal of student development, but it is questionable if this end goal truly exists within the founding theories of college student development.

The Missing Piece: Exposing Hegemony within Student Development Theory

A missing piece in existing literature that examines hegemony within higher education is how structures of power are exemplified throughout specific practices of the student affairs profession. For example, student development theory is a practice that practitioners use to directly advise students, plan programs, and implement strategic goals. There is no literature that highlights how specific hegemonic ideologies are intertwined with how a practitioner advises a student, how one might plan a program through hegemonic learning outcomes, or how strategic goals serve as intentional forms of oppression. The trends in the previous literature reveal how ownership is often placed upon the student to critically examine ways in which their identities are being impacted by life in college, but I discovered no literature that examines ways in which administrators guide the hegemonic experiences students have. Providing practitioners with concrete examples of how their practice may reinforce hegemony and oppression may serve as an accessible way to begin challenging practitioners to rethink the ways in which they utilize student development theory and identity development theory on college campuses. This section of the paper will identify ways in which theorists are thinking about how higher education

as a whole can be hegemonic. Giroux (2007) looks at institutions from the top down and exposes neoliberal influences that trickle into higher education. Chomsky (2003) discusses the direct impact of hegemony upon leaders within the field of education. Torres et al. (2009) explore the shift from college student development theory to identity development theory. These authors provide an overview of the discussions that are revealing hegemonic practices and also set the stage for deeper discussions to occur amongst practitioners. The goal of this section is to highlight how hegemony is being examined within higher education and to expose where opportunities exist for this type of critical thought to enter the field of student affairs.

Torres et al. (2009) discuss the shift from “student development” to “identity development” that seems to occur with a value towards examining intersectionality of identity during meaning-making processes. Torres et al. write:

...the role of meaning-making capacity enables educators to more effectively see students as they see themselves by understanding not only what they perceive their identity to be, but also how they make meaning of their identity dimensions as they do, how they come to perceive identity dimensions as salient or relatively unimportant, and to what degree they understand their social identities as integrated or distinct. (p. 19.)

Torres et al. highlight a shift that focuses on promoting the development of students as individuals while helping them make meaning of their intersecting multiple identities. This form of identity development then leads students to consider “how...experiences are enmeshed in systems of power and inequality” (p. 589). This statement encourages students to consider how their intersecting identities are connected to systems of “power and inequality.” What is still missing from this piece, however, is how SA practitioners may be reproducing systems of “power and inequality” through their journeys of helping students make meaning of their intersecting identities and their relation to systems of power and oppression.

Torres et al. (2009) also examine the shifting focus from Chickering's moral and ethical development of the student to the cultivation of specific social identities. They write:

Since Chickering's first foray into describing student identities, the college student population in the United States has undergone a substantial diversification, from majority male to majority female, to include a higher proportion and diversity of students of color, and to include visible populations of adult students, immigrants, students with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. (p. 579)

Torres et al. acknowledge the difference in demographics from Chickering's writings to 2009, which they use to justify the shift to a more focused development of identity theory. They also seem to imply that identity theory has come to the forefront in providing an example of how colleges and universities are inclusive of new students. Acknowledging their social identities and providing space for students to reflect on their identity are types of development that practitioners can claim are services that support all students on campus. Torres et al. argue that with the diversification of college students on today's campuses, development theories have had to adjust and acknowledge specific social identities more than before. What Torres et al. passively acknowledge in their writing is the immense privilege practitioners hold during a student's journey to self-discovery. Through trust and know-how, practitioners have the power to encourage student identity and growth in very intentional ways.

Chomsky (2003) brings the power to light while he discusses the concept of the "intellect." He argues that in order to be seen as an "intellectual", one needs to become a part of a system in some way. He writes:

...the people who make it into positions in which they're respected and recognized as intellectuals are the people who are not subversive of structures of power. They're the people who in one way or another serve those structures, or at least are neutral with respect to them. (p. 392.)

Chomsky's argument certainly informs how we can look at foundational leaders and "intellectuals", such as Chickering (1969). He teaches us that looking at student development theory critically moves beyond the theory itself and is attached to a person or entity that is pushing a specific ideology. While Chomsky is not referring to "intellectuals" within the field of student affairs specifically, he does bring to light the fact that we must be cognizant of the views and beliefs people like Chickering held while creating student development theories. This is the type of awareness and critical thought that student affairs needs in order to take the next step to move the profession forward.

While the theorists in the previous section focus on shifts within higher education from a top down perspective, this section highlights consistencies within existing literature that explore the direct impact of hegemony upon students. Patton et al. (2007) call upon educators to discuss the importance of understanding how students balance their social identities with the lived experience of hegemonic practices such as racism. They reveal that this discussion is missing from Chickering's (1969) explanation of his seven vectors. Additionally, there appears to be a movement that inspires the examination of intersectionality of multiple identities. This blends into a critical discussion by Kodama et al. (2009) that explores the apparent separation between culture and identity development on college campuses. All of these directly impact student development and appear to have led critical theorists in the field of education to consider specific inequitable power structures within higher education.

Torres et al. (2009) and Chomsky (2003) bring to light the immense power that educators and practitioners hold on college campuses while providing space for students to wrestle with their burgeoning identities and intellectual growth. Both articles justify the presence of student affairs practitioners on college campuses in facilitating such development and call for them to take ownership of the privilege they hold. Both articles fall short, however, in providing tools to enable practitioners to critically engage with the active decisions they are making when pushing students to further their identities.

There have been several criticisms of Chickering's theories specifically that discuss how his theories of development may be outdated due to the changing demographics of today's campus. One consistent critique is highlighted well by Patton et al. (2007). They write:

Chickering and Reisser do not directly discuss race and racism and how they may influence identity development. Furthermore, they offer no discussion of how race and racism may intersect with the seven vectors, even though racial identity development theory, research on racial identities, and research about the psychological aspects of racism were available in the literature when their revised model was published. (p. 41.)

One of the biggest criticisms of Chickering's (1969) theory is in regards to the lack of discussion about racial identity and other specific social identities. Tanaka (2002) adds to this critique by claiming, "Although not something modern theorists could have predicted in the 1970s, there is growing empirical evidence that current approaches are no longer adequate to explain the increasingly complex experience of contemporary college students" (p. 264). Tanaka argues that Chickering's theory is outdated, but claims there is no way Chickering could have predicted such a reality. Regardless of these criticisms, Patton et al. and other researchers argue that within student affairs "classic theories offered by Chickering (1969) and Perry (1970; 1981); Kohlberg (1975); and Tinto (1975; 1993) remain among the most frequently cited" (p. 40).

Another consistent trend is a strong desire to move to theories that focus strongly on the notion of intersectionality of identity. Abes (2009) highlights the following:

Living with these tensions in the borderland requires not only loosening the grip of traditional notions of student development theory as trajectories that predict and explain, but also letting go of monolithic beliefs about development and acknowledging contradictory perspectives that speak to the multiplicity of students' experiences. (p.

150)

Abes highlights the common understanding of students' multiple identities in relation to living in what Anzaldua (1987) refers to as the "borderland" of intersectionality of identity, as well as the multiplicity of understanding within students' experiences.

A consistent discovery throughout the literature that highlights specific lenses of critique is that traditional student development theories rarely leave space for students of various identities to incorporate their culture into their development. For example, when dealing with sexuality, Kodama et al. (2002) write that "coming out issues for gay and lesbian Asian Americans may be especially difficult in a culture where sexuality is rarely talked about, much less homosexuality" (p. 50). They use this example to refer to the fact that traditional development theories may place Asian-American students lower on sexuality development advancement models because of their potential discomfort with expressing growth around sexuality. This indicates a lack of understanding and inclusion of Asian-American values, which may alter an initial interpretation of LGBT development to begin with. This is an example of a trend within the literature that demonstrates that a tension exists between traditional student development theories and development theories that focus on a specific, identity-based model of student development. While Kodama et al. are truly significant in the way they push the boundaries of how student affairs theoretically interprets the concept of development, it appears to stray from a model that emphasizes the interconnectedness of students to one another and focuses more upon individualized identity development instead.

The discussions explored above have prompted McEwen (2003), Tanaka (2002), and Abes (2009) to state that there is also a common desire for administrators to examine inequality within higher education. "Researchers of college student development theory must focus increased attention on inequitable power structures that result in oppression such as racism, classism, and heterosexism (Abes, 2009, p. 143)." There is certainly a strong desire amongst educators to critically examine power

structures within institutions that promote oppression. Along those lines, there is a strong desire to enact agency amongst administrators. Patton et al. (2007) write, “we encourage educators and administrators to challenge, question, and critique traditional theoretical perspectives. Many of the theories used to guide practice give little, if any, attention to race” (p. 48). Researchers in student affairs are beginning to think critically about the foundational theories of our profession in relation to hegemonic structures of power and are trying to establish a community of needed engagement.

Part Two

Rethinking College Student Development Theory and Rethinking our Abilities: A Challenge to Practitioners

There is a pressing need for SA practitioners to revisit the foundation of our profession. We need to continue examining our roles in facilitating developmental conversations around the intersectionality of identity, but we also need to critically focus on our roles in producing hegemonic structures on campus through integral components of our profession. We also need to revisit foundational theories that we still refer to commonly, as discussed previously. It is imperative that we understand the historical situation Chickering (1969), for example, was in and how he may have laced hegemonic assumptions into his theory. SA practitioners must forge a connection between critical theory and student affairs as a profession, particularly in relation to how we practice oppressive, hegemonic behaviors unintentionally. This part of my research presents current trends in student affairs and discusses how practitioners can empower themselves to participate in critical dialogue and challenge the institutions to which they belong.

While SA professionals hold the unique ability to engage with students, as Sanford (1962) describes, it is important to first examine how student development theories and student affairs pedagogies participate in reproducing cycles of oppression on college campuses. In doing so,

practitioners can gain a better understanding of how to tweak existing services rather than add on to their already heavy workloads.

Unpacking the Theories: Identity Development, Vernacular, and Establishing Oppressed Identities

Now that readers have a sense of the purpose of a university education, its responsibilities, and the role student affairs has within it, let us turn to the theories we are familiar with. What are they teaching us about the ways we work with and empower students? Theories serve as forms of symbolic power that guide the way we work and advise our students. They are ideological apparatuses that infuse themselves into programming, advising styles, conduct philosophies, and teaching. This section of the paper will highlight some of the most widely referred to student development theorists within the field of student affairs. Chickering (1969, 1981) and Erikson (1968) will show us with their descriptive language and explanation of development what ideologies serve as a foundation to our profession. “Ideologies serve particular interests which they tend to present as universal interests, shared by the group as a whole” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 167). While these theorists claim to be subjective and often refer to each other as references, practitioners also need to recognize how they subjectively interpret these theories and practice them in everyday settings. In *Ideology and Curriculum*, Michael Apple (2004) states, “Education is both a ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ here. The school is not a passive mirror, but an active force, one that also serves to give legitimacy to economic and social forms and ideologies so intimately connected to it” (p. 39). Schools and thus administrators, like those working in student affairs, play active roles in giving “legitimacy” to specific theories. They are not simply mirrors of an already existing system, but rather active creators of it. SA practitioners use college student development theory as a pipeline to disburse specific values and ideologies into students directly from the top leadership of institutions. Let us jump into some theories and take a closer look.

Chickering's and Havighurst's (1981) discussion of late adolescence and youth (ages 16-23) focuses on "achieving emotional independence" (p. 30) and psychosocial development. He uses the term "vectors of development, because each [stage of growth] seems to have direction and magnitude- even though by direction may be expressed more appropriately by a spiral or by steps than a straight line" (Chickering, 1969, p. 8). Chickering's seven vectors indicate that each student is unique in his or her development based on whether they progress through the vectors in a "spiral," "steps", or a "straight line."

In his discussion of late adolescence and youth in particular, Chickering reveals an interesting fact: up until youth enter the late adolescent stage, they are completely surrounded by relationships and groups. Students are rarely treated as "individuals," it seems, and are referred to more as family members, partners, friends, etc. Chickering and Havighurst (1981) write:

During childhood, parents and other adults are typically seen as omniscient and omnipotent. As the fallibility of these previously strong and reliable guides becomes more clear, reliance shifts to peers, to other adults, and to occupational, institutional, or social reference groups. (pg. 30)

In his research, Chickering (1981) discovered that the participants he worked with are surrounded by communal relationships every way they turn. It starts with parents, then moves to friends, colleagues, and so on. We must question then, when students come to college, why is the focus on their development as "individual" and not in "group member"? Chickering writes:

...the ways in which we acquire and hold our values may undergo significant change. The glue that holds our ethical systems together, formerly laid on by authorities, peers or social reference groups, begins to be supplied from our own cognitions and developing convictions... we respond to the pluralistic alternatives encountered as we range through larger life spaces, by selecting and fashioning our own trademarks. Thus,

gradually, we create the best system of beliefs and behaviors we can, given the complex contexts in which we find ourselves. (p. 33)

Chickering (1981) argues that until a student reaches the age where one can attend college, s/he is surrounded by several systems of influence: authorities, peers, and other social reference groups that serve as the “glue” that holds someone together. As a society, we strip students of the glue that makes them who they are as they enter college. We force them to survive as individuals. Chickering continues to state “we respond to the pluralistic alternatives encountered as we range through larger life spaces, by selecting and fashioning our own trademarks” (p. 33). As students navigate “larger life spaces,” for example, the campus of a public university, “they select and fashion” their own “trademarks.” Students are forced to become consumers of their own social identity. They are then, as Chickering (1981) claims, encouraged to create their own “trademarks.” On college campuses today, these “trademarks” can range anywhere from the title of intern, queer, sophomore, sorority sister, Chicano, president, leader, conservative, volunteer, atheist, and so on and so forth. There are literally thousands of trademarks students can brand themselves with, and almost as many social media sites that allow them to capitalize on this form of development. When students enter college, they are turned into consumers who are free of communal responsibility and are encouraged to brand themselves with labels. This type of identity development encourages efforts to privatize education.

Saltman (2006) writes:

The cultural aspect of privatizing education involves transforming it on the model of business, describing education through the language of business, and the emphasis on what has been termed the ‘ideology of corporate culture’ that involves making meanings, values, and identifications compatible with a business vision for the future. (p. 4)

Not only does this theory encourage students to self-identify with a “business vision”, as Saltman suggests, it also encourages a type of development in which students compete against each other to see

who is the most individualized and self-aware. Developing trademarks prepares students to latch on to consumer-driven corporate marketing and identities, and perhaps most importantly, it removes a sense of communal responsibility. Because students are forced to quickly become “individuals” as they are thrown into the seemingly large ocean of four-year campuses, student affairs practitioners must acknowledge the potential crises that can occur as a result and be willing to help students navigate the plethora of social identities and values they can take on as their own. If we are to assume a social reconstructionist perspective as student affairs professionals, we must be willing to engage with these crises in a way that allows students to take ownership not only of their identities, but also of making their communities a more socially just environment.

Erikson (1968) acknowledges these crises through an interpretation of Freud’s psychosocial development model. He believes that “each crisis must produce a developmental change in order for the person to grapple with later developmental crises” (Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., 1998, p. 49). Erikson’s model encourages people to change as they experience new situations or environments that force a “crisis.” For this section, I am going to focus on Erikson’s fifth stage: identity versus identity diffusion. He claims this stage is when “adolescents begin to develop their core sense of self, values, beliefs, and goals” (p. 50). It is also the stage prior to when Erikson feels people become adults. It is in this stage that Erikson’s concept of “identity consciousness” emerges.

Erikson (1968) writes, “We meant by it [identity consciousness] a special form of painful self-consciousness which dwells on discrepancies between one’s self-esteem, the aggrandized self-image as an autonomous person, and one’s appearance in the eyes of others” (p. 183). There are three components that categorize a “crisis”, according to Erikson, in the identity versus identity diffusion stage. There must be a challenge to one’s self esteem, an understanding of oneself as independent, and

an awareness of oneself in the eyes of others. Students are often forced to balance all three of those components while in college and in life. Erikson discusses this crisis within the military, as he writes:

They [the military] strive within an atmosphere of mythical timelessness to combine some badge of sacrifice or submission with an energetic push toward sanctioned ways of acting- a combination which, where it works, assures the development in the novice of an optimum of compliance with a maximum sense of free choice and solidarity. This special proclivity of youth-namely, the achievement of a sense of free choice as the very result of ritual regimentation- is, of course, universally utilized in army life. (p. 184)

While Erikson is referring to army life in this statement, I suggest that SA practitioners participate in the same form of indoctrination. Universities often attempt to create a “mythical timelessness” on campus. Traditions are created around sporting events to establish loyalty and purpose, mascots take historical journeys through the university’s existence in school newspapers and yearbooks, and graduating classes are challenged to promote the mission of their university as alumni. Loyalty is established to transcend beyond the bounds of student loans and on-campus housing, which ultimately establishes a sense of “mythical timelessness” amongst students and staff.

Within this ideological culture of “mythical timelessness”, “some badge of sacrifice or submission” is connected with “an energetic push toward sanctioned ways of acting—a combination which, where it works, assures the development in the novice of an optimum of compliance with a maximum sense of free choice and solidarity.” As in the military, students in higher education are led to believe they are developing with a notion of free will. Earlier this paper discussed how mission-driven practices inform the purpose of a college education from a student affairs point of view. This mission “sanctions ways of acting” not only in how students behave, but also in how practitioners help their students understand whatever developmental crisis they may be experiencing. Students are led to believe they are coming to terms with their crisis completely on their own, when in reality, they are

experiencing crisis as a college student who belongs to a mission-driven community, which ultimately aids in guiding their thought process in self-authorship, academic discourse, and job preparation.

Erikson (1968) argues that a feeling of free will is necessary for students to successfully navigate their developmental crises, when in reality, their experience of free choice might be really just a feeling. Erikson argues that SA professionals must constantly encourage students to respond to their actions and decisions and analyze consequences of their behavior and experience. This establishes the development of a false consciousness and sets students up to feel the same in their future environments. Students are told they have free will, when in reality their decisions are guided by the institution they align themselves with. Both discussions of Chickering's (1969) and Erikson's theories of college student development serve to represent ways in which student development theory serves as symbolic power. The next step we must take is to assess how identity development and the false consciousness of free will set up public campuses to establish a culture of individualism and how it serves as an oppressor to identity development.

Individualism within the University: Competition, Agency, and Self-awareness

Individualism, as a value, certainly does not stem from higher education. Individualism is a result of the American culture's focus on the values of competition and dominance. The impact of an individualistic attitude on students can be devastating.

Our most malignantly regressed young people are in fact clearly possessed by general attitudes which represent something of a mistrust of time as such: every delay appears to be a deceit, every wait an experience of impotence, every hope a danger, every plan a catastrophe, every possible provider a potential traitor. (Erikson, 1968, p. 181)

Individualism establishes a culture of fear and mistrust. When students are advised to only believe in themselves and work towards fulfilling their destiny and establishing their identity, it forces them to

leave others behind and to trust in only themselves. A case study by Arthur (2011) proves loss of potential that individualism can have upon students.

Asian American student organizations at Technopark focus most of their energy on social and fundraising events rather than on education and political awareness. In addition, the Asian American students at Technopark are predominantly identified with specific ethnic groups rather than with a panethnic (Espiritu, 1992) community. (p. 75)

While social and fundraising events certainly play a role in establishing group belonging, they can also prove to be detrimental. Because the Asian American students at Technopark deny a panethnic identity and awareness as a result of focusing on their specific ethnic group, opportunities for activism and community engagement and education are minimal. These student groups seemed to deny or not understand the fact that if they collaborated for certain programs or events, the impact of their organizational identity upon the Technopark community would be much greater and more students would benefit from their programming and services.

Sanford's (1964) theory of development promotes more of an effort at creating a "unique" identity amongst their students' ethnic groups. His theory "does not deny that the individual must be socialized and must be able to support and adapt to civilization" and instead assumes the following:

...a well-developed individual can do these things in his own unique way; that as he expands and becomes more complex he becomes increasingly unlike other persons; that only a part of himself and often a superficial part is taken up with the mere requirements of life in the modern world. (p. 15)

Sanford places significant emphasis upon the student developing a complex understanding of the self. The impact of this development drastically changes the purpose of a higher education. Rudolph (1962) argues:

As Americans lost their sense of society and substituted it for a reckless individualism, there was less demand on the colleges to produce dedicated leaders.... In time colleges would be more concerned about the expectations of their students than about the expectations of society. In time going to college would come very close to being an experience in indulgence rather than an experience in obligation. (p. 59)

This experience of “indulgence” is a very expensive way to spend time discovering oneself. It completely destroys Giroux and Searls Giroux’s (2006) argument, which claims that public education should be about developing the following:

...scholars who not only defend higher education as a democratic public sphere, but who also see themselves as both scholars and citizen activists willing to connect their research, teaching, and service to broader democratic concerns over equality, justice, and an alternative vision of what the university might be and what society might become. (p. 248)

Values of individual success, competition, and mistrust are participating in destroying the possibilities for a critical consciousness to be fostered in the minds of future leaders. As practitioners with unique ties to students, we need to help students challenge their notions of individualism as success and instead instill a responsibility to one’s community and self-agency.

Empowerment is Student Success: Fostering Student Development and Communal Responsibility

Preszler Wethersby (1981) writes:

...exposure to higher-level reasoning, opportunities to take others’ roles and perspectives, discomfiting discrepancies between one’s actual experiences in a situation and one’s current explanations and beliefs—these are basic elements of the transition process. It is possible, therefore, to open doors and to help students open doors for themselves. But it is their choice to walk through. (p. 41)

Practitioners must recognize that planting the seeds for a critical consciousness, developing “higher-level reasoning”, looking at “other’s perspectives”, and being self-aware need to be balanced with a student’s capacity to absorb such development. Neither Chickering (1969), Chickering and Havighurst (1981), nor Erikson (1968) discuss in their theories to what extent students are capable of absorbing and comprehending information or complex experiences. What this means for SA practitioners is that we can always provide opportunities for students to engage with critical thinking, community building, social justice, and self-agency, but it will always be the choice of the student to participate. A benefit of identity theories is that they provide a framework that helps us understand where a student is at developmentally. This understanding provides us with the tools we need to instill reconstructionist values at the right pace and in the right way. We need to appreciate where our students are developmentally and the stories with which they enter the university. This is what will allow us to reframe our roles in higher education.

We also need to move beyond the language of “crisis” and teaching students how to “cope” with experiences. As SA professionals, we have a responsibility to empower students and cultivate their already existing strengths and community assets. While we need to understand where students are at developmentally, we also need to challenge them in ways that stimulate their strengths as college students. In *The American University*, Barzoun (1968) claims:

To put it another way, the student sees and resents the fact that teaching is no longer the central concern of the university or of its members. His own maturity is of the feelings rather than of the mind, but he seeks what he lacks, and in his own view he does not get it. (p. 68)

Even though a student may not be able to use the language of democracy or fully comprehend social justice, s/he is able to understand and recognize injustice. S/he can see that she is no longer being taught for the sake of enlightenment and education and that s/he is being trained to fulfill a particular

expectation. We need to appreciate the fact that our students are not ignorant and that they can be empowered to think critically about their world through the programming and events that we offer.

We also need to constantly check our motives. As social reconstructionists, we need to observe the subjectivity in our behaviors and established learning outcomes. Chomsky (2003) writes:

It seems to me that a cautionary flag should go up if you're doing it too much, because the purpose is to enable students to be able to figure out things for themselves, not to know this thing or to understand the next thing that's going to come along; that means you've got to develop the skills to be able to critically analyze and inquire and be creative. (p. 376)

Our responsibility as practitioners within higher education is to simply plant the seeds of empowerment and responsibility. According to Chomsky, these are critical thinking skills and curiosity. Fortunately there are already several existing programs and services that allow students to hone in on such skills and develop themselves as "intellectuals". The next section of this paper will highlight services and programming that already exist on college campuses that promote critical thinking, curiosity, and the development of intellectual skills.

Using Identity Development to Support the Critical Consciousness of Students

In *Liberal Education*, Freedman (2003) writes:

The word 'intellectual' has, of course, many meanings. A definition that I particularly like is that of Vaclav Havel. An intellectual, he writes, 'is a person who has devoted his or her life to thinking in general terms about the affairs of this world and the broader context of things. (p. 71)

If we are to assume the identity of a social reconstructionist student affairs practitioner, we need to move beyond developing student leaders and civic servants. Leadership development, involvement, and identity development need to function with the learning outcome of fostering intellectual curiosity. One example of how this has proven to be successful is Arthur's (2011) research.

The queer community at Technopark [University] has not always been the most active. The queer student group was first formed in the mid-1980s after a campus therapist who had been seeing many lesbian and gay students helped them form a support group. Gradually, this organization turned into a conventional campus organization, and a tight-knit group of students tried to bring awareness of queer issues to the campus through educational programs. The small queer community on campus also included some faculty, who often met with students as well. But it was not until the mid-1990s that the queer community became politically active on campus. (p. 76)

Activism and community development takes time. But the mid-1990s represented a truly powerful connection made on Technopark's campus. The counseling center, students, involvement office, and faculty came together and addressed a community need as a united group. This form of collaboration is an excellent example of how community and intellect can connect within the realm of student affairs. Elements of responsibility, collaboration, justice, critical thinking, community-wide education, mentorship, and advising all took place in this example, and these are the seeds that allow students to foster a reconstructionist point of view. Simon (2001) writes, "As a place of thought, the university would rearticulate the relation between educational practice and the social life of our communities, particularly so as to enhance the prospects for such ideals as democracy" (p. 50). Facilitating identity development and community responsibility removes the view of the public university as a place for young people to pass through as they prepare to get a job and start a family. Instead the public university becomes a hotbed of intellectual engagement, social activism, and community building. It holds a higher stake in statewide involvement and transcends the expectations of tradition theories of identity development. Students are seen as active creators of intellect and justice rather than passive recipients of crises that require coping skills. As SA practitioners, we have the ability to encourage students to hone in on their intellectual assets and energies.

Conclusion: Facilitating College Student Development as a Social Reconstructionist Practitioner

The first responsibility we must uphold as SA practitioners who are practicing a social-reconstructionist ideology is to identify where our students are at in their identity development. Sanford (1962) writes:

Whatever the stage of readiness in the personality, further development will not occur until stimuli arrive to upset the existing equilibrium and require fresh adaptation. What the state of readiness means most essentially is that the individual is now open to new kinds of stimuli and prepared to deal with them in an adaptive way. (p. 258)

SA practitioners must understand the identity development theories that serve as a framework of our profession, but more importantly, we must understand them in a critical way. Whether we are in academic advising, orientation programming, admissions, multicultural offices, or student organization and leadership centers, we need to be able to identify when a student is ready to explore new stimuli and understandings of the self. It is in these transformative moments that we can plant the seeds of reconstructive ideologies as students adjust and adapt to their new identities and thought processes.

Practitioners also need to understand the current status of public education within American society. "As neoliberalism spreads its ideology, power, and influence over all aspects of society, there is a growing dislike for all things social, public, and collective" (Giroux, 2001, p. 1). We need to be honest with what we are up against. Not only does hegemony dictate the lives of our students before they arrive on campus, but also it is dictating much of how educational public institutions function. We must be willing to serve as allies and advocates for our students by forming necessary collaborations.

Collaborating with faculty is one of the most essential connections we can make to preserve the critical state of public universities, and collaboration also serves to drastically benefit our students. We

need to live by example, showing students that community ownership and asset building can be successful and that they serve to benefit the self more than individualistic ideologies ever can.

Students are more powerful than the foundation of our profession gives them credit. For example, the case study at Sagebrush University proves that students are capable of running their own communities.

Sagebrush's women's center was still a volunteer project run by a student organization in the early 1990s. Ultimately students ran this women's center on \$1,500.00 a year and their own volunteer labor for 17 years. Other universities in the state system had long since created funded and professionally staffed women's centers. (Arthur, 2011, p. 101)

Students are capable of being successful without the help of faculty or staff. They are capable of identifying community needs, organizing community members, and serving the needs of their communities just as non-profits do. We need to be able to aid students in fostering the assets and strengths that already exist. They are more than capable of doing so on their own, but as community leaders on public campuses who can contribute to students' intellectual understanding of their efforts, we have a responsibility to foster some of the more challenging aspects of justice work that are constantly challenged by neoliberal ideologies.

Few commentators on movements within colleges and universities have seriously considered the role that non-student members of college and university communities may play in contentious politics. Many instances of contentious politics involve the coordinated action of students, faculty, and or staff. (Arthur, 2011, p. 6)

This is an example of what Saltman (2006) calls the "progressive tradition." He writes "the progressive tradition understands democracy as dynamic rather than static, as shot through with multiple power struggles, and as a quest and process rather than an achieved state that must be fixed, held, and protected from corruption" (p. 7). The progressive tradition, much like identity development, is fluid and

constantly changing and needs to be taught as such. Neither identity development nor the progressive tradition are things to be achieved; rather they are a way of life and need to be taught as such by practitioners. Democratic engagement and identity development are not topics or issues that need to be “coped” with or understood as “crises” because they are not clear-cut. It is our responsibility as practitioners to allow students to discover that intellectual engagement is messy and experiential and that it requires people to connect with each other in order to enhance the betterment of society. While these values may challenge the founding fathers and documents of our profession, we need to remain critical of the profession and our roles in promoting oppressive ideologies.

Limitations

Three major limitations need to be highlighted for this paper. The student development theories that were covered were not exhaustive; I recognize that theories in themselves are subjective and can be interpreted in many ways, and also that there are several departments, services, and programs that fall under the umbrella of student affairs, all of which can interpret college student development theories differently depending on the student population served and mission of the program or department.

Chickering (1969, 1981) was the only theorist highlighted in a dense manner in this paper and was chosen because his theory is taught as a foundation to the profession, as well as because his theory was covered extensively in my coursework covering the field of student affairs at a major Midwestern university. Chickering’s theory is in no way representative of each and every student development theory used in student affairs. This paper simply serves as an example of the potentially oppressive ways in which practitioners can use theory to harm students without realizing it.

Theories are tremendously subjective and thus readers must recognize that the interpretations made by the author of this work reflect the personal opinions and critical examinations of the author

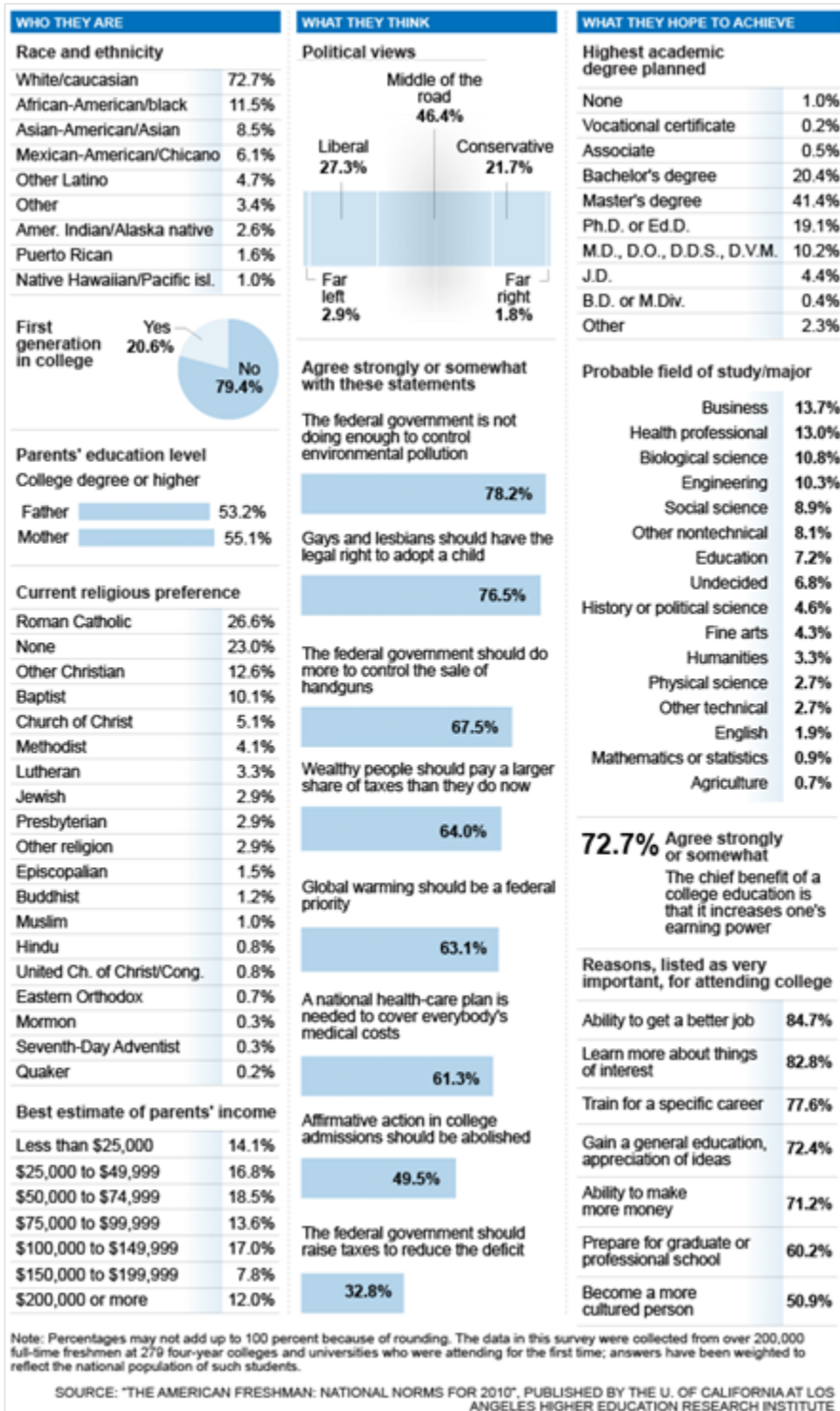
alone. While truth can be found in subjective matter, it is integral that readers recognize that truth in itself is subjective and thus encourages readers to develop their own sense of critical reflection in order to come to a personal sense of understanding.

It would be unwise to ignore that student affairs divisions on traditional college campuses take on many shapes and forms, including but not limited to women's centers, leadership offices, international student services, residential education, recreational sports programs, LGBT campus centers, offices of civic engagement, alumni departments, retention programs, multicultural student services, and involvement programs. Chickering's theory may be used in a way that is different from another department or not used at all by practitioners. This speaks to the ways in which theory can serve to define the ways in which we interact with our students, but it also shows that theory can play an absent role as well. Therefore, it is important to note that while college student development theory in itself is completely subjective, the ways in which it is utilized on college campuses are subjective as well.

In this paper I have provided an overview of the critical literature that examines Chickering and college student development in general. I have provided a methodological lens through which Chickering can be examined using a social reconstructionist perspective and provided examples of how our peers have already been asking questions that reveal who has power on college campuses and why. I challenge readers to embrace a critical perspective of their practice and look for ways to rejuvenate the existing programs, services, and philosophies in their department. Oftentimes we are encouraged to add on to the responsibilities we already have in order to be seen as dynamic or inclusive. This practice is not sustainable. Embrace the positive aspects of the work you do now and connect with allies who will help in re-envisioning what your work could achieve with tweaks and turns. Use tools that already serve to support our work. Theory is as powerful when used correctly as it is detrimental when used incorrectly.

Engage with professional development outside your typical outlets. Look for theorists who are in the process of challenging the status quo and support them. Foster the critical community that has already formed in the field of student affairs and advocate for their presence at National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and American College Personnel Association events. Participate in the change that our field so desperately needs to embrace and help us move forward with our own developmental crisis.

Appendix 1. The American Freshman: National Norms for 2010



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