CATCHING A NEW WAVE?: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF RACIAL
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT THEORY

by

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I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend
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ABSTRACT

Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) graduate programs use outdated identity

development models from a primary source (Patton et al., 2016) to teach racial identity

development to HESA graduate students and new professionals. Situated in a

constructivist paradigm and influenced by the field of psychology, these theories promote

life span, stage model approaches to identity which focus more on individuals than

context. HESA faculty often teach these courses in the same manner in which they were

taught (Harris, 2020), reproducing discourses in the field. Using a Critical Discourse

Analysis (CDA) methodology, this study sought to determine what discourses were

reproduced, how they contributed to upholding racial inequity, and how mixed-race

identity development models may complicate these discourses. The findings showed that

HESA syllabi need refreshing, the theories lack context, and Black, Indigenous, People

Of Color (BIPOC) development models lack agency. As a result HESA faculty should

use more critical and poststructural theory and engage in further research to examine how

a multiracial lens can complicate understandings of race, agency, and authenticity.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

I grew up in a small town named Spirit Lake, Iowa. My high school had roughly 400 students, and 99 percent of them were white. Despite being a light-skinned biracial Black girl, I was the darkest person in my school, and I was treated as Black. I remember my first day of elementary school in Spirit Lake very clearly because of all the stares and absurd questions like if the white woman who dropped me off was really my mom. I rode the bus to school after that, and the students chanted, "KKK! KKK!" every morning when I took my seat. After time, people in Spirit Lake got used to me, and the gossip around me and my family became much more interesting than my race. Still, I never questioned that I was "the Black girl" in school.

It came as a complete shock to me when I went to college and got called white for the first time by a group of Women of Color. For the first time in my life, I had to grapple with my white identity and the role of whiteness in my life. Years later I moved to Florida where I was perceived as a Spanish-speaking Latina everywhere I went. Even though this was not my identity, I found myself responding to stereotypes and discrimination through this lens because of others' perception. This is when I began to think about the agency, or lack thereof, I had my entire life trying to articulate my racial identity to others. The level of autonomy varied depending on many factors in my environment, but I never had a framework or language to describe my experience.

After college I started work as an admissions counselor at a for-profit institution. The functions of the role were similar to a telemarketer, but it provided me with exposure to higher education and patterns of student behavior. We talked about students based on their social identities, first-generation status, proficiency in English, and socioeconomic

status. We were trained to identify factors of students' behavior and identities that would

make them more or less successful in our programs and enroll them based on these

projections. Admissions work, particularly at a for-profit institution, was not sustainable

work for me, but I developed a desire to learn more about underrepresented and

underserved students. After several informational interviews with former supervisors, I

discovered the field of student affairs and decided to attend graduate school.

Student affairs is a broad and diverse field within higher education that aims to

support the holistic development of college students. According to the Council for the

Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) (2019), the field has 48 functional

areas which all have recommended standards for practice, including standards for:

assessment, human resources, communication and collaboration, financial resources, and

more. In addition to CAS, there are many other professional organizations related to

student affairs work and education. One such organization is Student Affairs

Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA, n.d.), and their directory of graduate

programs includes more than 400 programs focused on student affairs.

When I started my journey as a graduate student in Higher Education and Student

Affairs (HESA), the first class I took was student development theory. Our professor

required one book for our course by Evans et al. (2010), which included foundational

student development theories related to cognitive, moral, and social development. We

spent the semester reading theories, applying them to ourselves through a "My Story"

project, and then discussing how we could apply the theories to our students. HESA

graduate programs across the country require a course in college student development

theory that educates future professionals on a core set of theories (Patton et al., 2016).

Patton et al. (2016) define student development theory "as a collection of theories related to college students that explain how they grow and develop holistically, with increased complexity, while enrolled in a postsecondary educational environment" (p. 23). Most of these theories situate themselves in positivist and constructivist paradigms which fail to account for the social and environmental factors that influence identity and development, are decades old, use data collected from predominately privileged identities, and depend on narrowly defined social identities.

Additionally, some HESA programs teach students to use theory to diagnose and categorize students with whom we work. I draw this conclusion from informed assumptions based on my years in the field working with professionals in admissions, housing, and multicultural affairs who studied in a variety of HESA programs including private, public, and Research I universities across the United States. This practice leads to monolithic, essentialized understandings of students in relationship to their identities, specifically, and places all the onus on individuals to progress through developmental stages to reach an ideal or final stage. DeLamater and Hyde (1998) described essentialism as "a belief that certain phenomena are natural, inevitable, universal, and biologically determined (p.10). In a study on the difference between sexuality research using essentialism compared to social construction, DeLamater and Hyde (1998) concluded "there can be no true conjoining of essentialism and social constructionism" (p. 10).

Using a theory to practice approach, student affairs practitioners and scholars use monolithic, essentialized frameworks to develop programming, curriculum, and services for students that prioritize helping students progress to more developed stages and celebrate those who are further along in their development. The stages of development,

and the idea of development itself, are situated in dominant or normative understandings of identities. In *Rethinking College Student Development Theory Using Critical Frameworks* by Abes et al. (2019), the authors described how hegemony, or "normative expectations and conditions of life" (p. xii), shaped understandings of "masculinities, race, heterosexuality, and gender (and their intersections)… [and] framed early student development theories" (p. xiii). In traditional student development theory courses, student affairs practitioners and scholars are taught that racial identity development takes place in linear stages over the span of one's lifetime (Patton et al., 2016). However, is it possible that these shifts in racial identity are not so linear, developmental, and stage dependent, but instead are more context dependent and happening continually within the course of our daily lives?

For example, how I express and relate to my racial identity changes when I go from visiting my mom in Spirit Lake, Iowa, which is overwhelmingly white, to my home located in a historically Black neighborhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Similarly, what might the developmental impact be on an undocumented student when they read a tweet from the President of the United States about building a wall? How does their understanding and performance of their race shift when they visit the institution's cultural center to talk about the tweet compared to a discussion in their predominately white political science class?

Linear development models cannot help us understand the fluid nature, the constant back and forth, of identity development as contexts shift and change. Abes et al. (2019) addressed this disconnect by prioritizing and centering the experiences of marginalized students. By using critical and poststructural theoretical frameworks and

moving away from hegemonic constructions of identity, the authors provided a pathway

for new theories to emerge. My time as a graduate student predated their text, so it took

most of the semester before I finally saw myself in a theory via Renn's Ecological

Mixed-Race Identity Development Theory (Patton et al., 2016). The theory provided five

patterns of identity for mixed-race individuals, including *situational identity* or a "fluid

and contextually driven" racial identity (Patton et al., 2016, p. 119).

The characteristic I appreciated most about Renn's theory was the way it allowed

for the possibility of a discomfort and fluidity with one's racial identity as well as the

experience of a lack of control or agency in how one gets racially identified by others. As

a light-skinned, mixed-race Black and white woman, I am often incorrectly racialized or

denied the ability to name my own identity. Omi and Winant (2014) define racialization

as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified social

relationship, social practice or group" (p.111). Acknowledging this definition in HESA

literature is an important step for theory to account for minoritized experiences, and it is

also imperative for reclaiming agency in racialization.

Okello (2018) wrote how moving from self-authorship to self-definition may help

increase agency for marginalized students who work to "release themselves from the

expectations of hegemonic ideology and continuously bout with controlling images" (p.

541). Using a Black feminist perspective that aligns with the critical and poststructural

theories discussed later in the literature review, Okello (2018) wrote, "Agency does not

assume the possession of sociopolitical capital; rather it is the capacity to act upon the

world and not just give personal intersubjective meaning to it" (p. 539). In other words,

folks with dominant identities who fit into hegemonic notions of those identity categories

(such as white people and the category of race) have more authority to navigate the world

and be celebrated. Okello (2018) compared the ongoing process of self-defining to a

spring responsive to the weight or forces pressed against it. Unlike stage-based models of

development, self-defining is continuous, nuanced, and has no end point. Like Okello's

(2018) theory, Renn's theory (2004) opened a gateway for me to imagine theory that

could capture the social, political, temporal, and complex nature of identity development.

This situational and contextualized nature of racial identity is at the heart of my

research interests. I aim to conceptualize a more comprehensive model for racial identity

development that can apply across race and time in a multi-directional continuum, rather

than a staged-based model with a finish line. My working model borrows yet expands the

idea of a *situational identity* as presented in Renn's Ecological Theory of Mixed-Race

Identity Development (2004), which focused on mixed-race individuals, to include

people from all racial backgrounds. I want to build a theoretical explanation that better

captures the experience of having a fluid, contextual salience with one's racial identity,

which I believe all people have to some extent. The degree to which individuals

experience fluidity is likely connected to phenotype, with more ambiguous individuals

having more fluidity. I intend to identify the relevance and meaning of agency in the

process of forming a racial identity.

The first step to explore the degree to which people from all racial backgrounds

relate to a situational model is to examine existing theory and how it is complicated by

concepts borrowed from mixed-race identity development theory. Using critical discourse

analysis, I plan to focus on Helms (1995), Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001), and Renn

(2004) to explore the meaning-making which takes place in racial identity development

theories and how this contributes to a broader discourse on race in higher education.

Specifically, how do theories contend with constricted social definitions of race that may

not always feel in alignment with individual identities or current social context? This

process is not fully addressed in prior research on racial identity development. My study

addresses this meaning-making process in a new way using critical discourse analysis to

understand the complexity of the discourse on race in HESA graduate programs, how it

impacts the work of HESA professionals, and how it affects individual development. In

the next chapter, I provide a review of the literature on student development theory in

higher education and its relevance to racial identity development.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the first chapter, I explained how my own identity and experience with race led me to consider racial identity development differently than existing models allowed. I identified a lack of context and complexity in student development theory and its application as the problem addressed by my research. Specifically, my research approaches the problem in a new way using critical discourse analysis. In this chapter, I present an overview of existing literature which informed the development of my conceptual framework. I begin with an overview of student development theory, then discuss the relevance and importance of mixed-race identity development, and conclude with the destabilization of race. I use these concepts to complicate racialization by employing multiracial thinking to monoracial identities as well, challenging our understanding of race as fixed or stable. I close the chapter by outlining my conceptual framework and research questions.

Waves of Theory

In *Diverse and Critical Perspectives on Student Development Theory: New Directions for Student Services* edited by Abes (2016), Jones and Stewart (2016) provided a progression of college student development theory based on "waves" of theory and paradigms. The first wave focused on psychological and developmental theory situated in a positivist paradigm. Guided by an early calling in the HESA field to champion holistic student development, these theories sought to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the college student in developmental terms? What changes occur and what do those changes look like?

2. How does development occur? What are the psychological and social

processes that cause development?

3. How can the college environment influence student development? What

factors in the particular environment of a college/university can either

encourage or inhibit growth?

4. Toward what end should development in college be directed? (Knefelkamp,

Widick, & Parker, 1978, as cited in Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 18-19).

The questions presented above continue to inform student development theory, and the

distinction between waves of theory is how researchers think about and respond to these

questions in their theorizing (Jones & Stewart, 2016). For first wave theorists, this meant

seeking Truth through quantitative methods and mostly homogenous samples of wealthy

white men. As more students gained access to higher education, the second wave of

theory emerged.

In an effort to gain more understanding of the experiences of more diverse student

populations, the second wave introduced a constructivist paradigm and social identity

theories (Jones & Stewart, 2016). This wave brought foundational racial identity

development theories from psychologists still taught in HESA programs today. While

still very focused on individual student development, the theories in the second wave

answered the questions presented earlier through examination of the psychological and

cognitive development of identity groups. Abes (2016) wrote, "Theories directed to the

development of nondominant populations […] are typically grounded in psychological

perspectives and, therefore, foreground students' individual experiences rather than the

systems of oppression […] that shape their experiences" (p. 9). Specifically, these

theories, "did not analyze privileged identities…reinforc[ing] their "normalcy"" (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 21). Despite incorporating the social construction of identity and social context into theory, second wave theorists did not explicitly address dominance in a systemic way. In other words, the theories did not contend with the role played by systems of domination acting on individuals to shape their identity construction and influence their identity-relevant experiences. This need gave way for the third wave of theory.

The third wave, or current wave, uses critical and poststructural paradigms to examine systems and environments. Abes (2016) wrote, "The underlying assumption of critical perspectives is that power and systems of oppression shape reality" (p. 12). Despite its more recent popularity in HESA literature, critical and poststructural theory are not new and widely celebrated in other fields like queer theory and feminist theory. Critical theory developed from sociology as a way to explain how power determines positionality in society (Abes, 2016). A prominent form of critical theory used in education is critical race theory (CRT) which started in legal studies and led to other critical theories like LatCrit, TribalCrit, BlackCrit, and AsianCrit among others (Abes, 2016). Poststructural theory takes critical theory one step further.

Poststructuralists believe "that systems of oppression shape reality, the ways in which these systems shape reality need to be deconstructed, and reality is always changing and defies categorization" (Abes, 2016, p. 13). In other words, these theorists challenge conceptions of "normal" and identify ways that power is upheld through language by institutions like education. This collection of language, or discourse, "determines the possibilities for how identity is constructed and recognized by others. A

poststructural analysis deconstructs these discourses to create new possibilities for

identity constructions that are not shackled by power" (Abes, 2016, p. 13). While critical

and poststructural paradigms can be difficult to understand and apply, Jones and Stewart

(2016) clearly outlined the contribution these theories made to the third wave of student

development theory.

According to Jones and Stewart (2016), the third wave "reconsiders three

elements: the role of context, intersectionality, and acknowledgement of individual

agency" (p. 24). Critical theory contributed to the inclusion of context and

intersectionality while poststructural theory challenged thoughts on individual agency in

identity development. This wave also "challenge[s] tacit assumptions about the nature of

identity and social relations by situating social identities as products of inequitable power

structures instead of as inherent and natural" (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 21). In other

words, the theories included in this category help practitioners and scholars "resist talking

about identity as something that develops at all" (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 22) and

understand the way systems of oppression influence identity formation. As Abes (2016)

wrote this wave, "[situates] the problem to be fixed within these systems rather than the

student" (p. 14).

The first and second wave theories are often used to diagnose and categorize

students by HESA practitioners and scholars leading to monolithic, essentialized

understandings of students in relationship to their identities. The application of first and

second wave theories places all the onus on individuals to progress through

developmental stages to reach an ideal stage and/or consistency in identity. Third wave

theory is more useful in understanding the role context plays in identity formation and

recognizes the need for inconsistency or fluidity in how identity is articulated or enacted.

Jones and Stewart (2016) provided this example:

> …an individual may first express a lesbian sexual identity to reconcile awareness
> of same-sex attractions and desires with feeling more at ease with masculinity in a
> context that does not recognize or validate nonbinary gender identities. In a
> different context, where nonbinary gender identities are affirmed, this individual
> may redefine both their sexual and gender identities in ways that allow for more
> possibilities than were first recognized such as not limiting sexual attraction to sex
> or gender (pansexual) and identifying as transgender (not conforming to binary
> male– female gender identity). (p. 22).

This example demonstrates the importance of context and an individual's ability to make
meaning of their identity and experience in a dynamic, changing environment.

First and second wave theory rely on "constructivist developmentalism," or the
idea that individuals develop in community with others in ways that are increasingly
complex and can articulate this development to others. Third wave theory centers power
and acknowledges the many ways oppression and internalized forms of dominance
prevent people from fully perceiving their experience (Jones & Stewart, 2016). As
previously noted, critical and poststructural theories challenge our thinking on identity as
something that develops at all. However, these theories also question the way socially
constructed identities uphold power structures. Jones and Stewart (2016) wrote, "For
instance, to develop a model of racial identity development is to accept race as a
meaningful and appropriate locus of identity, and thus fails to recognize that the very idea
of race was constructed to enforce White supremacy" (p. 22).

The text used in most HESA programs, Patton et al. (2016), includes some critical work that names systems of oppression, but the theories utilized are primarily rooted in the individual, stage-like development of students. This is particularly true in cognitive development theories like Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development, moral development theories like Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, psychosocial theories like Erickson's Identity Development, and social identity development theories like Helms's Model of White Identity Development (Patton et al., 2016). While there is utility in models with clear application, the risk is incorrectly placing students in these stages and assigning lower value and ability to students we perceive to be "less developed."

For example, the first stage in Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) model for Black identity development is pre-encounter which describes Black individuals with "low race salience" and "internalized racism" (Patton et al., 2016). A Black student may demonstrate internalized racism, or the acceptance of dominate racist stereotypes, in a meeting with their academic advisor by claiming they do not want to take science courses because Black people cannot be doctors. The advisor could apply theory by labeling this student in stage one of their racial identity development without having the full picture. The advisor may believe the student is not developmentally ready for a scientific major. Should this one instance of internalized racism determine the student's identity? The student could leave the office and spend the rest of the day exhibiting attitudes and behaviors that more closely align with later stages of Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) model, but because the academic advisor did not see this behavior, their approach is based on diagnosing the student as less developed.

If the advisor employed a critical lens, they may have engaged the student on systemic barriers or institutional discourses that led them to feel like a career in medicine was not possible for Black people. This approach would illuminate a "more developed" racial identity for this student. Would this prompt the academic advisor to seek out solutions to overcome the institutional barriers for this student rather than situating the problem within the student? What types of interventions or programs might be developed when engaging students through this lens?

How do we avoid these risks? Nicolazzo (2016, March 19) suggested a break may be needed from student development theory because:

1. Much of student development theory is based on colonial, Western, individualistic perspectives; 2. Much of student development theory projects one monolithic understanding of populations and communities that have far more intra-group diversity; 3. Much student development theory is still rooted in positivistic and constructivist paradigms, which, as a result, means that 4. Much student development theory does not adequately account for how interlocking systems of oppression and privilege mediate the lives and environments of students, faculty, and staff.

However, a break may not be necessary with waves of new theorists emerging who address some of the gaps created by the first two waves of college student development theory. These new theories operate from critical and poststructural paradigms, focus on marginalized populations, and resist reducing the experiences of these populations to monolithic conclusions by engaging in an intersectional approach to their participants and data. Nicolazzo (2016, March 19) acknowledged that throwing theory out is not the

solution, and her student development course, which does not use the Patton et al. (2016)

text and focuses primarily on third wave theory written in the last five years, is a great

example of how faculty can give more attention to emerging theories. The next section of

this literature review provides a summary of these theories and their contributions.

Theory written in the last five years was developed by collecting data from

students who better reflect the racial demographics of our growing student of color

population on campus and uses critical and poststructural lenses to analyze and deliver

the results. According to Jones and Stewart (2016), "…when theories are created through

a critical lens, the possibilities for healing, liberation, and radical social change are

revealed" (p. 17). This approach humanizes minoritized people, honors multiple ways of

knowing, and questions how we come to know what we know. As Okello (2018) wrote,

"Part of challenging White/Eurocentric paradigms […]is naming restrictive theoretical

underpinnings and working to decolonize them" (p. 529). This collection of new theories

does this by taking early theories on topics like Black identity, gender identity, mixed-

race identity, etc. and addressing existing gaps either explicitly or implicitly.

One of the benefits Patton et al. (2016) identified in early stage-based models of

development is the utility of these models when trying to serve students because they

"serve as the rationale for specific programs and services" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 24).

However, contemporary theorists like Johnston-Guerrero call for HESA practitioners and

scholars to accept the ambiguity in models and definitions that validate the experiences of

minoritized students. Otherwise, one ends up with models that might seem effective yet

function in prescriptive ways that center the experiences of white students. Johnston-

Guerrero (2016) wrote, "not considering diverse perspectives on race and ethnicity

contributes to white supremacist notions that normalize whiteness and homogenize and

essentialize Communities of Color" (p. 47). Jourian (2015) and Johnston et al. (2014)

also leaned into ambiguity by naming gender and racial identity, respectively, as fluid

identity categories constantly being ascribed and negotiated through external forces.

These authors challenged early theory by destabilizing identity categories while

others (Robbins & McGowan, 2016; Stapleton, 2015; & Stewart, 2015) applied the

concept of intersectionality to disrupt monolithic definitions of identity groups. All of

these examples are a departure from social identity development theories in Patton et al.

(2016) which study groups or identities in isolation. This understanding of development

manifests as a one-size-fits-all approach to supporting students, which neglects to account

for the needs of some of our most vulnerable students who are marginalized on multiple

levels at our institutions. Taking a more nuanced approach to an understanding of

development and identity comes directly from critical and poststructural paradigms found

in the third wave.

Constructing these new theories required theorists to imagine something not yet

created and articulate information known viscerally by minoritized people. Okello (2018)

described this as self-definition, "a process: a deliberate warring of deconstruction and

reconstruction" (p. 538) that is necessary to reclaim agency and affirm non-Western ways

of knowing. There are five tenets to self-definition: "(a) validating and integrating

standpoint knowledge of minoritized bodies; (b) prioritizing self-love; (c) emphasizing

agency in a matrix of domination; (d) foregrounding identity as performative; (e) and

dreaming and imagining futures not yet known" (Okello, 2018, p. 538). The concept of

self-definition is deeply liberating to me because it locates identity as a performance and

politic situated outside the individual.

Identity as performance can be found in poststructural theories like queer and

Black feminist theory (Abes, 2016). According to Abes (2016), "Identity does not create

behaviors, but instead socialization and behaviors create identity" (p. 14). Okello (2018)

insisted that to participate in self-definition we must be innovators and creators. He

wrote:

> It is in consciousness that [minoritized bodies] depart from conventionality and
>
> achieve a different standard for living, predicated on self-definition.
>
> Consciousness, as it relates to self-definition, is a questioning and embodied
>
> critique of dominant paradigms. Built on the legacy of Black women intellectuals,
>
> it is a posture that refuses to be hemmed in by exclusionary norms. It (re)presents
>
> a multifaceted self that is socially and politically located and signals a shift in
>
> thinking about history, power, and liberation (Okello, 2018, pp. 538-539).

This rejection of societal norms and discourses steeped in white supremacy, sexism,

heteronormativity, and other forms of power is an excellent location to begin dreaming of

what the fourth wave of theory can and should look like. Mixed-race identity theory

offers considerations for how we complicate normative, monoracial understandings of

race and racial identity development.

Mixed-Race Theory

Renn (2004) identified five different "identity patterns" for mixed-race

individuals derived from data collected in individual interviews, focus groups, and

written reflection; however, the interview specifically prompted students to think about

racial identity using the question "How do you describe yourself?" (Renn, 2004, appendix C). The patterns are: monoracial (claiming one racial category), multiple monoracial (claiming multiple racial categories), multiracial (claiming mixed, biracial, or multiracial identity), extraracial (not using racial categories), and situational (claiming various identities based on context) (Renn, 2004). Here I focus on extraracial and situational identity because of their fluid and unconventional properties. About 25 percent of Renn's (2004) participants either opted out of racial categorization or did not adhere to U.S.-specific categories, which Renn labeled extraracial. This decision was influenced by either international upbringing or the understanding of race as a social construction—meaning rather than based in biology, racial identity is a product of historical social, political, and economic factors (Omi & Winant, 2014).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), people create shared meanings through a process called "habitualization" where repeated behaviors become patterns or habits that get repeated and cemented through social interactions. By learning and performing these behaviors or roles with each other over time, these habits become institutionalized (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Participants who selected extraracial identity may have been rejecting the social construction of race as an internal or personal identity. However, none of them chose to solely identify this way which, according to Renn, suggests "holding such an approach to racial identity is a difficult stance to maintain in the face of powerful forces on campuses that are organized in part around racial identities" (Renn, 2004, p. 78). Certainly, the same challenge can be extrapolated to larger social organizational structures that rely on race.

Many participants (61 percent), either intentionally or unconsciously, identified differently depending on the contexts and settings they were in, and Renn (2004) placed these participants in the situational identity pattern. Renn (2004) took an asset-centered approach and suggested that, "the ability to read contexts and construct identity in relation to specific contexts is a highly evolved skill requiring emotional maturity and cognitive complexity" (p. 80). This identity pattern incorporates the daily shifts in identity that cannot be represented in stage models like those discussed from Patton et al. (2016). Prior models in first and second wave theory rely on universal assumptions about identity borrowed from psychology which assume a progression of identity through stages, which fails to holistically account for sociological perspectives on the influence of context and interaction in identity development (Omi & Winant, 2014). I would like to push theory further by engaging in more poststructural theorizing that not only accounts for context but challenges how an investment in racial identity re/produces power inequities in HESA and beyond.

This theory is specifically written for mixed-race students, but I believe there are lessons in the theory about the importance of context on the degree of agency individuals of all races have to engage in self-definition (Okello, 2018). The findings from Renn's (2004) theory allow researchers to ask questions about the practicality of racial identity as a life span model that gradually develops over time. If identity does not necessarily develop through stages, but rather constantly shifts with contexts and conditions, then what are the everyday conditions that cause individuals to renegotiate and reconstruct their identities? In what types of situations does lack of agency constrain the possibilities of self-definition for people of color? These questions could not emerge from first and

second wave theory, but third wave theory makes them possible because of its focus on social contexts. The problem is, despite developments in third wave theory, most HESA practitioners and scholars still lead from first and second wave theories resulting in reduced time spent reflecting on the critical questions posed above both in graduate programs and in practice.

Destabilizing Racial Categories and Stereotypes

One issue revealed through Johnston-Guerrero's (2016) work is that social constructs like race and ethnicity have been diluted to the point of being indistinguishable in the literature. He found that "44% of 261 empirical articles using racial constructs conflated racial and ethnic terminology" (p. 45). One wonders how effective our HESA courses and texts are if practitioners and scholars struggle to separate racial and ethnic identities. Johnston-Guerrero (2016) clarifies the two by referring to race as an externally dictated identity based on societal norms around racialization (phenotype) whereas ethnicity is internally claimed based on language, heritage, and other forms of culture.

Despite this critique, Johnston-Guerrero (2016) named the difficulty in separating race and ethnicity in daily practice calling the process messy. By acknowledging this difficulty, Johnston-Guerrero (2016) wrote educators can understand the complexities in how both race and ethnicity influence students. The call to "embrace the messiness" invites readers and researchers to resist narratives assigned to groups of people and listen to the messy and varied experiences within seemingly homogenous groups (Johnston-Guerrero, 2016). Essentialized definitions of racial identity strip agency from individuals and prop up white supremacy by "norming" whiteness and masking nuanced and violent

forms of oppression that individuals experience at the intersection of multiple minoritized identities.

Johnston-Guerrero (2016) used the example of disaggregating Asian (race) into various ethnic groups. While there may be similarities, there are distinct, important differences between Chinese, Hmong, and Filipino communities. Lumping these groups into an Asian racial category masks important forms of oppression Hmong individuals experience that Chinese individuals do not, for example. Furthermore, Johnston-Guerrero (2016) noted that "the racist homogenization of Communities of Color can be tackled" when an intersectional analysis of race and ethnicity is engaged. Here is where questions like, "How do we know what we know?" and "Who can say what it really means to be [insert race here] in this country?" become possible. The presentation of an external identity in competition or tension with an internal identity and incongruence in how these identities are defined by scholars challenges the notion that these categories are stable.

Once again, third wave theory created space for imagination and curiosity. It seems appropriate to discuss the importance of poststructural theory at this point because of the emphasis Johnston-Guerrero (2016) placed on diversifying perspectives on social definitions of identity to resist and dismantle white supremacy. Okello (2018) wrote, "a fully human body is not easily exploited" (p. 541). If self-definition is a process that moves individuals closer to humanity, then theorists must consider its tenets when developing student development theory. For better or worse, HESA faculty and students look to theory for healing, and we have a responsibility to reduce the exploitation of our most vulnerable people by engaging in research, teaching, and practice that supports self-definition.

Based on Harris's (2017) findings, a misalignment between an individual's actions and their self-definition is possible. Harris (2017) revealed the way expression of racial identity gets circumscribed by stereotype threat, or "the threat of being negatively stereotyped due to one's racial group membership and the ensuing fear that comes from unintentionally confirming the stereotype" (p. 478). They described racial stereotypes as mechanisms which sustain racism and white privilege and "lead people to false understandings of how certain racial groups should behave, look, and exist within US society" (Harris, 2017, p. 475). If we understand individual action to be constrained by forces like stereotype threat, then understanding internal thinking and processes of meaning making related to racial identity requires an ability to distinguish the action from thought. Is it possible that HESA practitioners and researchers are making determinations about students based on the actions of individuals while failing to account for their internal narratives? This theorizing highlights the performative nature of identity which contradicts first and second wave theories that conceptualize identity development as an individual, psychological process.

One of the key themes from the study was the influence of internalized racism on individual action (Harris, 2017). Racial stereotypes increase the prevalence of internalized racism, and more narratives, theories, studies, etc. that expose these stereotypes as false will reduce the friction between internal and external identity. Harris (2017) tasks HESA practitioners and scholars with self-work, which "includes reading literature on race, racism, and intersectional identities that stem from disciplines outside of higher education, such as Sociology, Critical Legal Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Women Studies" (p. 488). It is worth noting that these disciplines also use critical and

poststructural paradigms in their literature, and Harris (2017) explicitly names the use of

a critical paradigm as an "opportunity" for researchers to study issues of identity at a

systemic level (p. 489).

Conceptual Framework

The research on identity development is extensive, and, in the field of higher

education, there are many prominent racial identity development theories. In the literature

review, I provided a brief overview of the evolution of identity development theory,

which included an explanation of the three waves of theory. The third wave, or most

recent wave, utilizes critical and poststructural paradigms to explore identity

development. These theories inform my study by providing evidence that identity

development is driven by external factors and sociological definitions that may not align

with individuals' internal understanding of their racial identity. They also demonstrate the

importance of agency and performance as key aspects of individual development that

have been relatively neglected in prior theorizing about racial identity.

My study will explore how first and second wave theories contribute to a broader

discourse on racial identity in HESA programs, interrogate if and how the discourse

reproduces power inequities, and consider how mixed-race identity development can

refine our understanding of how individuals engage with their racial identity. These

inquiries are informed by my own experience as a mixed-race woman and some

exploratory research. In the next section of this paper, I expand on how my conceptual

framework formed in early stages of this research. First, I discuss my experience and

exploratory research. Next, I outline key components in my conceptual framework.

Finally, I discuss how my current theory led to the development of my research

questions.

Experiential Knowledge and Exploratory Research
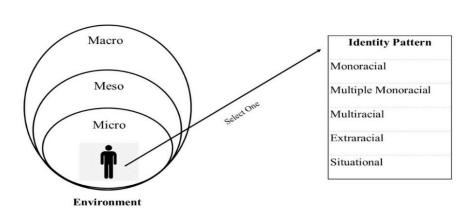
As a mixed-race, phenotypically-ambiguous individual, I identify with Renn's

(2004) situational identity pattern, which describes an individual whose racial identity

shifts based on context (people, place, relationships, etc.). In fact, every mixed-race

person I have spoken to in my family, friend, or professional circles identifies this way. I

began to wonder if Renn's theory (Figure 1) would have been more applicable to the

lived experiences of mixed-race if it was a Situational Mixed-Race Identity Development

theory (Figure 2) with four fluid identity patterns: monoracial, multiple monoracial,

multiracial, and extraracial instead of an ecological model with five somewhat distinct

patterns. Renn's theory offers situational identity as just one option among five for how a

mixed-race individual might identify rather than as an over-arching lens for

understanding mixed-race identity generally.

In Figure 1, which is my visual interpretation of Renn's (2004) theory, the person

is situated within their environment which contains micro, meso, and macro-

environments. Based on political, demographic, familial, or other factors in these

environments, the individual selects one of the five identity patterns located on the right

side of the figure. As these environments change or evolve over one's life, their selection

may change. Figure 2, which is a representation of my thinking on situational mixed-race

identity, shows the person situated in the center of four orbiting identities. The inspiration

for these orbits came from a conversation with my advisor and recollection of the Model

of Multiple Dimensions of Identity by Jones and McEwen (2000) described in Patton et
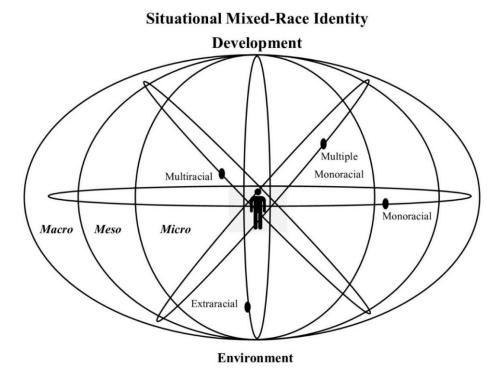
al. (2016). These orbits are constantly in motion and impacted by context and

environment. As the identity gains salience for the individual, it draws closer to the

center. This thinking led me to question if there were other racial groups, including

monoracial people, who experienced contextual or situational fluidity with their race and

if limited agency played a role.

Figure 1: Renn's Ecological Mixed-Race Identity Development Theory (2004)

Figure 2: Situational Mixed-Race Identity Development

Situational Mixed-Race Identity Development

One example of how this might be taking place for monoracial people relates to what I gleaned from an exploratory pilot interview with a white friend, in which I began to see the distinction of whiteness or race as a systemic or sociohistorical phenomenon as opposed to merely a personal identity. My participant struggled to talk about his own associations with being a white person and spoke at length about the history of whiteness or historical white figures. While he could identify himself abstractly as white, he was unable to articulate what that really meant for him. This signals to me that there are extraracial identity components operating for an identity category that Renn presumes to be monoracial. I think this is an interesting concept to continue to explore.

Renn (2004) described *extraracial* identity as an individual who does not opt into racialization or uses categories outside the context of the United States to describe their identity. This identity was not selected by many of Renn's participants, and all

participants who selected extraracial also selected another racial identity (Renn, 2004).

Renn's (2004) theory was specifically for mixed-race individuals, but the way the

participant disconnected whiteness from a personal identity relates to an extraracial

identity here that could point to a situational experience for this participant. As

demonstrated in Figures 1 and 2, his context influenced his development in a significant

way. In this case, what was missing from the context that would nurture a more salient

white identity was most important. For example, it may be from a lack of continuous

discourse or reflection on white identity that the participant viewed himself as

disconnected from whiteness.

This example, therefore, sparked my thinking about a theoretically innovate way

of considering how Figure 2 could be expanded beyond mixed-race people. Figure 2

serves as a bridge to understanding the in/stability in other racial groups' identity

development. A third figure could take the destabilization of racial categories even

further by representing the role of performance, agency, and self-definition. This thinking

led to the development of the core components of my conceptual framework as outlined

in the next section.

Framework Components

Using the existing theory, my experiential knowledge, and my exploratory

research, I have developed a conceptual framework or working theory. The core areas

include a critical and poststructural paradigm, racial identity as a form of discourse, and

situational racial identity development. This framework will inform my analysis in key

ways, beginning with selecting my methodology. By framing racial identity as a form of

discourse, I am able to use critical discourse analysis to examine the prominent racial

identity development theories. In later stages of analysis, my critical and poststructural paradigm will inform the questions asked of the discourse. Determining the significance of performance and agency as described by Okello (2018) is one of my tasks during analysis, and, if supported by the data, could become a central theme in my findings. For now, these two concepts are secondary components informing my working theory.

The first core area is the critical and poststructural paradigms which guide the selection of literature or prior theory, research questions, and the lens with which I will analyze my data. The existing theory I selected, including Renn (2004) and Okello (2018), among other critical and poststructural theories (Abes, 2016), situate race as socially constructed, highlight the importance of context, and complicate racial identity by discussing the role of agency and performance in forming a racial identity. These theories influenced my understanding of racial identity as potentially non-linear, situational, and complicating understandings of agency in identity formation. Based on the poststructural lens used to guide my questions and consultation with my committee, I selected critical discourse analysis as my methodology. I originally planned to gather data through interviews and focus groups to explore the relevance and connection of current students' development to life span, stage-model racial identity development theories to determine if HESA practitioners and scholars should continue using the theories. The transition to critical discourse analysis allowed me to focus on the theories themselves in an effort to highlight the contribution HESA practitioners and scholars make to the societal discourse on race, which in turn shapes practice.

This led to the second core component of my conceptual framework, which is recognizing racial identity or race as a form of discourse. As described later in the paper,

discourse is a collection of statements (Mills, 2004) which are informed by and inform

societal norms (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Framing racial identity as discourse is important

because of the implications for control. The ability to control or govern discourse comes

with a great deal of power to shape society, and HESA programs should think critically

about their contribution to how race is discussed and understood both within and outside

our institutions.

Perhaps the most obvious site for impacts on racial identity are multicultural or

identity-based offices on campus tasked with providing support to specific student

populations. However, HESA professionals who work in housing, orientation, fraternity

and sorority life, first-generation student offices and more all grapple with racial identity

through the students they serve and supervise. The discourse on racial identity in these

spaces can have consequences on student retention, mental health, academic success and

more. My study provides a critical discourse analysis of racial identity development

theories taught in HESA programs as a way to reflect on their larger contribution and

implications.

This leads to the final section of the framework: situational racial identity

development. This area represents a working hypothesis of sorts for my study explored

further in the first and second rounds of data collection. Due to the constraints of this

dissertation and in-depth nature of critical discourse analysis, analyzing all racial identity

development theories is not possible. My study highlights three theories widely taught in

HESA programs: Helms's Model of White Identity Development (1995), Cross and

Fhagen-Smith's Model of Black Identity Development (2001), and Renn's Ecological

Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development (2004). Using critical discourse analysis,

my goal is to explore the discourse and meaning making of racial identity produced by these theories which become reinforced in the way HESA practitioners and scholars work with students. I will also critique and add to existing theory, incorporate the broader application of situational identity, and question the allegiance to racial identity development theories as tools for understanding students. This lens could likely destabilize narrow social constructions of race and problematize the temporal, or life span, nature of prior theories. I anticipate that this will continue to evolve and become sophisticated with more exploration of additional racial identity development theories in the future.

Research Questions

As noted in the previous section, there is extensive research on the topic of racial identity development. The nature of these studies has evolved from a stage-model approach to an ecological approach that recognizes contextual influences in how individuals make meaning and identify racially. Theories like Helms's (1995) and Renn's (2004) help move the conversation forward about the social construction of race and its impact on the individual level, but I believe they fall short in explaining the situational and, perhaps, performative nature of race. One methodological shortcoming is that these studies are done in silos, focusing on one race at a time. As such, my analysis will consider the data holistically in an innovative way by approaching racial identity development theory as a form of discourse, rather than in discrete identity categories such as the theories in Patton et al. (2016) which place focus on individuals, to develop findings that help illuminate an overarching discourse on race.

My research questions are different than prior HESA studies because I do not intend to study race by studying individuals. I am more interested in what the theories say, both with the language that is used and the language that is absent, and how this contributes to a discourse on race in the HESA field. Specifically, I want to know:

1. What discourse(s) are sedimented through how racial identity development has been taught in HESA programs?

2. Based on these discourse(s), how might racial identity development theories contribute to re/producing power inequities in the HESA field?

3. How does situational mixed-race identity development:

    a. necessarily complicate racialization as an ongoing process of becoming,

    b. and complicate notions of agency and authenticity?

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

As Glesne (2015) indicates, the foundations of a study are the philosophical assumptions, methodological framework, and the study and its components. The ontological belief grounding my study and questions is the fact that race is a social construction that can best be understood by critically examining discourse. The discourse I am most interested in analyzing is racial identity development theory as it is taught in HESA programs. However, I am also interested in the broader implications of what examining these theories means for societal discourse on race. For this reason, I believe using a critical discourse analysis methodology makes the most sense based on my conceptual framework and research questions. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss my research relationships, provide a background on critical discourse studies, explain how the methodology informed my data selection, and outline the plan for analysis. As I continue data collection, it will be important for me to re-read and re-visit both the literature and my memos to identify gaps and check for validity threats (Maxwell, 2013).

Critical Discourse Studies

A methodology is "a theory-driven process of constructing *objects of research* for research topics…as they initially present themselves to us" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 5). It is important to define methodology this way for my study because multiple approaches or methods exist within the methodology of critical discourse analysis (CDA). There is a lack of consensus on one method to engage in discourse analysis, and thus, there are many approaches from which to choose. While not intended to be an exhaustive overview of the history of CDA, this chapter does provide a summary of the methodology and

highlights a method proposed by McGregor (2003). I begin by defining common terms

used throughout this chapter.

First, I define discourse using perspectives from multiple methodologists. Mills

(2004) highlighted three definitions of discourse provided by Foucault:

[1]…the general domain of all statements…[2] groups of utterances which seem

to be regulated in some way and which seem to have a coherence and a force to

them in common…[3] a regulated practice which accounts for a number of

statements" (p. 6).

The key to these definitions are the regulations and constructs which determine or

produce the texts, statements, and utterances in our collective discourse. Blommaert

(2005) described discourse as "language in action" (p. 2). Similarly, Wodak and Meyer

(2016) saw discourse as a "social practice" which is both "socially constitutive as well as

socially conditioned" (p. 6).

Fairclough (2010) wrote that the societal issues of language and power should be

central to discussions of language and power in education. In his view, through discourse

"consent is achieved, ideologies are transmitted, and practices, meanings, values and

identities are taught and learnt" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 531). Learning is co-curricular, so it

is important to consider how language and power convene both in and outside the

classroom. Graduate students in HESA programs both learn discourse on identity theory

and transmit discourse through their roles as practitioners during and/or after their

program. Therefore, the impact of the discourse prevalent in these courses reaches much

further than the graduate students or institutions where they study.

As discourse develops on a particular subject, it is governed by the archive. The archive represents rules that define the limits of language, expression, conservation, and memory in a particular period in a society (Mills, 2004). In other words, the archive dictates not only what can be said but what gets remembered from the historical period it represents. For the purpose of this study, student development theory taught by HESA practitioners and scholars represents the archive of discourse on identity development. I focus on this archive because despite the vast array of works on identity development in other fields, specifically social sciences, HESA programs focus on a narrow set of works.

Patton (2014) defined CDA using van Djik's definition. Patton wrote, "According to van Djik (2003) "CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Patton, 2014, p. 731). This definition allows researchers to examine the way discourse on a micro-level influences macro-level discourse in society (Patton, 2014). This chapter provides an overview of the methodology, a description of the method used in my data analysis, and a rationale for using CDA as my methodology. I support my rationale citing two articles (Patton, 2014, Mobley Jr. & Johnson, 2018) from higher education research that used this methodology and advocated for increased use in future higher education research.

Overview of CDA

Norman Fairclough (2010) wrote the three properties of CDA are that it is relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary. He expanded on each of these properties to distinguish his view from other methodologists. Fairclough (2010) believed that discourse cannot be defined without thorough examination of relations, including

communication relations between people, communicative events, and "relations between discourse and other such complex 'objects'" like institutions (p. 3). Ultimately, he provided examples of how discourse, in many facets of our lives, contributes to our meaning making processes. The meaning individuals make leads to collective meaning making which leads to broader social discourse. Other methodologists expand on this property later in the chapter.

Second, Fairclough (2010) also believed the relations between discourse and objects that constitute meaning making are dialectical. In other words, "they are different but not discrete" and cannot be analyzed without consideration of the other. He described critical discourse analysis by first naming what it is not. He wrote, "It is *not* analysis of discourse 'in itself' as one might take it to be, but analysis of dialectical *relations between* discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as analysis of the 'internal relations' of discourse" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4). For example, it is not enough to analyze a discourse on capitalism without also analyzing its relationship to power.

Because of the merging of disciplines required to address these complex questions, Fairclough's (2010) third and final property of CDA is that it is transdisciplinary. He defined transdisciplinary analysis by detailing that "the 'dialogues' between disciplines, theories, and frameworks which take place in doing analysis and research are a source of theoretical and methodological developments within the particular disciplines, theories and frameworks in dialogue – including CDA itself" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4). More simply stated, transdisciplinary analysis acknowledges the social construction of the world through discourse. It is important to note that, according to Fairclough (2010), "we cannot transform the world in any old way we happen to

construe it" (p.5). He wrote that there are some changes to the world that are just not

possible dependent on a variety of conditions. Fairclough (2010) thus described CDA as

"a 'moderate' or 'contingent' form of social constructivism" (p. 5).

As previously stated, there is not one consensus on the methodology of CDA, and

there are methodologists and analysts who used different frameworks to guide their use

of CDA. Critical discourse analysts explored language beyond expression or

communication, and discourse analysts who were poststructuralists "saw language as a

system with its own rules and constraints, and with its own determining effect on the way

that individuals think and express themselves" (Mills, 2004, p. 7). In other words,

discourse impacts our identities and how we express those identities. Gee (2010)

distinguished discourse with a lowercase "d" as "language-in-use" while Discourse is

about acting out a particular identity (p. 177). He says:

> The whole point of talking about Discourses is to focus on the fact that, when
>
> people mean things to each other, there is always more than language at stake. To
>
> mean anything to someone else (or even to myself) I have to communicate *who* I
>
> am (in the sense of what socially situated identity I am taking on here and now). I
>
> also have to communicate *what* I am doing in terms of *what* socially situated
>
> activity I am seeking to carry out (Gee, 2010, p. 178).

A foundational understanding of this field of study is that collective discourse

does not exist outside social contexts. Gee (2010) compared the relationship between

discourse and context to the "chicken and egg" question. Do we say and do things based

on the context we are in, or does what we say and do define the context? Gee (2010) used

the example of a committee meeting to highlight this:

Are we speaking and acting this way because this is a committee meeting or is

this a ''committee meeting'' because we are speaking and acting this way? If

institutions, committees, and committee meetings didn't already exist, our

committee ways of speaking and interacting wouldn't mean anything or be

possible. But, then, too, if we did not speak and act in certain ways, committees

could cease to exist (p.84).

Gee (2010) went on to explain how we engage in this world building process for

activities, identities, and institutions. Discourse shapes world building by determining our

actions collectively over time. Institutions are main sites where this process occurs. In

fact, Mills (2004) wrote:

discourse is not a disembodied collection of statements, but groupings of

utterances or sentences, statements which are enacted within a social context,

which are determined by that social context and which contribute to the way that

social context continues its existence. Institutions and social context therefore

play an important determining role in the development, maintenance, and

circulation of discourses" (p. 10).

The focus on social context includes historical context and the way discourse changes

over time. Mills (2004) described Foucault's work as a mirror into the "strangeness of

discourses" and an examination of how "discourses are constantly changing" based on

"key shifts in history" (p. 23).

The social and historical context matters even in considering data collection.

Capturing shifts in discourse is critical to situating the analysis in a broader narrative on

the archive. Once captured, there are numerous methods to engage in analysis. Gee

(2010) outlined "seven building tasks" for discourse analysis: significance, activities,

identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge (p. 91).

Each task has a related discourse analysis tool associated with it, and these tools lead to

questions the researcher must ask.

Regarding identities, Gee (2010) pointed out how identities are performed based

on what others believe to be "right" or "appropriate" about that identity (p. 106). In other

words, we expect identity to be legible based on our beliefs about identity groups.

Despite there being many ways to be Black, for example, we expect Black people to

perform their Blackness in particular acceptable ways. Those who express their

Blackness outside this monolith may contend with questions of authenticity as a result of

their identity being illegible to others. Gee (2010) asserted that these performances shift

based on both context and time.

Where first and second wave development theories focused on the individual or

subject's development, as discussed in the literature review, Foucault dismissed the

subject preferring to focus on historical practices that constructed subjectivity (Mills,

2004). As more time passes and patterns, or more importantly, shifts in patterns become

identifiable, the archive forms. Mills (2004) uses sexism as an example of how the

archive works:

> The debate around sexism has been a struggle to change words, a struggle over
>
> language, at the same time as it has been a struggle over legitimacy and about
>
> who has the right to define the usage of language, as well as who has the right to
>
> decide what is studied in schools and universities (p. 39).

The struggle represented in this example and other instances of subjects seeking to define

themselves is a struggle based in power. Blommaert (2005) wrote, "we have to use

discourse to render meaningful every aspect of our social, cultural, political environment"

(p.4).

On an individual level, we do this using voice, and "[v]oice stands for the way in

which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so" (p.4). In this way,

discourse is a tool for delineating and disseminating power. As Foucault wrote, "Where

there is power, there is resistance" (Mills, 2004, p. 37). There is a power in constituting

subjects, limiting their expression, and giving or taking away their agency. On an

institutional level, Gee (2010) wrote we do this using "secondary Discourses" or

discourses that are gained in formal structures like education. To understand how this

form of power operates, it is necessary to use discourse studies.

Method Summary

Patton (2014) and Mobley Jr. and Johnson (2018) both used a CDA primer

produced by McGregor (2003) to inform their method during analysis. As previously

stated, there is not a singular agreed upon method for discourse analysis. According to

McGregor (2003):

> CDA tries to unite, and determine the relationship between, three levels of
>
> analysis: (a) the actual text; (b) the discursive practices (that is the process
>
> involved in creating, writing, speaking, reading, and hearing); and (c) the larger
>
> social context that bears upon the text and the discursive practices (n.p.).

Based on these three levels of analysis, McGregor (2003) provided a three-step guide to

CDA for researchers to follow. The first step is a reading of the data with an open mind

as if you are a regular person taking in the information for the first time. The purpose of

this is to catch things we may take for granted based on our proximity or deeper

knowledge of the data.

Second, McGregor (2003) asked the researcher to find the "point of view" or

"framing" in the next reading. They provided five tools to guide the researcher in this

process including noting what is and is not said, what truths are presupposed in the text,

and which statements are foregrounded (McGregor, 2003). During this level of analysis,

the researcher asks many questions of the text to understand the intended and unintended

messages found in the discourse. Mobley Jr. and Johnson (2018) used this read-through

to apply their critical framework to the data in addition to following McGregor's model.

The third and final level of analysis happens at the smaller level of words and

sentences (McGregor, 2003). For this more in-depth analysis of the text, McGregor

(2003) provided eight considerations for researchers: 1. topicalization, 2. agency, 3.

nominalization, 4. presupposition, 5. insinuations, 6. connotations, 7. tone, and 8. register.

Engaging in this depth of analysis, according to McGregor, "enable[s] one to understand

the conditions behind the specific problem—the deep, ideological roots of the issue"

(n.p.) rather than solving the problem. However, exposing how power operates through

discourse is an important first step to addressing any issue.

Again, this is one method out of many used in CDA. It is worth noting, however,

that McGregor's (2003) method is most prevalent in higher education studies using CDA.

There are numerous methodologists with varied recommendations on how to approach

the data, and I do not spend time in this paper providing an overview of those methods. I

elected to use McGregor's three-level method because it is relatively straightforward,

supports the application of a critical framework, and has precedence in higher education

research. In the next section, I provide a rationale for CDA as a methodology and method

for my research questions.

Rationale for CDA

When I initially wrote my proposal, I planned to utilize interviews and focus

groups to collect data. I developed interview questions to get a sense if students

connected with existing racial identity development theories and to what extent, if at all,

they experienced situational racial identity (Renn, 2004). This approach answers an

interesting question, but it does not align with a poststructural paradigm or what I am

most interested in learning because it focuses on identity through the individual rather

than exploring race systemically. After a conversation with my committee, I determined

that moving from the examination of people to the examination of discourse allowed me

to question how the use of racial identity development theories in HESA programs

contributes to a broader discourse that is potentially harmful to our field.

According to Patton (2014), "CDA has not been widely used in higher education

research" despite its limited use leading to "a critical examination of an important topic in

the field" (p. 731). Researchers in higher education who engaged in CDA examined

student unions, policies, and mission statements to identify ways that inequity and power

operated through discourse (Raaper, 2018; Patton, 2014; Iverson, 2007; Ayers, 2005).

Patton (2014) advocated for greater use of CDA citing its ability "to illuminate issues of

power that do not readily reveal themselves and serve as a framework to disrupt,

challenge, and generate alternative perspectives of reality mediated by power relations

and hegemony" (p. 732) in the analysis process.

Not only is it important to introduce CDA into HESA research, but it is also important to demonstrate the types of questions CDA can help answer. Mills (2004) wrote, "A discourse theory view characterizes subjects as engaging in their own constitution, acquiescing with or contesting the roles to which they are assigned" (p. 41). Critical discourse analysts examine both the way groups of utterances create and maintain power structures and how subjects resist oppression by developing their own language and discourse. Critical discourse analysts study the context in which these groups of utterances or texts occur (Gee, 2010). This type of analysis is inherently political in nature. According to Mills (2004), critical discourse analysts are "less concerned with content-analysis or thematic analysis and more with questions of the impact of the systematic choices of particular language items…within a text" (p. 119). Similarly, Blommaert (2005) wrote critical discourse analysis "should be an analysis of power *effects*, of the outcome of power, of what power *does to* people, groups and societies, and of *how* this impact comes about" (pp. 1-2). Given that race is a social construction that has well documented impacts on BIPOC communities and racial identity development is an examination of how race forms on an individual level, it is appropriate to use a critical discourse analysis methodology to examine racial identity development theory.

The call for critical discourse analysts, according to Blommaert (2005), is to provide action-oriented interventions to systems of power. He says, "analysing [discourse] should have effects in society: empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilising people to remedy social wrongs" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25). The purpose of analyzing racial identity development theory as taught by HESA practitioners and scholars is to identify whether these theories maintain

racist power structures or contribute to empowering students to construct their own

identities in contextually meaningful ways. Simply put, this study seeks to analyze the

discourse re/produced by racial identity development theories through a lens of power

and agency.

Agency and performance are central elements of my conceptual framework.

These are also central elements of post-structuralism and critical discourse analysis

(Blommaert, 2005). Blommaert (2005) wrote:

> labels that presuppose identity as a sociologically stable attribute of groups are
>
> usually less than reliable…identity categories have to be enacted and performed
>
> in order to be socially salient. …in order for an identity to be established, it has to
>
> be recognized by others…a lot of what happens in the field of identity is done by
>
> others, not by oneself (p. 205).

This offers further support for a critical discourse analysis methodology in this study.

Wodak and Meyer (2016) wrote, "critical discourse studies frequently explore the

linguistic means used by the elites to reinforce and intensify inequalities in society" (p.

22). By approaching the data in this way, I aim to determine if racial identity

development theory is reinforcing dangerous and racist narratives present in societal

discourse on race.

Fairclough (2010) asked an important question regarding discourse analysts

producing more discourse: "on what grounds can we say that this critical discourse is

superior to the discourse which its critique is partly a critique of?" (p. 8). His answer is

that critical discourse analysts must provide explanations with high explanatory power

(Fairclough, 2010). The stronger the explanatory power an analysis has, the more likely it

is to transform society or social discourse. Explanatory power is measured by the strength of the justification for as many features of the discourse as possible. He also wrote, "CDA can contribute to the social imaginary, to the stock of feasible Utopias which can inform choices which people make individually and collectively, but the choices must be made by the people concerned and affected on their own behalf," (Fairclough, 2010, p. 543). In other words, even with explanatory power, analysts must use caution when prescribing new discourse in their studies.

To that end, the aims of this study are to critically examine the theories, or the archive of discourses, on racial identity development in HESA programs and the implications of their use. My research questions will help reveal new information about the discourse of racial identity in HESA programs, and I hope they will move HESA theories forward in a way that recognizes the social construction of race as having evolved beyond the individual/interpersonal level as discussed in other fields like sociology. For example, contextual/situational factors may have more influence on how people relate to their race than intrinsic values or traditions (Omi & Winant, 2014). Despite being an interdisciplinary field, HESA programs use outdated theories that could be causing harm.

Research Relationships

Maxwell (2013) wrote at length about the importance of considering your research relationships as a critical part of your research design. Kilbourn (2006) advocated for positionality or personal statements to situate oneself within the research topic and the study, and I intend to use this section as an opportunity to provide more context to the relationships with my topic. I think one of my biggest assets in this area of

design is my professional background in student affairs. I have worked in the field for

nearly a decade, and I plan to use that to relate to other student affairs practitioners and

scholars to establish trust while collecting and analyzing data. Not only do I work in the

HESA field as a practitioner, but I also teach as an adjunct professor in a HESA graduate

program. This experience provided a unique opportunity for me to witness racial identity

development theory as a student, practitioner, and an instructor. It would be remiss not to

name the ways my experience in these roles led me to this study, and I expand further on

this in the perspectives and goodness criteria (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011) section

of this paper.

The biggest challenge I face regarding relationship building and establishing trust

will likely be related to my racial ambiguity. My racial ambiguity leads people to interact

with me based on a set of assumptions that are often incorrect. Noticing reactivity to my

perceived identity is second nature to me as it happens so frequently in varied ways.

Rather than disclosing my racial identity during the data collection process, I allowed

participants to make their assumptions and respond accordingly. I hoped that my

ambiguity was more of an asset by allowing my racial identity to fade into the

background of the data request for syllabi.

While there were no obvious signs of reactivity in the email responses I received,

there were several faculty who apologized for their syllabi. One faculty member said they

have been struggling with a new way to teach the course for years and would love to read

the findings from my study. Another mentioned that the syllabus "needed updating", and

a third faculty member apologized for all four syllabi, which spanned four years, being

identical. I did not ask for any demographic information from the faculty, but it would be

interesting to conduct a follow-up study with the faculty who teach HESA courses to gain

more perspective on the differences in how they construct their syllabi.

Funding did not permit me to reward participants who shared requested materials,

but I think I can give back to them in the very least by sharing the results of my study,

particularly the findings and implications. Many of the participants who sent syllabi via

email indicated they would be interested in follow up when I finished my paper. Perhaps

some of the faculty who provided their course syllabus would want to participate in a

publication on how to shift student development courses in the future.

Perspectives and Goodness Criteria

Consistent with the work of Lincoln et al. (2011), Maxwell (2013) claimed

validity should be more than an afterthought to your study, and that will absolutely be my

approach to addressing my perspectives and goodness criteria. Memos are a tool to do

this, but there are also concrete techniques I plan to employ in my study, making these

checks part of its design (Maxwell, 2013). First, as suggested by Lincoln et al. (2011), I

will work to identify my perspective as the researcher. This includes naming my

positionality in my final presentation of data. I am a mixed-race (Black and white)

woman who was predominately raised around all white people in the Midwest. This is a

very specific lens, and I need to make sure that in a study about race, I let the CDA of

racial identity development theories lead me to my findings. However, my identity is also

an asset which allows me to view race differently based on my lived experience. The

social construction of race is salient, and always has been for me, because of my

ambiguous phenotype.

This may mean that I do not find the data I was expecting. My assumption is that

many people, regardless of racial identity, relate to their race in a situational or contextual

way and that theories like Helms, Cross and Fhagen, and Renn (Patton et al., 2016) do

not account for this experience. Maxwell (2013) warns against excluding data because it

does not fit your interpretation, so I must be open to finding a different explanation to my

research questions through careful analytic memos and inductive analytic approaches.

Blommaert (2005) warned against, "…biased interpretations of discourse under the guise

of critical analysis" (p. 31). This is why adhering to the method laid out by McGregor,

engaging in all three layers of analysis, is important when working with the data. Memos

will help identify tensions with the data analysis process and my hypothesis.

     Another area where memos can help me sort through tensions between my

perspective and the research is identifying how my time as a teaching assistant for

Nicolazzo's College Student Development course at the University of Arizona influenced

my thinking. As previously mentioned, Nicolazzo does not adhere to more "traditional"

methods of teaching student development theory in HESA programs. My experience

preparing for this course influenced much of my early thinking on this topic. My

introduction to waves of theory came from this course, and I valued her focus on third

wave theory compared to my experience in graduate school. Most of the readings on the

syllabus came out in the last five years by authors from a variety of marginalized

identities. I valued the authors' perspectives and began to wonder why more HESA

programs did not approach student development this way. This relates to the point Mills

(2013) made regarding the significance of the archive and formations of discourse. The

archive does not celebrate or recognize these authors in the same way as second wave

theorists more focused on racialization than institutional racism.

Blommaert (2005) named several other critiques of CDA that could lead to poor

goodness criteria, including the vagueness of the analytical models and failure to address

history in analysis. I addressed the lack of consensus on a singular approach to CDA

earlier in this chapter, but the use of McGregor's (2003) method in other HESA studies

provides precedent to use it here. I also addressed the history of racial identity

development and student development theory in the literature review chapter of this paper

to help put the theories in context. In the discussion of findings, it will be critical to once

again situate the data in a historical context in the HESA field.

Despite my experience as a student, practitioner, and faculty member being listed

as an asset previously, there is also a potential risk during the first read-through of the

data. Blommaert (2005) wrote, "…stable patterns of power relations are sketched, often

based on little more than social and political common sense, and then projected onto

discourse" (p. 32). How is common sense defined? The first reading of the data is meant

to be through the lens of a layperson reading the data for the first time, and my

experience and proximity to the topic could lead to some taken-for-granted "common

sense" that I project onto the data. This self-awareness leading into the data analysis

process combined with memos will help me identify if and how I engage in this behavior,

and I will address this further in the findings.

Limitations

As with any study, there were limitations to this study from the overall research

design, method, and goodness criteria. My project looks completely different than it did

at the proposal stage, and I think I struggled initially with designing a study that both met

my research interests and felt manageable for the scope of a dissertation. This was quite

evident in the formation of my conceptual framework early on in the research design

process. However, I think I responded to this limitation really well by effectively

adjusting the scope of my study to make a very specific contribution to the field and

discourse on student development theory. The research questions were ambitious, and I

think I answered them to the best of my ability all things considered.

CDA is a self-proclaimed nebulous methodology by the methodologists who

developed and utilized the method in their studies. There is not one approved method to

use when conducting the analysis, and I think the limited examples from HESA research

presented a challenge when working through my findings. Some of the recommended

methods with CDA were simply beyond the scope of this study, but I believe the primer

from McGregor (2003) served as a great resource for a study of this size. McGregor's

(2003) method is used in other studies from HESA articles, and the examples I provided

in chapter three informed my work in chapter four a great deal. Ultimately, I stand by the

choice to use CDA because I believe it refocused the problem on the discourse and

literature rather than continuing to center individual development. This shift allowed for

critical and poststructural paradigms to guide my thinking and analysis in new and

positive ways.

The proximity I have to the topic heavily shaped my perspective which could be

viewed as a limitation to my study. My experience as a mixed-race woman, my

familiarity with Renn's theory, my graduate and doctoral student experiences, and my

experience as a teaching assistant for Nicolazzo's course all shaped the lens through

which I conducted my analysis. There was ample opportunity for my perspective to threaten the goodness criteria of my results. However, I believe I responded to these threats by following McGregor's (2003) method as closely as possible and connecting to literature as often as possible. Additionally, I think my experiences made me uniquely suited to do this study in a way that others could not, and I believe I brought a valuable perspective to racial identity development theorizing.

Another consideration is that my research design did not include exploration of pedagogical decisions made by faculty to get a deeper and broader picture of how theory is taught in practice. I took the syllabi collected at face value paired with some informed assumptions from my experience to draw conclusions, and this does limit the scope of my study. These assumptions failed to include a structural analysis of the professional norms, organizational policies, and institutional expectations and discourse governing student development theory courses and faculty's decision-making in the classroom on how to discuss course content. However, the purpose of my study was to examine the theories and identify the discourse created and maintained in the theories themselves. While I acknowledge there is likely more to the story in how faculty navigate the political barriers associated with introducing new texts and content in their courses, I wanted to offer a new way of thinking about the texts we continue to use (regardless of the reasons) and how these texts inform our practice in potentially dangerous ways.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Student Development Theory Course Syllabi

I conducted the data collection for my study in two parts because I needed to first verify the prominent texts and theories used to teach racial identity development in HESA student development theory courses. My hypothesis was the Patton et al. (2016) book and its earlier edition would emerge as the clear leader. Given the fact that most HESA practitioners are in entry or mid-level positions, I chose to focus on HESA courses from the past ten years. To collect the data, I sent an email to the College Student Personnel Talk (CSPTalk) listerv, an email listserv for HESA faculty, requesting their student development syllabi from the last ten years.
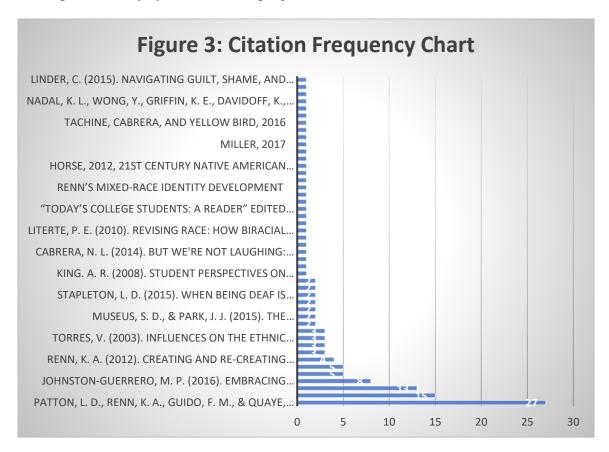
I received syllabi from 26 institutions spanning the last decade (2010-2020). The syllabi came from all regions of the United States, including: 5 from the Midwest, 3 from the Northeast, 10 from the Southeast, 3 from the Southwest, and 5 from the West. The institutions represented various institution types, including: 4 public universities; 5 public research universities; 6 public Research I universities; 2 private Research I universities; 3 private universities; 4 land grant, flagship, Research I universities; 1 public land grant university, and 1 public flagship Research I university. Of these syllabi, 11 came from courses taught prior to 2015. The sample of syllabi collected include many Research I universities, and these institutions award a small portion of degrees in HESA. It is important to note this is a small and incomplete picture of student development courses; however, the ability to draw broader conclusions is supported by the recent study from Harris (2020) which demonstrated how faculty reproduce these courses in similar ways.

Next, I reviewed the assigned readings on the syllabi pertaining to racial identity

development. Many of the syllabi had designated weeks to cover this subject. In total,

there were 131 reading assignments from 46 different sources across 54 syllabi related to

racial identity development. I collected the information by listing the citation, institution,

region, and year in a spreadsheet for each reading assignment. Then, I sorted the data by

citation and tallied the occurrences of the citation in a separate column to determine the

frequency of each theory's use in the HESA courses.

There were clear citations that emerged as the most common across institution

and year. Patton et al. (2016) showed up 27 separate times out of the 54 syllabi collected.

Its earlier edition, Evans et al. (2010), made 15 appearances. Thus, collectively, these two

texts were on 42 of the 54 syllabi or 77.8% of the syllabi collected for the study. Another

notable point is that theories covered in those two texts, such as Helms (1995), Cross and

Fhagen-Smith (2001), and Kim (2001), were also represented in syllabi that did not use

the student development book. This provides strong evidence that the majority of HESA

courses on student development theory used the same set of theories, and more

importantly, they used the Patton et al. (2016) or Evans et al. (2010) texts to teach these

theories as opposed to the original authors' work.

Interestingly, there were 28 sources that were only cited once and 14 sources cited

twice, totaling 42 sources out of the 46 collected or 91.3%. Figure 3 helps illustrate the

disparity between these 42 sources and the other 4 sources cited multiple times. The chart

provides a visual representation of how prominent the most cited sources are compared to

the list of source cited once or twice. Due to spacing limitations, all of the citations did

not fit on the chart in the left axis; however, all sources are represented in the chart itself.

The two sources cited five times were Helms (1995) and Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001),

which are also included in Patton et al. (2016) and Evans et al. (2010) cited 27 and 15

times, respectively. These sources were all included on syllabi from courses taught in

2015 or later. This shows a trend in the last five years of diversifying sources on student

development theory syllabi in HESA programs.

Figure 3: Citation Frequency Chart

Despite this diversification, the Patton et al. (2016) text continued to be the primary

source on the syllabi for racial identity development theories. The new sources often

served as supplements to the Patton et al. (2016) text. It is worth noting, however, that the

Abes et al. (2019) book was still relatively new at the time of data collection. It is

possible that more HESA scholars have incorporated this text to their syllabi. At the point

of this data request (Spring 2020), only 3 institutions cited the Abes et al. (2019) text.

Given the data collected from the syllabi, my original hypothesis was correct. As such, the second and more important round of data collection was to review the racial identity development theories covered in Patton et al. (2016) and Evans et al. (2010). For the purposes of this paper, I selected to focus on the three theories found in my conceptual framework: Helms (1995), Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001), and Renn (2004). Rather than using the original theory, however, I selected to focus on the theories as they appear in the Patton et al. (2016) book because that is the source where HESA practitioners and scholars are teaching and learning from most often in their courses.

Racial Identity Development Theory

As a method, CDA has three levels of analysis where the researcher approaches the text in progressively more critical ways (McGregor, 2003). The purpose of these three levels is to "link the text (micro level) with the underlying power structures in society (macro sociocultural practice level) through discursive practices upon which the text was drawn (meso level)," (McGregor, 2003, para. 10). In the case of this study, the goal is to understand how racial identity development theory influences HESA practitioners and scholars in their work with students and how broader societal context shapes this discourse. To do this, McGregor (2003) recommends three separate readings of the text. In the first reading, the researcher absorbs the text as a layperson who "accepts the reading and offers unquestioning support of the status quo" (para. 13).

This read-through is where the researcher outlines what seems reasonable in the text. As someone with a degree in student affairs and nearly ten years of experience working in higher education settings, I have not been a layperson for quite some time. This presented a threat to my study because I am not only familiar with the literature

examined in my analysis, but I had opinions about the literature prior to the start of this study. However, I used validity checks (Maxwell, 2013) to help address this threat throughout my analysis. These included memos, strict adherence to the techniques presented by McGregor (2003), and asking an actual layperson to read through Helms (1995) to compare their perspective with my own first reading.

Second, the researcher brings a critical lens to the text by comparing it to other works, asking questions, and even thinking of alternative ways of writing the text. This level of analysis includes situating the text in its genre and identifying the rules, both explicit and implicit, governing the genre (McGregor, 2003). In this study, this means situating the racial identity development theories in the genre of student development theory. I expand on this and the questions posed during the second read-through later in the findings section of this chapter.

"Framing" the text by "checking out what sort of perspective is being presented—what angle, slant, or point of view" (McGregor, 2003, para. 14) is another goal during the second read-through of the text. McGregor (2003) noted authors use the following techniques to frame discourse:

1) choosing and placing specific photographs, diagrams, sketches, and other embellishments to get the reader's attention;

2) using headings and keywords to emphasize certain concepts by giving them textual prominence (called foregrounding if the text is emphasized and backgrounding if text is there but de-emphasized or minimized);

3) leaving certain things out completely, counting on if it is not

mentioned, the average reader will not notice its absence, and thereby

not scrutinize it;

4) using certain words that take certain ideas for granted, as if there is no

alternative (presupposition), begging the question, "What could have

been said that wasn't, and why not"; and,

5) manipulating the reader by using selective voices to convey the

message that certain points of view are more correct, legitimate,

reliable, and significant while leaving out other voices (referred to as

register and relates to who the voice belongs to, such as elected

politicians, corporation presidents, union leaders, bureaucrats,

laborers, criminals) (para. 14).

To put it briefly, the researcher uses the second read-through to consider the text as a

whole. They do this by putting the text in conversation with others in its genre, asking

critical questions, and noticing the way framing techniques guide the reader to specific

conclusions about the discourse. Once this level of analysis is completed, the researcher

can begin more detailed analysis at the "sentence, phrase, and word" levels (McGregor,

2003, para. 15).

The third level of analysis primarily focuses on the sentence level of the text, and

McGregor (2003) provided eight techniques to aid the researcher during this level of

analysis. I outlined these techniques in the methods chapter of this paper, and I expand on

each of them further in the findings section of this chapter. Regarding the utility of this

level of analysis, Gee (2010) wrote,

A tool for discourse analysis is a specific question to ask of data. Each question

makes the reader look quite closely at the details of language in an oral or written

communication. Each question also makes the reader tie these details to what

speakers or writers mean, intend, and seek to do and accomplish in the world by

the way in which they have used language" (p. x).

McGregor (2003) compared this process to peeling layers of an onion to reveal "the

profoundly insidious, invisible power of the written and spoken word" (para. 24). In other

words, words matter, and how they are used to form discourse that shapes our

perspectives and actions is worthy of study. McGregor (2003) wrote that CDA does not

solve problems. Instead, it provides a tool for us to understand a topic or problem with

more depth and breadth.

As I outlined in the first portion of data analysis with student development theory

course syllabi, I selected three theories to analyze using CDA. I selected these theories

based on the prominent racial identity development theories represented on the syllabi.

Rather than going to the original source of the theories, I opted to use the Patton et al.

(2016) text because it is the text used most often to teach the theories. In the following

section of this chapter, I present the findings from my analysis using the three levels of

CDA recommended by McGregor (2003). I address each theory both individually and

holistically within the three levels of analysis, keeping in mind the research questions

posed earlier.

Findings

Developing "Healthy" Identities

In my first reading of the theories, I took their contents mostly at face value without critique. This was admittedly difficult to do given the purpose of this study is to critically analyze racial identity development theory. I focused on my first research question to guide my thoughts back to the text when I started to move into level two analysis: What discourse(s) are sedimented through how racial identity development has been taught in HESA programs? This led me to hone in on the overall message of the three racial identity development theories.

All three theories described processes of racial identity development that included multiple factors like family, knowledge, and experiences which shaped individual identity. The authors identified racial identity development as a difficult process that occurs over time. While Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) and Helms (1995) used life span models to model racial identity development, Renn (2004) used an ecological model that focused more on environment and context than time. Whether implicitly or explicitly, all three theories discussed identity as something that could be healthy or unhealthy for individuals. For Renn (2004), all identity patterns within her model are considered healthy, but Cross and Fhagen-Smith and Helms both have more ideal identities for their populations. Below I outline what each theory says about development of a racial identity to further demonstrate their specific similarities and differences.

Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001). Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) Model of Black Identity Development came from a prior psychological theory created by Cross on "Nigrescence" (Patton et al., 2016). Cross defined Nigrescence as "the process of becoming black" (Cross, 1991 as cited in Patton et al., 2016, p. 99). The model developed by Cross and Fhagen-Smith is the most complex of the three theories. It includes a life

span development model with three patterns, six sectors, three salience levels, four

stages, and five enactments (Patton et al., 2016). I briefly outline the components below

without providing the full theory verbatim in this paper.

Within the theory, there are three main patterns of development: Nigrescence

Pattern A, which happens from birth to adulthood; Nigrescence Pattern B, which is an

"identity conversion in adulthood"; and Nigrescence Pattern C, or Nigrescence recycling,

which is "an expansion or modification of Black identity throughout adulthood" (Patton

et al., 2016). Individuals go through either patterns A and C or B and C depending on

their interactions with parents and family early in life. Within these three patterns are six

sectors representing developmental segments over the course of a person's life span.

They are:

    1) Infancy and Childhood in Early Black Identity Development; 2)

    Preadolescence; 3) Adolescence; 4) Early Adulthood; 5) Adult Nigrescence; and

    6) Nigrescence Recycling (Patton et al., 2016).

Throughout these six sectors, the authors discuss individual development by examining

how Black people navigate the sectors based on their identity salience. Individuals have

either high race salience, low race salience, or internalized racism (Patton et al., 2016).

Sector five, Adult Nigrescence, consists of four stages taken from Cross's original

theory. They include: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and

internalization/internalization commitment (Patton et al., 2016). Internalization, or the

final stage of development, leads to three identities for Black people: Black Nationalist,

bicultural, or multicultural. Black Nationalists view their Black identity as most salient

and strive to advance the Black community, bicultural individuals identify as both Black

and American, and multicultural folks focus on multiple identities and work to advance

social justice (Patton et al., 2016). Individuals who go through this sector as adults

engage in a "corrective" process, particularly those with internalized racism (Patton et al.,

2016, p. 102).

Later, Cross expanded the theory with another author to "represent not only how

Black identity is performed but the manner in which Black people are taught to perform

it" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 103). As a result, Cross included the five enactments: *buffering*,

or a protective response against racism; *code-switching*, a proactive shift between

dominant and Black culture; *bridging*, the ability to comfortably form relationships with

people from different identities; *bonding*, or how Black people stay connected to other

Black people and culture; and *individualism*, a detached relationship to a Black identity

and a salient "individual" identity (Patton et al., 2016). During these enactments, identity

remains constant and responses to the events depend on race salience. While this concept

was not part of the original theory, it is presented under the same heading in the chapter.

Helms (1995). Cross's Nigrescence theory inspired Helms to develop the White

Identity Development Model (WIDM). Helms (1995) created the WIDM "to raise

awareness of White people about their role in creating and maintaining a racist society

and the need for them to act responsibly by dismantling it" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 104). A

central concept to this theory is all people have a racial identity in the United States that

operates in a power based framework. The WIDM has two phases: abandonment of

racism and evolution of a non-racist identity.

The first phase consists of individuals experiencing an "encounter" which causes

them to "relinquish idealized notions of Whiteness and acknowledge their complicity in

maintaining a racist society" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 105). The second phase begins with

individuals seeking the status of being a "good" white person. Interactions with other

racial groups are "often superficial and/or paternalistic" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 105).

Later in the second phase, individuals understand their relationship to white privilege and

"work toward abandoning" it while "learning about other racial groups" (Patton et al.,

2016, p. 105).

   Renn (2004). To develop a theory for mixed-race students, Renn borrowed from

Bronfenbrenner's (1995) Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model, which is an

ecological model that describes the environments where student development occurs

(Patton et al., 2016). Renn's (2004) theory applied the PPCT model to biracial students

by relating the person component to family, cultural knowledge, experiences with non-

family members, and physical appearance or phenotype. The process component used the

college experience as a site for multiple opportunities for development. Similarly, the

context component featured micro, meso, exo, and macro environments in college that

could have developmental impacts. Finally, Renn's (2004) model noted that

"sociohistorical context" rather than "individual development over time" (Patton et al.,

2016, p. 118) influenced the time component, particularly at the macro context level.

   As mentioned earlier in the literature review chapter of this paper, Renn's theory

contained five identity patterns for mixed-race students. These five patterns include

monoracial, multiple monoracial, multiracial, extraracial, and situational, and they are

considered "fluid and nonexclusive" as well as "healthy" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 118). A

major contribution from this study was the idea that "a single identity may not be

possible nor desirable for mixed-race students" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 118). There was an overall "fluidity and variability of identity" for the students involved in Renn's study.

Students who identified as monoracial found it was easier if their phenotype and cultural knowledge aligned with the selected identity, but "peer microsystems affected the degree to which students could easily assume a monoracial identity and have it accepted" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 118). Similarly, students who identified as multiple monoracial (e.g. Black and Asian) did so based on the acceptance of this label by their peers. These students demonstrated a "strong desire to label themselves rather than be labeled" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 118) and did so typically based on parental heritage.

Renn (2004) found that multiracial-identified students identified more with other multiracial people regardless of their heritage and saw themselves "existing outside the monoracial paradigm" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 118). Much like these folks, the students who selected an extraracial identity did not opt in to traditional U.S. racial categories. This was either due to an upbringing outside the U.S. or exposure to the concept of socially constructed identities, but it is worth noting that none of Renn's participants exclusively identified this way. Finally, students whose identities depended on context selected a situational identity. These students unconsciously and deliberately shifted their identities, although the "rigidity of racial boundaries on campus" made this process challenging (Patton et al., 2016, p. 119).

Constructing Power

As previously mentioned, one of the first goals of the second layer of analysis is to situate the text within its genre. In the case of the three theories in my data set, they are part of the broader collection of social development theories highlighted in Patton et al.

(2016). More specifically, they are part of second wave student development theory

which uses a constructivist paradigm to draw conclusions about individual and collective

identity development. In other words, this genre of development theory believes

knowledge is co-constructed with others and their environments, and they contend that

multiple truths can exist at the same time (Abes, 2016). Constructivists acknowledge that

context impacts development, but the focus of their research is how individuals respond

to the environment, ultimately taking the environment for granted.

By accepting the environment or context as a normal reality, researchers place an

unbalanced onus on individuals who are more negatively impacted by that environment

to respond to it in "healthy" ways. Gee (2010) suggested discourse analysts look for

figured worlds in the text. He wrote, "A figured world is a picture of a simplified world

that captures what is taken to be typical or normal" (Gee, 2010, p. 170). Figured worlds

are fluid, but change is difficult and slow due to the fact that they are taken for granted

truths. CDA asks, "What must this speaker assume about the world— take to be typical

or normal— in order to have spoken this way, to have said these things in the way they

were said?" (Gee, 2010, p. 173).

In the case of racial identity development, constructivist theories accept racism as

a normal part of reality. Those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

(BIPOC) have "an additional developmental task" compared to their white counterparts

to navigate racism (Torres & Hernández, 2007 as cited in Abes, 2016, p. 12). A critical or

poststructural approach to this issue would critique racism and the way white supremacy

shapes our understanding of identity development. I believe this approach removes a

deficit implication for BIPOC students by acknowledging systemic barriers within our

conception of race and racism. One reason why this is missing from Helms (1995), Cross

and Fhagen-Smith (2001), and Renn (2004) is because psychological theory heavily

influenced second wave student development theory.

The theories examined in this study all built on concepts started in psychology.

Cross and Bronfenbrenner, whose theories influenced Helms, Cross and Fhagen-Smith,

and Renn, were both psychology scholars. While the racial identity development theories

in this study expanded on their original theories to include more acknowledgement of

contextual influences on development, they still used life span models focused on an

individual's internal development. As McGregor (2003) wrote, it is important to situate

the text in this genre "because these rules, for how to structure the genre, belong to the

institution that owns the genre, the genre becomes a means through which the institution

extends power" (para. 13). As it relates to this study, framing racial identity development

as an internal process *influenced* rather than fundamentally *shaped by* social context

allows that context to often go unquestioned. In other words, systemic forms of

oppression like racism, white supremacy, anti-Blackness, etc. go unchecked and get

marginalized in our thinking and actions because the focus is centered on the individual

or groups of individuals to develop in "healthy" ways, as encouraged by using a

psychological lens.

McGregor (2003) suggested looking for the "building blocks" (para. 13) in the

genre that make it identifiable. In social development theory, these buildings blocks

include stages of development that take place over the span of one's lifetime. An

exception to the life span approach is Renn's (2004) theory which views development as

more fluid and situational for participants. Nonetheless, all three theories assume there

are finite options to identify with for each racial group. Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001)

had three identities: Black Nationalist, bicultural, and multicultural; Helms (1995) had

two stages of identity: abandonment of racism and evolution of a non-racist identity; and

Renn (2004) had five identity patterns: monoracial, multiple monoracial, multiracial,

extraracial, and situational.

Regarding building identities, Gee (2010) described teachers having a sorter

identity "and the students take on— and sometimes are talked about by teachers in terms

of— an identity as things to be sorted, on the basis of their fixed internal traits" (p. 110)

He uses the example of special education teachers relying on special education students

which focuses on students' mental abilities rather than the learning environment which

accommodates some students and not others. Gee (2010) wrote:

> One way we enact an identity in language is to portray other people and their
>
> identities in certain ways that compare or contrast with the identity we want to
>
> enact. In many cases a given identity cannot exist without other people taking up
>
> or being portrayed as having related identities" (p. 109).

In his example, the teacher's identity as a special education teacher cannot exist without

first labeling students in need of special education. In the example of racial identity,

whiteness is often defined by what it is not through comparison of BIPOC identities. One

could argue that this is reinforced by Helms's (1995) theory only receiving two

paragraphs in Patton et al. (2016). What is clear, however, is that the genre of social

identity development theories feigns individual autonomy over racial identity

development while skimming over larger systemic influences—ultimately allowing the

systems, and their power, to go unchecked.

Framing Identities

The second task during the second reading of the text is to notice how the authors frame the text. McGregor (2003) provided five techniques during the second reading and eight techniques during the third reading to watch for, which I outlined at the start of this chapter. The first two techniques rely on visual indicators of importance or significance for the reader like diagrams, pictures, and headings. None of the three theories in Patton et al. (2016) contain diagrams, pictures, or other large visual components. They do, however, use italicization to indicate central terms or concepts in the theory. A definition and explanation of its significance typically follows the italicized word. This technique framed the contributions of each theory and helped the reader contextualize each component in the broader theoretical framework.

The third technique, leaving content out that the average reader would not notice, was more difficult to search for in the text. Rather than looking for visual indicators or analyzing what is on the page, the researcher has to read for the missing context surrounding the authors' claims. It is important to note, prior to presenting the findings from this and following techniques, that one may find different results by studying the original texts of the theories. However, the focus of this study is the Patton et al. (2016) book and its influence in HESA programs and practice.

After looking at the text as a whole to draw conclusions about the genre and framing, McGregor (2003) recommended analyzing the text at a closer level to highlight the ways words and phrases convey meaning and frame the text. This was an arduous process that required careful examination of the theories in a way I never analyzed them before. There were moments that I noticed myself looking for something that was not

there within the text. Using the eight techniques offered by McGregor (2003) helped to hone my focus during analysis. The eight techniques include: topicalization, power relations, omission of information, presupposition, insinuations, connotations, tone, and register (McGregor, 2003, para. 15-23). I outline the findings from both the second and third level framing analysis in the following sections of this chapter.

     Context Matters. All three racial identity development theories have limited to no information about the data collected, the methods used to collect it, or the participants themselves. The participants' voices are absent in Helms (1995) and Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) theories, pointing to an omission of information (McGregor, 2003). The authors present the theories without sharing the evidence that led to their conclusions. This omission allows the researchers' interpretation to take precedence over the experiences shared by the participants. In contrast, Renn's (2004) theory explicitly names that mixed-race college students provided the data for her study, and they provide both quantitative and qualitative data to support the five identity patterns in the framework. With this information missing from the first two theories, the reader must fill in critical gaps with assumptions.

     For example, in Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) theory, the authors refer to a "healthy" Black identity several times without providing an example or definition of what constitutes an identity being either healthy or unhealthy. Who decided whether the identity was healthy or not? What criteria did they use to draw their conclusion? Based on the way the authors present the theory, it appears that the researchers determined whether an identity was healthy based on psychological factors. Analyzing the text at the word level, we can unpack a lot from the usage of the word healthy. The authors use a

tone that conveys certainty while using their positional power in the study to place their

participants in a passive position (McGregor, 2003).

It is clear from the lack of description on the criteria for healthy identities that the

authors are using presupposition to convey their assessment carries more weight than the

participants'. Additionally, the three identities (Black Nationalist, bicultural, and

multicultural) correspond with less feelings of anger toward white people (Patton et al.,

2016). Are we to conclude that the authors view more acceptance of white people to be a

healthier identity for Black people? The use of insinuation (McGregor, 2003) here leaves

it unclear about the authors' intent, and the reader is left to draw their own conclusions.

It is problematic that a conversation about healthy racial identity for Black people

includes their level of acceptance of white people without situating the conversation in a

broader discussion or critique of racism and anti-blackness in the United States. For

example, Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) used more positive language for a multicultural

identity than a Black Nationalist identity. This could promote colorblind ideology or

neoliberal multiculturalism—which relies on new expressions of racism that punish those

who do not adopt "multicultural American" identities (Melamed, 2006, p. 19).

Furthermore, the idea of healthy or unhealthy identities is pathologizing, which speaks to

the influence of psychology. Who or what benefits from this framing of identity? By

positioning racial identity as an internal, psychological process, racialization and white

supremacy continue to thrive. A more descriptive model which centers participant voices,

rather than evaluative, might be more beneficial to discuss various identities within racial

groups to dispel monoracist (Harris, 2015) constructions of race.

In all three theories, the authors allude to experiences that shift identity for individuals, but they do not provide examples or details about the experiences. This may be a way to imply racist incidents shift identity. Insinuations like "traumatic experience" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 102) or "racial dilemma" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 105) indicate that these experiences are negative, but it is also possible that identity shifts could happen as a result of positive experiences. By avoiding or leaving out racism and systemic forms of oppression, Cross and Fhagen-Smith, in particular, fail to provide strong arguments for their model.

Similarly, Helms (1995) used the language of "abandoning" identities as a way for white people to develop (Patton et al., 2016). First, white people are expected to abandon racism and then abandon white privilege, but Helms provided no examples of how a white person could achieve this task. While this theory acknowledges racism and systemic oppression, it leaves out the critical perspective required to address these issues. Rather than approaching the conversation from a systemic lens, Helms (1995) makes it the responsibility of individual white people to abandon structures woven into the fabric of the United States. This and the prior examples demonstrate the importance of providing context in racial identity development theory. Without the additional information from the authors in the Patton et al. (2016) book, regardless if present in the original or not, the pathways to "healthy identities" seem murky.

Missing Pieces. The fourth technique McGregor (2003) encouraged researchers to identify was presuppositions, or taken-for-granted words and ideas, in the text. To do this, McGregor (2003) recommended asking the question, "What could have been said that wasn't, and why not?" (para. 14). In order to identify the presuppositions in the three

theories, I wrote down the places where I had questions about words, phrases or ideas.

This level of analysis still required looking at the text as a whole, but the instances of

confusion or lack of clarity helped me identify larger taken-for-granted information.

Earlier I mentioned that examining individuals rather than racism not only normalized

racism, but it also led to a deficit approach for BIPOC students who, in these theories, are

responsible for developing healthy identities given an additional barrier that their white

counterparts do not have.

The issue of taking environment for granted showed up numerous times in the

case of Black identity development. In Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001), the authors

wrote, "Black adults with low race salience still see race as nonessential and construct

diverse identities across an array of categories. They can continue to live in environments

where their identities are maintained and their race is never acknowledged" (p. 101).

What type of environment, specifically, are the authors referencing? It is possible that

Black adults who grow up in homogenous Black communities live in an environment

where race is less salient because they are not constantly having racist interactions with

white people, and this results in the freedom to explore other identities like sexuality or

gender. It is also possible that Black adults who grow up in homogenous white

communities and have assimilated live in an environment where race is less salient due to

colorblindness. This omission of information makes it difficult for the reader to identify

which environments foster this type of identity.

As previously mentioned, Helms (1995) wrote about white people abandoning

racism and white privilege, which implies that these are things which can be abandoned

at all. Helms wrote, "…individuals grapple with the idea of relinquishing idealized

notions of whiteness and [acknowledge] their complicity in maintaining a racist society"

after "encountering a racial dilemma" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 105). While perhaps an

important part of the developmental journey for white people, realizing complicity in and

abandoning racism are not the same. The use of the word "abandon" has a connotation

that things are left behind or cease, but racism and privilege, when discussed at an

institutional level, do not simply cease.

      Furthermore, the WIDM does not address individuals who are aware of racism,

know they are complicit, and continue to exhibit racist ideas and behaviors. The

implication that white people become aware and begin to abandon their racist identities

and "[redefine] what it means to be White" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 105) does not allow us

to understand how racism persists. In both of the previous examples, white people are

given agency and power (McGregor, 2003) over their identities in ways that Black people

and mixed-race people were not in Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) and Renn (2004).

This small example points to a broader trend of BIPOC folks being subject to their

identities rather than engaging in self-definition (Okello, 2018).

      Another presupposition in the theories came from Renn's (2004) mention of

physical appearance as a factor in mixed-race student development. The brief mention in

Patton et al. (2016) wrote, "…family background and heritage, extent of cultural

knowledge, degree of experience with individuals of one's own heritage and other

cultural backgrounds, and physical appearance" made up the person component of the

PPCT model for mixed-race students. Renn, as cited in the Patton et al. (2016) text, did

not expand on the significance of physical appearance. Additionally the connotations

(McGregor, 2003) between physical appearance and phenotype are different, and I am curious about the decision to use physical appearance over phenotype in this passage.

To answer McGregor's (2003) question about things unsaid, there is a missing conversation here on the importance of concepts like colorism, passing, and belonging for phenotypically ambiguous people within BIPOC communities. I am unsure what led to the exclusion of these topics, but from my own experience, these are critical considerations for why a mixed-race person may have more fluid and contextualized identities. While other aspects of physical appearance may be important, traits like skin tone, hair texture, facial structure, and eye color are more closely associated with someone's phenotype. An example of how this shows up could be a mixed-race person who is more phenotypically white-passing having a harder time claiming a monoracial Black identity with peer groups due to monoracism (Harris, 2015).

The final presupposition addressed in this section is the concept of what constitutes a Black identity in Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001). As outlined several times in this paper, Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) found three identities for Black people which connect to their salience with race. Individuals then undergo an internalization process where three new identities emerge: Black Nationalist identity, marked by high saliency and a commitment to improving the Black community; bicultural identity, marked by the merging of Black and American identities; and multicultural, marked by a commitment to social justice and salience in multiple identities (Patton et al., 2016). While analyzing the text, I paused to question two things: why is social justice only possible with a multicultural identity, and why is being an American separate from being Black? The most logical answer is to consider the influence of white supremacy.

If individuals are committed to uplifting the Black community by addressing racial inequity, is that not considered justice work? Is being Black not an inherently American identity? Again, the insinuation technique leads to questions about intent of the researchers. One could interpret this to mean that being Black or having a Black identity falls outside the scope of being an American. The result is further "othering" Black folks in the United States. Similarly, there is an insinuation that Black people can only engage in social justice work when they focus on uplifting other marginalized groups. One could infer that Black people focusing on Black empowerment threatens white supremacy which the researchers in turn defend by problematizing Black Nationalist identity. The lack of answers to these questions in the text leads to the fifth and final technique discussed by McGregor (2003).

Identifying Voice. The fifth technique used to frame text involves "manipulating the reader by using selective voices to convey the message that certain points of view are more correct, legitimate, reliable, and significant while leaving out other voices" (McGregor, 2003, para. 14). In the case of racial identity development theory, this includes both the voices of the researchers and the participants. Based on my analysis, the researchers filtered the data through their own identities and perspectives to develop the theories presented in the book. Their voice as scholars implied a certain level of expertise that encouraged the reader not to question the reliability of their claims, and, at times, claims were made without context or data in the Patton et al. (2016) condensed theories.

We see an example of this in Renn's (2004) theory. Patton et al. (2016) wrote that Renn identified all five identity patterns found in her theory as "healthy" (p. 118). Why was it significant that Renn found these identities healthy? What were the criteria? How

did the participants who held these identities feel about them? The power relations involved here position the participants as passive while Renn, the researcher, has power over the health or validity of their identities. After reading other theories about monoracial development like the WIDM (Helms, 1995) or Nigrescence theory (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001), the reader expects that there is only one "healthy" or goal identity. Renn dubbing all five identity patterns for mixed-race students as healthy gave them more validity and legitimacy for stage based, life span theorists (Patton et al., 2016). It also created an oppositional or hierarchical relationship between researchers and their perspectives, which was reinforced later in the chapter.

Patton et al. (2016) wrote, "Renn (2004) argued that rather than being problematic, as stage theorists would suggest, "the ability to read contexts and construct identity in relation to specific contexts is a highly evolved skill requiring emotional maturity and cognitive complexity" (p. 119) to describe situational identity for mixed-race students. This does contrast with theories like Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) which promote a healthy Black identity formed throughout one's life without giving much voice to participants to name that identity. For example, Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) claimed, "Black people who are not socialized toward Blackness…usually experience conversion during adulthood" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 99). The conversion process is described as "corrective" for adults with low racial salience or internalized racism (Patton et al., 2016), a word that connotes brokenness. However, if a Black person has not been socialized toward the form of Blackness accepted by the authors, are they not still Black? If not, what are they? White supremacy and monoracism demand monolithic, simplified racial identities to avoid destabilization within unpredictable social discourse.

On a related note, Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) labeled the identity expression of individuals going through the immersion stage as superficial because they use symbols like music, fashion, food, and language to connect to their Black identity. Who determined these are superficial forms of identity? Whose voice gave more value to "a more balanced and focused lens" or selected what qualified as "a more authentic understanding of Black identity" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 102)? Finally, who benefits from the concept that to be "more developed" as a Black person equates to being less opposed to white people (Patton et al., 2016)? As with many of the questions posed in this section, the answer lies within an examination of how white supremacy thrives under monoracist, essentialized conceptions of race. Traits and relationships to Black identity which seem rooted in positivity and self-love (Okello, 2018, 2020) get dismissed as superficial and unhealthy because they threaten the foundation of racialization and white supremacist discourse. Clinging to the idea of one way to appropriately claim or perform a racial identity does not seem to benefit BIPOC individuals or honor their voice.

The final example of the danger in prioritizing the wrong voice comes from Helms's (1995) WIDM. The model is all about positioning white people in relation to "other racial groups" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 105) and as beneficiaries of racial privilege. Rather than exploring how white people develop internalized, salient identities influenced by family, language, and culture like theories on BIPOC folks, the WIDM focuses on the journey for white folks to become "good" white people (Patton et al., 2016). The authors devoted two sentences to describe this lifelong process:

> This phase progresses as individuals begin a quest toward understanding
> themselves as racial beings and the racism and privilege associated with being

White, as well as redefining for themselves what it means to be White and taking

ownership of racial privilege and how it affects others. Individuals continuously

work toward abandoning White privilege and learning about other racial groups"

(Patton et al., 2016, p. 105).

This approach further supports whiteness as the norm and lacks an understanding of the

cultural humility needed for white people to truly understand their identities in relation to

others.

When examining the way the authors position voice to guide the reader to

conclusions, I am left with more questions about the value of these racial identity

development theories for individuals and the broader discourse on racial identity. Overall,

the second and third level of analysis demonstrated that these theories followed rules and

guidelines established within the broader genre of social identity development theories.

Influenced by psychological theories before them, these theories focused on stage

development over the life span of individuals. The exception in the group was Renn's

theory which did not highlight development over time but rather over different contexts

and environments. Renn (2004) also found all identity patterns participants exhibited to

be healthy, as opposed to other theories preferring certain identities over others.

This level of analysis also provided insight into a lack of context in the Patton et

al. (2016) book to fully understand the theories and the way voice manipulated the reader

to draw certain conclusions. Whether by using presuppositions in the text or centering the

researcher's voice over participants' voices, the framing of these theories encouraged

readers to draw broad conclusions about each racial group represented in the theory. In

the next chapter, I engage in a discussion of the findings and their relevance. I also

demonstrate how this dissertation relates to existing literature while clarifying its

contribution to those works. Finally, I provide implications and recommendations for

theory and practice before ultimately offering a conclusion.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Traditional racial identity development theories taught in HESA graduate programs come from second wave student development theory which, using a constructivist paradigm, fails to adequately address the social construction of race (Abes et al., 2019). These theories are not only decades old, but they depend on narrow definitions of racial categories determined, at times, by researchers who did not hold the same identities as the participants they studied. HESA scholars and practitioners use racial identity development theory, and other student development theories, to inform the work they do around engagement, education, and other services to support college students. Due to the monolithic, essentialized (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998) nature of these theories and the belief that development happens over an individual's life span, HESA scholars and practitioners prioritize moving students toward "more developed" stages of development.

Influenced by my own experience as a mixed-race woman and Renn's Ecological Mixed-Race Identity Development Theory (Patton et al., 2016), I wondered about racial identity development happening in more fluid and contextual ways for people regardless of racial category. Building on Renn's (2004) situational identity pattern, I started to hypothesize a model for development that accounted for agency, performance, and context more explicitly. After many iterations of my proposal, it became clear that developing this model was beyond the scope of this study. However, my identity and unique perspective on race and being subject to racialization, in particular, continued to influence what I believe is the first step in pursuing a new model for racial identity

development. The first step was to analyze current theory and justify the need for a new

model in our field.

I set out to explore the contribution made by racial identity development theories

commonly taught in HESA courses to the broader discourse on race in HESA graduate

programs, the work of HESA professionals, and individual development. Using a CDA

approach, I explored the explicit and implicit meanings of text within the three racial

identity development theories selected for this study. Paying close attention to factors like

agency and performance, I approached the text with various levels of analysis to answer

my research questions. In the following sections of this chapter, I summarize the findings

from my study, discuss the implications, review limitations, and provide

recommendations for application and future research.

Summary of Findings

Time to Refresh

The results from the first round of data analysis indicate that HESA student

development theory courses may benefit from an intentional refresh of the syllabi.

According to the data, 91.3% of the sources cited on the syllabi only appeared once or

twice in courses from the last five years. This demonstrates that diversification of

resources is happening; however, the Patton et al. (2016) book and its earlier edition

Evans et al. (2010) made 27 and 13 appearances, respectively. They collectively appeared

on 77.8% of the syllabi collected for the study, and racial identity development theories

used within the text like Helms (1995) and Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) were cited

separately as well. This clearly shows that most HESA graduate students learn the same

core set of racial identity development theories. For at least the last decade, and likely

longer based on the publication dates, HESA graduate students learned these theories and

became practitioners and scholars who taught them to new graduate students (Harris,

2020).

Student development theories considered foundational in the HESA field came

from the field of psychology (Abes, 2016; Abes et al., 2019; Patton et al., 2016; & Harris,

2020). My analysis demonstrated that the rules associated with the genre of student

development theory constrict our view of development (McGregor, 2003). The focus on

individual, psychological development which occurs over one's lifespan does not allow

us to see the full picture of development that critical and poststructural theories

illuminate. As students on college campuses continue to diversify and their understanding

of socially constructed identities increases, the theories taught in HESA graduate

programs become less relevant. HESA practitioners and scholars should revisit their

syllabi and consider more recent texts like Abes et al. (2019).

We Need Context

The results from the study also indicated that context is important and often

missing in the way racial identity development theories appear in the Patton et al. (2016)

text. The authors did not include the data or methods used to develop the theories in the

text, and whether through omission or presupposition, the lack of supporting evidence for

conclusions drawn in the theories leads the reader to make their own assumptions about

how the researchers reached their final conclusions. The techniques described by

McGregor (2003) situated the researchers and authors in a position of power to shape the

narrative rather than allowing participant voices to shine. This was most clear in the

examination of the researchers' use of the word "healthy" to describe various identities or identity patterns.

While the authors failed to explicitly define what classified an individual's identity as healthy, there were numerous insinuations of unhealthy factors in identity development. As mentioned previously, Renn (2004) positioned herself in opposition to other racial identity development theorists by asserting that all identity patterns found in her theory were healthy. Still, it remained unclear what made them healthy or what, if anything, would make them unhealthy. Here the reader is once again left to make assumptions to fill in the missing context. This presents a risk in practice because our biases, identities, experiences, etc. shape our assumptions, and individuals could use these theories in very different ways.

Passive Development

Another theme from the findings was the way voice and positional power rendered the BIPOC participants as passive in their own development in a way white participants were not. Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) and Renn (2004) used their positions as scholars and researchers to develop racial identity development theories for BIPOC folks whose voices and experiences were not explicitly highlighted in the Patton et al. (2016) book. The theories made determinations about the health of individual identities, their depth and authenticity in ways that preferences certain ways of developing over others. By presenting the theories through the researchers' gaze and using the rules and norms of the psychological theories which informed the studies, the participants became subject to their own development. This is tied directly to Okello's (2018, 2020) work later in the discussion section.

In contrast to the findings above, Helms's (1995) theory made its white participants active in their development. While BIPOC identities relied on acceptance of their identity from others, family dynamics, physical appearance, and culture, the WIDM explored white participants' journey to understand and redefine themselves within the context of white privilege. These folks sought a "good" white identity by abandoning their privilege and learning about other racial groups. Based on my analysis, this approach lacks cultural humility and contributes to the "othering" of BIPOC identity groups. I expand on the significance of this finding later in the discussion section. First, I address whether the results of my analysis supported my hypotheses and answered the research questions.

Discussion

As I mentioned earlier in the paper, the field of HESA is large and research on student development is vast. A full analysis of the genre was beyond the scope of a dissertation, so I selected to focus on racial identity development theory. My study set out to answer the following questions:

1. What discourse(s) are sedimented through how racial identity development has been taught in HESA programs?

2. Based on these discourse(s), how might racial identity development theories contribute to re/producing power inequities in the HESA field?

3. How does situational mixed-race identity development:

    a. necessarily complicate racialization as an ongoing process of becoming,

    b. and complicate notions of agency and authenticity?

In this section of the chapter, I address each of these questions individually. I address the answers for each question based on the findings, what this answer contributes to theory and practice, why the contribution matters, and how it aligns with existing theory and emerging literature.

Student Development Course Design

Wodak and Meyer (2016) defined discourse as a "social practice" which is both "socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned" (p. 6). As I stated in the methodology chapter, discourse is both language and "language in action" (Blommaert, 2005, p.2) which is why studying development theories is so important. In a study on HESA faculty who teach student development theory (SDT) courses, Harris (2020) wrote, "While HESA faculty members may be integral to the transmittal and reproduction of culture, knowledge, and meaning, how HESA faculty dis/engage processes of socialization and de/construct organizational culture through their SDT courses remains, at this time, underexplored" (p. 1). Although this study focused on racial identity development, specifically, Harris's statement is still relevant. The contribution to discourses through these courses warrants further exploration, and this study explored one portion of SDT with important and relevant urgency: race.

My first research question focused on the discourses sedimented in HESA through the manner in which it's taught. I found that for the last ten years, HESA faculty have primarily used the *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice* book (Evans et al., 2010; Patton et al., 2016) which Harris (2020) referred to as "*The Book*" in her study. One of the key findings from Harris's (2020) study was that HESA faculty taught SDT using *The Book* in part because it was how they were taught and also

because *The Book* is viewed as "a cornerstone in the field" (p. 9). My study builds on this

by demonstrating not only the widespread use of the Patton et al. (2016) text, but I really

focused on the messages reinforced in the text by using a CDA approach. Apple (2014)

wrote about "official knowledge" in education reinforced through curriculum archives,

using the same definition of archives outlined in CDA. The archive represents "what is

counted as worth knowing and remembering" (Mills, 2004, p. 57) in society.

According to Apple (2014), state regulations, district guidelines, publisher

criteria, and more construct the archive and define official knowledge. Regarding the

influence of power on the archive, Apple (2014) wrote, "*selective tradition* operates in

which only specific groups' knowledge becomes official knowledge. Thus, the freedom

to help select the formal corpus of school knowledge is bound by power relations that

have very real effects" (p. 68). As Harris (2020) wrote, *The Book* represents the

curriculum archive of student development theory in HESA courses, and Apple's (2014)

work helps provide context to how knowledge becomes official through political and

systemic power structures. It is because *The Book* operates as official knowledge in the

HESA field that I selected it to examine discourse on racial identity development.

By utilizing second wave theories, HESA practitioners and scholars have

reinforced the concept of identity development as a psychological process that happens

on an individual level. This is an incomplete picture that fails to capture the social

construction of race and other concepts found in critical theory. It also leaves out the

perspective offered by poststructuralists who challenge norms and question truths that

other paradigms take for granted. Furthermore, by using these theories in fragmented

forms, HESA practitioners and scholars miss out on important context from the original

theories. Harris (2020) found that HESA faculty teaching SDT courses appreciated the

updates made to the third edition of *The Book* saying it gave them "agency to talk about

oppression and privilege up front in their classes" (p. 11). Additional language

throughout *The Book* added critical perspectives that the participants in Harris's (2020)

study believed helped shift culture in the field.

Based on my analysis, the second wave racial identity development

theories also reinforced the othering of BIPOC communities while norming whiteness.

They accomplished this by focusing on BIPOC individuals' ability to respond to and

overcome racism rather than questioning and critiquing racism itself. I imagine future

identity models using a poststructural approach to complicate and undo everything we

have learned about "developing" racial identities and situate that knowledge within a

history and legacy of white supremacist fallacies about race and anti-blackness.

Additionally, while white people were viewed as active participants in their

development and definition, BIPOC folks were passive subjects in their development.

Their identities relied on their legibility to others, perceived health, physical appearance,

family and cultural background, and relationship to white people among other things.

BIPOC participants had identities ascribed to them while white participants sought their

identity through abandoning privilege and learning more about other racial groups. White

identity development is about a journey to be "good" while BIPOC identity is a journey

to be racialized and othered.

One way to respond to this discourse is to reimagine how SDT courses get taught

in HESA graduate programs. Harris (2020) wrote HESA faculty should:

come together and discuss (a) newer texts…[and] other thought-provoking

literature that might be included in course content, (b) how to adopt new materials

and innovative theories while still honoring and critiquing foundational materials

and theories, and (c) innovative ways to structure course content" (p. 15).

Harris (2020) noted, as did I, that the Abes et al. (2019) text was new during data

collection for her study, but this could be a great addition for faculty. If faculty do not

examine the way racial identity development theory is taught, specifically, they risk not

only missing the mark with students in their program but sending practitioners into the

field unprepared to meet the needs of the undergraduate students they serve. This is

punctuated by a year of racial unrest and upheaval started by the murder of George Floyd

in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As a resident, practitioner, and educator in Minneapolis, I can

attest that this year made me rethink my approach to engaging students on race. This is an

opportunity for the field to do this work collectively.

Re/Producing Power Inequities

The second question in my study asked how racial identity development theories

contribute to re/producing power inequities in the HESA field. Harris (2020) wrote, "the

value placed on foundational theories may shape how HESA faculty members teach, but

also may put at risk upholding inequitable environments" (p. 13). This quote supports the

relevance and need for my research question. Again, Harris (2020) focused on faculty,

but my study examined how the language and discourse within racial identity

development theories re/produced imbalances of power. This difference moves the

conversation from analyzing why faculty make the pedagogical decisions they do to how

particular texts construct our realities and constrict our decisions.

My study found that racial identity development theory re/produces power inequities in two key ways: by positioning BIPOC communities in passive roles subject to racialization and white people as active participants in their self-definition, and by giving power to an archive (Mills, 2004) of SDT situated in outdated paradigms. As outlined in the methodology chapter, the archive dictates what gets said and remembered from the historical period it represents. Despite the vast array of works on identity development in other fields and informal theories written in the last five years, HESA programs focus on a narrow set of works which have specific rules and techniques to lead the reader to incomplete conclusions about racial identity development. Harris (2020) described this archive as "doctrine" in the HESA field stating, "The emphasis placed on knowing and memorizing formal theory may also eclipse the importance and need for students to explore informal theories, which may be equally—if not more—relevant to their future practice" (p. 5). Clearly, the loyalty to this archive in the HESA field restricts the discourse around racial identity development.

The second way racial identity development theory re/produces power inequity is by casting BIPOC participants as passive subjects whose identity development hinges on their psychological response to social factors. This normalizes the social factors, like racism, and labels individuals who do not respond in approved ways as unhealthy. Although Renn (2004) did not label any identity patterns as unhealthy, there is still a commitment to understanding how the individuals in the study responded to the environment around them rather than investigating the environment more thoroughly. By creating a hierarchy of identities or developmental stages, racial identity development

theories encourage the HESA practitioners, who learned about these theories in their

coursework, to treat students differently.

For example, an academic advisor may be more willing to mentor and give

attention to students they perceive to be further along in their development because these

students are viewed as more likely to succeed. A residence hall director may not select

residents to serve on their hall council based on their perceived social development.

Similarly, a conduct officer could attribute a student's poor choices to a developmental

deficit without digging deeper to understand the student's motivations. These examples

demonstrate how the focus on health embedded in the psychological perspective of these

theories can have tangible impacts in practice.

Writing about student development theory and self-love, Okello (2020) wrote,

"Framed largely by master narratives, Black being has been misrepresented,

misrecognized, and erased in higher education curricula and the cocurricular" (p. 729).

My study showed that one way this happens is by racial identity development theory

discourse removing the agency of BIPOC folks to view their race as object rather than be

subject to it and by not allowing them to engage in self-definition (Okello, 2018, 2020).

In other words, racial identity theory discourse takes away the ability of BIPOC

individuals to choose their racial identity. This lack of choice makes it difficult for them

to have ownership and space to critically examine their race. Instead of engaging in self-

definition, which is a liberatory practice, BIPOC folks have racial identities thrust upon

them through these models of development.

Okello (2020) defined coloniality as "patterns of power…that define culture,

labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of

colonial administrations" (p. 719). Literature like student development theory helps

coloniality thrive. Okello (2020) wrote that institutions need to reckon with coloniality in

order for self-definition to be possible. He wrote:

> Consistent with the work of what hooks (1992) called *loving Blackness*, unsettling
>
> the coloniality of being (Wynter, 2003) reinforced by higher education involves
>
> (a) naming Black self-hatred and its origins as a production of white supremacist
>
> logic, (b) locating self-love as the resistance of white supremacist logic, and (c)
>
> understanding Black self-love as impossible without engaging in decoloniality
>
> (Okello, 2020, pp. 724-725).

My study contributes to the work of Okello by providing evidence of how patterns of

power manifest in racial identity development theory. It is important for HESA faculty to

make this connection between Okello's work on self-definition and the barriers presented

by foundational theories to that work. This provides justification and urgency for the

archive of racial identity development to be refreshed.

Applying a Multiracial Lens to Complicate Racial Identity

My final research question explored how situational mixed-race identity

development necessarily complicates racialization as an ongoing process of becoming

and complicates notions of agency and authenticity. I believe this is the most significant

contribution of my study. Second wave racial identity development theories do not

accurately capture the complexity of race and racialization. They fail to do this by

accepting racism and white supremacist constructions of race as normal, framing BIPOC

individuals as responsible for navigating these constructions in predetermined "healthy"

ways, and neglecting the situational manner in which race is defined and internalized as a

meaningful self-concept. Despite the flaws in Renn's (2004) theory, there is something to learn about her rejection of "unhealthy" identity patterns and acknowledgment of situational identity informed by physical, psychological, individual, and community factors.

What my analysis showed was that there are distinct differences between Renn's (2004) theory and Helms (1995) and Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) theories. For example, mixed-race identity development theory was explored using space rather than time as a variable. Renn (2004) wrote about the identity patterns of her participants by explaining the factors which led them to choose their identities and found that one identity may not be possible for mixed-race folks. More importantly, Renn questioned whether a singular identity was even *desirable* for participants (Patton et al., 2016). One reason for this could be because of shifting societal context, in addition to the day-to-day factors, that inform our collective understanding of race and racialization. The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 and 2021 is an example of context that likely influences all of us in how we relate to and understand ourselves as racialized people.

As I mentioned throughout this paper, we expect identities to be legible to others—this is what gives them meaning when we rely on ascribed patterns of racialization. Renn's (2004) situational mixed-race identity pattern demonstrated how participants would shift their identity based on context. Sometimes this context was how accepting the people around them would be of the identity they claimed. This complicates our understanding of racial identity being a psychological, autonomous process by highlighting the significance of external validation when claiming membership to a racial group, and the reality of racial identity being ascribed to people based on things like

physical appearance or phenotype. While applying a multiracial lens to racial identity

development helps illuminate this reality, this could be true for monoracial people as

well.

       In *Rethinking College Student Development Theory* (Abes et al., 2019), Stewart

and Brown (2019) wrote a chapter on the way socially constructed identities are

complicated by both critical and poststructural paradigms. They wrote that "high-density

theorizing" helps complicate identity by "rejecting dehumanization" and "destabilizing

identity" (Stewart & Brown, 2019, pp. 117-118). High-density theorizing emphasizes

intersectionality and encourages identity exploration through the lens of multiple

identities shaping your experience. They wrote:

> Individuals, especially those with racially minoritized identities, must sift through
>
> multiple competing ideologies about their identities from social institutions and
>
> within their own identity communities. The process of engaging with
>
> institutionally conveyed social messages and multiple, varying, and conflicting
>
> interpersonal communities influences self and community understandings of what
>
> it means to hold a particular identity. Meaning-making and articulations of
>
> identity are therefore subject to (d)evolution and should be expected to (d)evolve
>
> across time and space (Stewart & Brown, 2019, p. 119).

In other words, identity is not fixed, and the competing, inconsistent messages make it

impossible for an identity to remain stagnant over time. This is true not just for the

individual but for our collective understanding of identity groups as well.

       My study contributes to the conversation in Stewart and Brown's (2019) chapter

by providing a multiracial lens to help demonstrate how this has always been true for

mixed-race development. The ability to respond to and navigate the unstable terrain of race by engaging in situational identity patterns is something Renn (2004) referred to as a "highly evolved skill requiring emotional maturity and cognitive complexity" (p. 80). In my own experience, I have to adapt based on the racial makeup of the environment, the geographical region, the topic being discussed, the political implications of claiming a particular racial identity, and so much more. While this may not directly translate to monoracial people, what is clear from my study and the excerpt above from Stewart and Brown (2019) is that the racial identity development theories commonly taught in HESA programs cannot fully capture the complexity of autonomy and authenticity in creating an identity.

This research question led to what I believe is the most significant contribution of my study: while a situational identity pattern may not neatly apply to all monoracial people, it is clear both from my research and the work by Stewart and Brown (2019) that race is less stable than Helms (1995), Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001), and other constructivists would suggest. This instability does not come from some deficit or unhealthy pattern of development for individual people, but rather from the shifting and evolving discourse around race in society. Future identity development models should not ignore the important contributions of multiracial identity development to unpacking situational identity. Additionally, multiracial identity development uniquely addresses the importance of an individual's racial identity being *accepted* by others. This complicates our thinking about both agency and authenticity in how racial identity is both performed and understood by others.

Recommendations and Implications

Further research is required to establish what the future of college student development theory is in the HESA field. As I discussed in this paper, we have been through three waves of theory (Jones & Stewart, 2016). Future research should explore what the potential fourth wave of theory could and should include in terms of its content, structure, and paradigm framing. An analysis of recent literature like Abes et al. (2019), Harris (2020), Okello (2018, 2020), and others is warranted. Additionally, a new book by editors Johnston-Guerrero and Wijeyesinghe (2021) called *Multiracial Experiences in Higher Education: Contesting Knowledge, Honoring Voice, and Innovating Practice* may have much to offer in terms of expanding the ideas in this paper about applying a multiracial lens to racial identity development theory. Johnston-Guerrero and Wijeyesinghe (2021) wrote:

> …higher education is a site of discourse, analysis, and knowledge building for subjects that create the contexts in which Multiracial lives are understood, questioned, researched, contested, embraced, and experienced. Almost every aspect of those contexts shifts over time in response to political advocacy and action, evolving cultural and political forces, and through insights gained from research and practice. Hence they require constant assessment and consideration…" (p. 15).

My study expands this idea to complicate the lives and experiences of monoracial people through a multiracial and situational lens. Further examination of this book may help illuminate more opportunities to challenge monoracial thinking with regard to racialization and agency.

Abes et al. (2019) provided a critique of first and second wave student development theory and offered a new wave situated in critical and poststructural paradigms. My study demonstrated the importance of shifting to these paradigms in order to appropriately account for the social construction of race and evolution of racialization. I build on the works in this book by suggesting that a fourth wave may be necessary for the HESA field to address race meaningfully for our students. Current and future students have had much greater exposure to critical perspectives on race and identity prior to arriving on our campuses, and our thinking must evolve as their identities and self-love challenge our existing models. Further research on this text could explicitly search for and explore openings to a fourth wave in the authors' recommendations.

This study also creates an opportunity for research on the resistance and/or adoption of change by HESA faculty, program directors, practitioners, and students as it relates to refreshing the syllabi on student development theory. Using organizational development theory and other theories which examine culture shifts in organizations, one might track HESA student development courses to see how they evolve with the emergence of the new literature mentioned above. The findings from this study may help inform those wanting to engage in a shift do so successfully. As I mentioned throughout this paper, there are faculty who shifted away from foundational theories already, including Nicolazzo. Being a student in her class after taking the class as a master's student using only *The Book* demonstrated to me that another way was possible. An examination into the experience of Nicolazzo and other faculty who deviated from the "doctrine" (Harris, 2020) in the field may illuminate tools for a collective shift.

Future research could also further explore situational identity development patterns in monoracial groups to develop a racial identity development theory. My own research interests align with this being a next step in my academic journey. Based on my findings, the emergence of a formal theory that destabilizes racial categories and rejects white supremacist notions of being could be critical in moving us to a fourth wave of identity development. The data showed that HESA faculty are still primarily using second wave theory to teach racial identity development, so a leap to a fourth wave is unlikely right away. However, as stated in the literature review, critical and poststructural theory are not new despite what student development syllabi would have us believe. A broader adoption of third wave theory can better prepare HESA faculty, scholars, and practitioners for this shift.

Okello's (2018, 2020) work on self-definition is critical to incorporate into fourth wave identity development models. I imagine future research in this area using a poststructural approach to find liberatory models of self-love and self-definition which resist white supremacist fallacies about race and anti-blackness. My findings demonstrated that second wave researchers positioned themselves as experts on their participants identities, even going so far as to pathologize them. Fourth wave models should center the voices and lived experiences of BIPOC people, specifically, and accept descriptive methods of reporting these experiences to others.

Second wave racial identity development theories focused on psychological, internal development patterns, and third wave theory brought in critical perspectives which challenged social contexts like racism and white supremacy. Fourth wave racial identity development models should create opportunities for dreaming and imagining

new possibilities of being that destabilize and unravel current conceptions of race. These

theories should reject the ascription of identities and embrace self-definition (Okello,

2018, 2020). Engaging in this sort of theorizing is dangerous for the prevailing discourse

on race and racialization, and it is necessary if we desire liberation from white

supremacist notions of our relationships to ourselves and others. HESA has an important

role to play in shifting the discourse and updating the archive on race and racial identity,

and I believe a fourth wave as described above is critical for the field to take lead in racial

emancipatory work.

HESA Faculty

As the people who create the syllabi and deliver course content, HESA faculty

have a responsibility to critically consider the pedagogical decisions they make in student

development courses. It is not enough to simply teach these courses as we were taught

(Harris, 2020). I provided evidence that our content could use a refresh, and whether we

abandon foundational theories altogether or make space to critically examine them while

adding perspectives from new informal theories, a new approach is warranted. HESA

faculty can no longer depend on *The Book* to be all-encompassing. Despite gains in the

supplemental text added to the third edition of Patton et al. (2016), the theories

themselves are outdated and lack the nuance required to meet the needs of our students.

HESA faculty can meet these needs by incorporating new and emerging work in

the field from diverse authors using critical and poststructural paradigms. Student

development courses should also introduce works from other fields to create an

interdisciplinary perspective on race and development. Fields like sociology, ethnic

studies, gender and sexuality studies, and even our colleagues in secondary education,

have evolved their thinking around these topics in important and useful ways (Apple, 2014; Iverson, 2007; Mobley & Johnson, 2019; Omi & Winant, 2014; Tatum, 1992). Future research could explore pedagogical choices made by faculty teaching these courses to determine how *The Book* is used and if it is needed to teach HESA graduate students about human development. Pilot or exploratory courses which use more interdisciplinary and contemporary literature may offer important insight into both faculty and student experiences departing from the traditional archive of student development theories.

HESA faculty should also recognize student development and racial identity development theory, specifically, as a form of discourse which contributes to a broader discourse on race on college campuses across the country. As the ones responsible for imparting this knowledge on practitioners who then use the knowledge to respond to student needs, HESA faculty hold a great deal of power to influence how race and racialization get discussed in higher education and beyond. Recognizing this as a form of discourse allows us to view the way power is disseminated through the language we use. Additionally, it frames *The Book* and the theories contained within it as an archive in our field which has dictated which knowledge is considered important to the HESA field for decades. The exclusion of newer authors, many from marginalized identity groups, is a form of gatekeeping which allows white supremacist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, etc. ideas about social identity to persist. It is time to allow new works into the archive, and HESA faculty can play a pivotal role in this process.

To be successful in making these changes, HESA faculty need support from colleagues, administrators, and other constituents to try something new and depart from

foundational texts. HESA faculty should consider the political, financial, or other

ramifications of such a departure and garner support from institutional allies or faculty

colleagues. Creating structural changes to things like CAS standards or ACPA/NASPA

competencies could offer the systemic support needed to be creative and inventive with

student development courses. Future research from HESA faculty could continue using

CDA as a method to examine the discourse on race in other theories or frameworks in the

field. This findings from this research may justify structural shifts in the field.

HESA Practitioners and Scholars

Like HESA faculty, HESA practitioners and scholars have power and

responsibility in moving theory forward both in and outside the classrooms. First,

scholars should bring a critical reflection of these theories into their class discussions

regardless of the content provided by the faculty. Social justice and equity are values and

expected competencies in the HESA field that get developed as early as graduate school

(Amey & Reesor, 2015). Scholars who also have assistantships or internships during their

time in the program can bring their practical experience into their student development

courses in meaningful ways to demonstrate how theory does/does not capture their work

with students. Taking an active role in their learning can encourage faculty to make space

for more critical conversations regarding course readings.

Despite the frequent use of the phrase "theory to practice" in the HESA field, the

day to day demands of our work make it difficult to give the necessary time to be

intentional about incorporating theory into our practice (Amey & Reesor, 2015). HESA

practitioners working to bring racial identity development theory into their work with

students should think critically and prioritize the voices of their students rather than using

these theories as diagnostic tools. As Stewart and Brown (2019) wrote, HESA practitioners should also engage in high-density theorizing that accounts for the role of intersecting identities in shaping experience. For example, a student struggling with their major may be struggling specifically at the intersection of their race, gender, and sexuality, and responding to the barriers only presented by race leaves their needs not fully met.

Finally, HESA practitioners and scholars should adopt a continuous learner mentality throughout their careers. As demonstrated by Harris's (2020) and my study, relying on the same, familiar source for information is ill-advised. As the field expands and responds to cultures at the macro, meso, and micro levels, so will the knowledge and practices recommended to support students through those transitions. Most HESA practitioners will not regularly return to the classroom throughout their careers, so there is a responsibility to continue professional development through association memberships, journal subscriptions, and other forms of informal education (Amey & Reesor, 2019). This could also assist with tensions between new and senior professionals who have different expectations and standards for how the HESA field should approach matters related to race and other identity development concerns.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to critically examine the way racial identity development theory taught in HESA graduate programs contributes to discourse on race. Specifically, I wanted to know if these theories contributed to harmful narratives about racial identity that help prop up white supremacy. I selected this topic because of my own experiences as a mixed-race woman taking two very different college student

development courses in my master's and doctoral programs which focused on theories from fundamentally different paradigms. Despite feeling more connected to and represented by critical and poststructural theories, I hypothesized that most HESA programs taught theories from positivist and constructivist frameworks.

I found that the majority of HESA programs represented in my study used the same core set of theories from the Patton et al. (2016) book for the past ten years. These theories (Helms, 1995; Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; & Renn, 2004) situated themselves in a constructivist paradigm and borrowed ideas and rules from the field of psychology. Although the theories acknowledged the social construction of race and external factors like racism played a part in racial identity development, they treated these as normal factors in society and focused on how skillfully individuals responded to construct "healthy" identities. Truncated for publication in the Patton et al. (2016) book, these theories lacked context and used numerous techniques like presupposition, insinuation, and omission to guide readers to incomplete conclusions about racial identity development which normalized whiteness and white supremacy.

The outlier in the group of theories was Renn's Ecological Mixed-Race Identity Development Theory (2004) which, unlike the others, prioritized participants' ability to name their own identities. Renn (2004) viewed all identity patterns for her participants as healthy and articulated how these patterns were heavily influenced by factors outside participants' control like environment, culture, physical appearance, and acceptance from others. I found that applying a multiracial lens to all racial identity development complicates notions of agency and authenticity in identity formation. I also demonstrated

how this lens can also promote a shift toward self-definition (Okello, 2018, 2020) for all

people, including monoracial communities.

By using a CDA methodology, I was able to situate the problem away from

individuals and their development and instead, direct the critique at the foundational

theories for the HESA field. I concluded that student development theory syllabi could

use a refresher by incorporating newer critical and poststructural works such as Abes et

al. (2019), Okello (2018, 2020), Harris (2020), and Johnston-Guerrero and Wijeyesinghe

(2021). HESA faculty can support this endeavor by critically examining their syllabi and

inviting critique of foundational theories in their classes. HESA practitioners and scholars

should be mindful of their incorporation of theory to practice to refrain from engaging in

diagnostic approaches to serving students and instead opting for high-density theorizing

which prioritizes intersectional analyses of student experiences.

My findings challenge existing theory by demonstrating that the theories prioritize

researchers' perspectives over participants', fail to appropriately account for racism and

white supremacy, and specifically, take power away from BIPOC students to define

healthy identities for themselves. The most significant contribution is the application of

situational identity to all racial groups as a way to acknowledge the instability of racial

categories based on a variety of key factors. Further research could further explore how

these findings may inform a fourth wave of student development theory which prioritizes

poststructural ways of thinking about race and identity and fosters conditions for self-

definition and self-love described by Okello (2018, 2020).

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