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**“IN OUR OWN WORDS”: EXPLORING FEMALE PSYCHOSOCIAL
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

by

Elizabeth Maier Marietta

**A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology**

**Western Michigan University
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“IN OUR OWN WORDS”: EXPLORING FEMALE PSYCHOSOCIAL STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Elizabeth Maier Marietta, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2001

On a continual basis student affairs professionals apply Chickering's (1969) theory of psychosocial student development theory to their work with college students (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In order to best serve their students it is, therefore, critical that the theory be accurate and representative. While Chickering's theory has received much acclaim, it has also been criticized throughout the years, particularly in the area of female student development (Straub, 1987; Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991). The purpose of the present study is to supplement existing theory by moving away from conceptual assertions based mainly on quantitative data gathered in the 1960s prior to vast social change within and beyond college campuses.

The research question examines the following: (a) a definition of self to include (but is not limited to) feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and values, relating to self as autonomous and in connection with others; and (b) the impact of college upon one's sense of self. Qualitative grounded theory methods and techniques are utilized, allowing for themes of female psychosocial student development to emerge. Women of varied races and cultures use their own words to describe themselves and the impact college has had upon the development of self. Applying their insights to

inform Chickering's theory will allow student affairs practitioners to more accurately meet the needs of their female students.

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I begin by thanking individuals I've yet to meet: the women researching and writing about female identity development. Their work has quietly instructed and inspired me. I must also acknowledge the college women who participated in the study for willingly opening their hearts and minds to a total stranger. I hope I did justice to their words and experience.

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Elizabeth Maier Marietta

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Theories of psychosocial student development are applied readily by student affairs professionals in their work with college students. In order to best serve their students it is, therefore, critical that theories accurately represents the students' experience. Chickering's (1969) theory of psychosocial student development is the most readily applied theory of its kind in the profession (Gilson, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; White & Hood, 1989). Since the theory's inception it has been both widely criticized and validated by numerous researchers (Greeley & Tinsley, 1988; Hood, 1982; Straub, 1987; Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991; Thieke, 1994; White & Hood, 1989). One of the areas of criticism has been the appropriateness of applying Chickering's theory to women, as researchers have pointed to ideas within Chickering's theory which may be biased against women or do not accurately represent their experiences (Straub, 1987; Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991). To answer his critics Chickering (along with colleague, Reisser) updated his theory in 1993. The updated version incorporates many recent assertions about development, including concerns around the validity of applying Chickering's work to female college students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The purpose of the present study is to inform existing psychosocial student development theory by applying qualitative methods to the examination of psychosocial

student development theory, allowing women to use their own words to describe themselves, as well as the impact college has had on the development of self. It is hoped that informing existing theory in this way will allow student affairs practitioners to more accurately meet the needs of their female students. A description of the project to include the rationale, significance of the findings, definitions of relevant terms, my perspective as a researcher, and the critical research questions is presented in the following sections.

Rationale for the Study

Five main reasons exist for researching female psychosocial development from a qualitative perspective in order to inform existing theory: (1) psychosocial student development theory is utilized to such an extent by student affairs professionals and academicians, that it is critically important to accurately represent the experience of all students, especially women (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Gilson, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; White & Hood, 1989); (2) historically women have been pathologized or excluded in the area of theory development (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Bohan, 1992; Crawford & Marecek, 1992; Denmark & Paludi, 1993); (3) it may be important to draw from ideas around female psychosocial development that were undiscovered when psychosocial student development theory was originally produced (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Helms, 1990; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991); (4) due to social change and shifting demographics it is likely women today are experiencing a college atmosphere that

is quite different from the college atmosphere their foremothers experienced when the original psychosocial student development theory was conceived (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Schuman & Olufs, 1995; Thornton, 1995); and (5) it may be extremely beneficial to apply methods that are qualitative and multicultural in nature to the study of psychosocial student development (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The rationale for those statements is explained further in the following sections.

The Importance of Continuously Analyzing Psychosocial Student Development

Understanding the psychosocial development of college students is a critical component of the work of student affairs professionals. Theories around psychosocial student development are consistently taught within student affairs masters and doctoral programs (Evans et al., 1998; Gilson, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; White & Hood, 1989). These theories are then brought to life within the student affairs setting, and incorporated into counseling and advising sessions, group sessions, programming, and publications. In order to comprehend the extent to which psychosocial student development theory is utilized in the practice of student affairs professionals, an illustration of theory follows: A judicial affairs advisor may work with an underage student who has been caught drinking and disturbing the peace. It is important for the advisor to understand that the student may be having difficulty handling her anger. The opinions of her peers who are encouraging her to drink are critically important to this 19-year-old student. Another example is that of a career

counselor who is working with a student who wants a summer internship but does not care if it relates to her career choice, only that she is able to live in New York with her friends. Again, understanding the importance of the student's peer group and her connections with her friends, as well as her status regarding vocational development, would assist the professional. If practitioners are applying theories whose validity may be changing with the times, they may not be appropriately addressing the needs of their students.

Historical Injustices to Women and Their Remedies

The social sciences have a history of either excluding women in the development of theory or pathologizing them (Belenky et al., 1986; Bohan, 1992; Crawford & Marecek, 1992; Denmark & Paludi, 1993; Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987). In an effort to move away from theories that suggest that women are deficient, many researchers have endeavored to study women from a non-patriarchal perspective. Examples include Gilligan's (1982) theory of moral reasoning, Belenky et al.'s (1986) description of women's ways of knowing, Josselson's (1987) exploration of female psychosocial development, and Jordan et al.'s (1991) ideas around the concept of a woman as a "self in relationship" to others. Though the recent theories have added extensively to the understanding of female development, there is still much work to be done before it can be said that the experience of women has been fully acknowledged.

Limited understanding of general female development begs the question of

whether or not women are appropriately represented in the area of college psychosocial student development theory as well. In fact, extensive research efforts have revealed ways in which psychosocial student development theory has not accurately represented women's experience (Straub, 1987, Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991). In response, Chickering's psychosocial student development theory has been updated to address those concerns (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). However, simply applying an existing template (i.e., the existing theory) to women does not allow for differences that the template may not uncover because it is limited by an inflexible design. Erikson himself, the initial author of general psychosocial theory, acknowledged the importance of uncovering the female voice, stating,

the fact that a woman, whatever else she may also be, never is not-a-woman, creates unique relations between her individuality, her somatic existence, and her social potentials and demands that the feminine identity be studied and defined in its own right. (Erikson, 1968, p. 290)

Informing existing theory to include the perceptions of college women relayed in a setting that allows for exploration and self-expression is one way of responding to Erikson's plea in reference to psychosocial development within the college setting. Applying this relevant and necessary addition to existing psychosocial theory would allow student affairs practitioners and professors to more appropriately address the needs of female college students.

Recent Ideas Around Female Development Informing Psychosocial Student Development Theory

Since psychosocial student development theory was originally defined, much progress has been made in the area of female development theory. Themes have arisen across several realms of development that strengthen the research and the resulting conclusions. For women the concepts of relationship and connection are critical in the areas of cognitive, moral, and psychosocial development (Belenky et al., 1986; Crawford & Marecek, 1992; Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987). According to the research, women have come to be viewed as persons in relation to one another (Jordan et al., 1991). Their relationships with others have very much to do with who they become (Josselson, 1987).

Beyond concepts of female identity, other varied aspects of psychosocial formation have been identified and layered upon psychosocial student development. While students are confronting issues related to psychosocial student development, they may be struggling with aspects of development that may not be discussed within the context of psychosocial student development (e.g., racial and ethnic identity development, gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity development) (Cross, 1995; Evans, et al., 1998; Helms, 1990). For example, according to Chickering and Reisser (1993), an African American sophomore is likely dealing with issues of competence, management of emotions, and autonomy. It is likely this student may also be struggling with issues around his/her racial identity (Cross, 1995; Evans, et al., 1998; Helms, 1990). The layering of developmental issues is an area of psychosocial

student development research and literature that is worthy of more elaborate and detailed study. The proposed research seeks to include the experience of women working through multi-layered development and draws upon the literature to inform the newly acquired concepts.

Today's College Women

Much of the existing psychosocial student development theory was originally composed 25-40 years ago, prior to widespread change in U.S. society. Two major historical events that impact colleges and universities were the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement. Today's university women are exposed to a college environment that is quite different from the atmosphere that existed at the time the original theories were conceived.

Also, the roles of women have changed drastically since the time of the original college student development research, the mid 1960s. Though college women today still develop their sense of self within a patriarchal society, they live in a world (and experience a college atmosphere) that differs greatly from the 1960s.

In addition, the profile of college women has changed dramatically since the 1960s as a result of the societal changes. For example, college campuses now include students from varied ethnic backgrounds and of varied age groups. Not only is it necessary to include the experience of students of diverse backgrounds, but to also realize the impact varying groups may have upon one another. A comprehensive presentation of demographic trends and changes within the college environment is

included in Chapter II.

Application of Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques
Within a Multicultural Context

Data that relies on qualitative techniques will add to the depth of knowledge gained from the original methodology that was used to form the basis of existing psychosocial student development theory. Chickering's (1971) original theory was based upon a five year study of student development, student and institutional characteristics, and attrition. Several instruments were used in "The Project on Student Development in Small Colleges": College Goals Rating Scales, Guide to College Visits and Reporting, College and University Environment Scales, Experience of College Questionnaire, Omnibus Personality Inventory, Strong Vocational Interest Blanks for Men and Women, Questionnaire on Religious Orientation, Student Questionnaire A, Student Questionnaire B, Test of Religious Knowledge, Institutional Classification Sheet, Attrition Study Questionnaire, Withdrawal Follow-up Questionnaire, and SAT and ACT scores. Although a comprehensive description of the scales is not available, they appear to be largely quantitative (e.g., questionnaire and rating scales). The subject pool included both men and women from the following institutions: Bryan College, Earlam, Easter Mennonite, Goddard, Malone, Messiah, Morris, Nasson, Sacred Heart, Salem, Shimer, Western New England, and Westmont (Chickering, 1966). The schools differed according to patterns of curriculum organization, religious emphasis, patterns of regulation and supervision, student-faculty relationships and sense of community, and institutional objectives. The ethnicity of

Chickering's sample is unknown. One may assume, however, that in the early 1960s small liberal arts colleges such as these enrolled few ethnic minorities, which would minimize the presence of students of color in his study. Though the quantitative techniques and the data that resulted were most useful, it would be beneficial to inform the original concepts with qualitative data gathered within a multicultural setting (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Significance of the Study

It is necessary to augment existing theory of female psychosocial student development in an effort to address the need to: (a) continually work toward an understanding of the psychosocial development of college students in order for student affairs practitioners to meet the needs of their students; b) remedy previous theorists' tendency to pathologize, marginalize, belittle, or exclude women in the area of theory development; (c) include newly developed female psychosocial and multiple identity development theories; (d) incorporate the experience of today's college women which may be quite different from the experience of their foremothers; and (e) apply grounded theory procedures and techniques within a multicultural setting.

Student affairs professionals and instructors depend upon the theories of college development to better understand and facilitate the growth of their students. Psychosocial student development theory forms the foundation upon which programming, consultation, and counseling is based. To rely upon perhaps patriarchal and outdated theories to inform student affairs practitioners and professors about

women's development is inappropriate. It would be most beneficial for women to inform student affairs practice to a larger extent. The goal can be achieved by allowing women to use their own words to describe their development. Applying grounded theory techniques and methods within a multicultural setting, and drawing upon more modern ideas around development when and if appropriate, will do justice to college women in a way that no other study that has addressed female student psychosocial development has done previously. It is hoped that the resulting data will inform existing theory, resulting in an increased understanding of the psychosocial development of university women.

The Definition of "Psychosocial"

In order to best comprehend the project, it is necessary to be aware of this researcher's definition of the concept of psychosocial, particularly within the context of student affairs. According to their book on student development in college, Evans et al. (1998) described psychosocial theory as that which "examines individuals' personal and interpersonal lives" (p. 10). Prominent psychosocial development theories (e.g., Marcia's model of identity status, Levinson's theory of adult identity development, and Josselson's conception of developmental pathways) focus on identity development as the psychosocial process of self definition (Evans et al., 1998; Josselson, 1987; 1996; Levinson, 1978, 1996; Marcia, 1966, 1980). The concept will also incorporate recent theories regarding the importance of "connection" (Jordan et al., 1991). Additionally, Erikson, one of the first researchers to study psychosocial

theory, viewed psychosocial development as a sequence of developmental stages or tasks encountered by adults when their “biology and psychology converge and qualitatively change their thinking feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and oneself” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 2). In general, psychosocial development theorists view development as continuous throughout the life span. Therefore, drawing upon the work of previous psychosocial development researchers, the concept of psychosocial is viewed as one’s self definition, examining individuals’ personal and interpersonal lives. Development may be continuous and involve qualitative change in feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and values, relating to self and others.

Research Question

The proposed research is meant to focus on the psychosocial development of today’s female college students from a qualitative and multicultural perspective. Informing the research question is the definition of the term “psychosocial” as proposed by prominent theorists within the field of psychosocial development as outlined above, with special emphasis on those that have studied female development (e.g., Jordan, et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987,1996; Levinson, 1996). Therefore, the question addresses the impact of college upon women’s sense of self, and can be dissected into the following: (a) a definition of self to include (but is not limited to) feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and values, relating to self as autonomous and in connection with others; and (b) the impact of college upon one’s sense of self as defined above.

Summary

Since psychosocial student development theory is utilized to such an extent by student affairs professionals and academicians, it is critically important to accurately represent the experience of all students, by giving women a voice as has never been done before in order to supplement existing theory. Utilizing grounded theory procedures and techniques, the study reveals thematic processes of psychosocial student development in order to accurately represent the experience of today's college women.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

In order to understand the psychosocial development of female college students it is helpful to be informed by the vast foundation of literature that addresses general psychosocial development, paying special attention to associated literature that relates to college students, and women in particular. This section is divided into four parts: (1) psychosocial development across the life span and adulthood, (2) previously ignored areas of psychosocial development, (3) female psychosocial development and the demographic profile of today's college students, and (4) psychosocial student development theory. The research discussed informs this study, adding to the strength and meaning of the resulting conclusions.

The Foundation of Psychosocial Student Development: Identity Development Theory

Life Span Identity Development

In his groundbreaking book, Childhood and Society (1950), Erikson presented an elaborate stage theory of identity development that focused on an individual's interactions with society. He is said to have been the most influential theorist of psychosocial development (Marcia, 1980). The theory grew out of his vast experience as

a psychoanalyst (Erikson, 1950). Erikson's work differed from Freud's, however, in that the focus was not on sexual conflicts and neurosis, but development of the ego, "man's capacity to unify experiences in an adaptive manner" (p. 15). Though Erikson did discuss his perceptions of female development, Horst (1995) acknowledged that, like many of the psychologists of his time, Erikson focused the majority of his attention on the masculine version of experience (p. 272).

The underlying assumptions of Erikson's theory are: (a) personality develops according to stages determined by the individual's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with society; and (b) society tends to meet and invite these stages, encouraging the proper sequence and rate of development (Erikson, 1950). The theory itself describes eight stages characterized by crises that occur across the life span from infancy to mature adulthood: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair (Santrock, 1981). When the crisis is resolved the individual moves on to the next challenge.

College students, according to Erikson's theory, are thought to be moving through the fifth stage, identity versus role confusion, and into the sixth stage, intimacy versus isolation. Identity is described as a "search for continuity and sameness within themselves" (Hall, Perlmutter & Lamb, 1982, p. 37). Intimacy is defined as the capacity to commit the self to concrete partnerships and affiliations, along with the strength to abide by these commitments even though they may call for

compromise (Erikson, 1968). Avoiding such experiences because of the fear of ego loss may lead to isolation and self absorption, and is, therefore, critical for women in college (Marcia, 1980).

One controversial aspect of Erikson's theory is of particular importance to the current research because it involves developmental concepts during adolescence and young adulthood. According to Morgan's (1982) analysis, the stages of Erikson's theory are similar for boys and girls until they reach adolescence, at which point development differs. During adolescence boys confront identity issues prior to intimacy issues, while identity and intimacy are developmental tasks that are fused for girls. It is necessary for girls to fill their "inner space" through relationship before their identities are formed (Erikson, 1968; Morgan, 1982). Some have interpreted Erikson to have meant that women wait for men to rescue them from emptiness and loneliness. Once they have been rescued they can pursue identity formation (Gilligan, 1982). Others perceive such interpretations as inappropriate and praise Erikson for appreciating the significance of relationship to female development (an observation that was far ahead of its time) (Horst, 1995).

The proposed difference between girls and boys regarding intimacy and identity development has also been criticized because of the ramifications of describing women's development as "delayed" as they focus on the interpersonal realm at the cost of the ideological and occupational realms (Erikson, 1968; Hodgson & Fischer, 1981). Critics acknowledge the interpersonal nature of female identity development, but propose instead that "female development is not delayed, but follows different

developmental pathways" (Hodgson & Fischer, 1981, p. 682). Thinking about development according to differential pathways rather than "faster or slower than" removes the negative connotation that may be equated with the concept of delayed development. This controversy over Erikson's theory roars on and necessitates further research and analysis, but it does not dull the monumental impact Erikson has had on the area of psychosocial development.

Building upon the work of Erikson, Marcia postulated four distinct identity formations, or identity statuses, that occur in response to the identity crisis Erikson characterized (Marcia, 1966, 1980). Marcia developed the identity statuses as a means to study Erikson's theory, but they have become a crucial element of the identity theory itself. Each status is characterized by the presence or absence of a decision-making period and the extent to which an investment (or commitment) has taken place in the areas of ideology (religion and politics), occupation, and interpersonal relationships and sexuality (sexual expression and sex-role beliefs). The resolution of the crises can be characterized in one of four ways (statuses): (1) the statuses are foreclosure (commitment, no exploration); (2) identity diffusion (no commitment, no exploration); (3) moratorium (no commitment, but exploration); and (4) identity achievement (commitment and exploration). For example, during college the traditional female student is experiencing a crisis regarding career choice. To resolve the crisis she either experiences foreclosure (e.g., commits to an occupation that is based on parental pressure, rather than a self-directed search), identity diffusion (e.g., makes no career decision, avoiding a commitment and the decision making process),

moratorium (e.g., continues to engage in the struggle, remaining in crisis), or identity achievement (e.g., commits to an occupation after engaging in a decision making process). According to Prager (1985), Marcia's identity statuses have been validated in over 30 studies. And, over the years, Marcia has revised his theory. For example, the theory began with only two areas of conflict and resolution: occupation and ideology. As the years (and research) has progressed, the areas of interpersonal relationships and sexuality have been acknowledged as well.

The concept of identity statuses first arose from research conducted in 1966 (Marcia, 1966). Individuals in Marcia's research participated in 15-30 minute semi-structured interviews, and completed the Ego Identity Incomplete Sentence Blank (EI-ISB) (a projective test), the Concept Attainment Task (CAT), and the Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ-F) (Marcia, 1966). Participants included 86 males (ethnicity is unknown) from Hiram college. Subsequently Marcia dedicated much attention to the inclusion of women, including them in his research and theory (Bilsker, Schiedel, & Marcia, 1988; Marcia & Friedman, 1970; Schenkel & Marcia, 1972; Schiedel & Marcia, 1985). Women were first acknowledged through the addition of an area that was thought to impact primarily female identity status: attitudes toward premarital intercourse, "an issue both unique to women and crucial in identity formation" (Marcia & Friedman, 1970, p. 251). This erroneous assumption was later amended. Interpersonal sexual concerns play a part in both male and female identity formation (Rogow, Marcia, & Slugoski, 1983), but to varying degrees. The sexual-interpersonal domain may be more important for women, while ideological concerns

may be more important for men (Bilsker et al., 1988). Future research efforts might do well to explore sexuality and interpersonal relations as separate entities. The importance of interpersonal relationships in women's lives apart from the sexual domain has been well documented in other areas of developmental study (Gilligan, 1982; Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987). Though the focus may vary, for both male and female college students, occupation, ideology (religion and politics), and interpersonal relationships and sexuality (sexual expression and sex-role beliefs) are now said to be critical aspects of identity development.

Both Erikson and Marcia made significant contributions to the psychosocial development literature across the life span. Several researchers have added to the psychosocial development research by highlighting growth throughout the adult years.

Adult Identity Development

In The Seasons of a Man's Life (1978), Daniel Levinson intentionally explored male adult identity development. He felt that possible differences between male and female development were enough to warrant research devoted to each. A study of both men and women "would do justice to neither group" (p. 9). His follow-up book, The Seasons of a Woman's Life (1996), addressed female adult development. Both works were based on his extensive knowledge of the work of Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, and Erik Erikson. Levinson crafted his method of study, "Intensive Biographical Interviewing," which allowed him to examine individuals' lives from

childhood to present in depth. He was careful to include individuals from varied ethnic backgrounds as well.

Levinson (1978, 1996) viewed development as a process, or journey, through the seasons, or eras, of the life cycle. In his book on male development, Levinson proposed his eras of adulthood: pre-adulthood (age 0-22), early adulthood (age 17-45), middle adulthood (age 40-65), and late adulthood (age 60-?) (Levinson, 1978). The pattern of human development (both male and female) described in The Seasons of a Women's Life (Levinson, 1996) differs from the former in two respects. First, the names of the periods have been changed to reflect a more accurate description of the eras (but the meanings are unchanged). The seasons unfold as follows: early adult transition (age 17-22), entry life structure for early adulthood (age 22-28), age 30 transition (age 28-33), culminating life structure for early adulthood (age 33-40), mid-life transition (age 40-45), entry life structure for middle adulthood (age 45-50), age 50 transition (age 50-55), culminating life structure for middle adulthood (age 55-60), late adult transition (age 60-65). Second, every cross-era is actually a component of both eras it joins. Hence, for each era there is a "cross-era transition" that finalizes the outgoing era and initiates the new one: a period of creating and maintaining an "entry life structure," a "mid-era transition" that allows for review and modification of the "entry life structure" and an exploration and formation of the new era, and a "culminating life structure."

In The Seasons of a Woman's Life Levinson (1996) illustrated the concept above through the biographies of female "homemakers", corporate-financial career

women, and academic career women. The women were between the ages of 35-45 and interviewed between 1980-1982. Therefore, the information about the college years revolved around memories of experiences between 1953 and 1969. The data, then, does not most accurately represent the experience of today's college women, but it is significant none-the-less. According to his theory, college women are experiencing the "novice phase" which involves "early adult transition" (age 17-22), and the first years of the "entry life structure for early adulthood" (age 22-28). Thus, college educators and administrators are encountering college women who are transitioning from high school, experiencing newfound freedom, and the opportunity to be themselves. During college they are designing the foundations (academic, interpersonal, occupational, political, spiritual, etc.) upon which to build their lives. As they are transitioning out of college and moving into the "entry life structure for early adulthood" era they are beginning to realize that life is about to truly begin. The remnants of childhood are slipping away as they are facing the exciting (yet frightening) adult world. The pressure to "grow up" has never been so great.

Gail Sheehy (1974, 1995) wrote about adult development based on personal biographies of men and women. Sheehy offered extensive demographic information in her book (e.g., occupation, religious background), but ethnicity was not recorded. She described the "trying (or tryout) twenties" (most relevant to traditional college students), "turbulent thirties", "flourishing forties", "flaming fifties", and "serene sixties." During the tryout twenties the task is to decide one's life course. According to Sheehy, today's college generation can be described as the "endangered generation"

(Sheehy, 1995). Unlimited choices, limited structure, and an economic squeeze pressures them into remaining in school for as long as possible. She claims the common apathetic lament, "*Whatever*," is needed to avoid inevitable disappointment.

The theorists cited above addressed psychosocial development across the life span and, in particular, adulthood. Because the proposed research is intended to add to existing psychosocial student development literature in order to provide a more accurate, and effective working theory, it is appropriate to survey psychosocial development theories that deviate from the more general life span literature. Taking into account individual and cultural differences as they relate to psychosocial development is one way of enhancing inclusivity.

College Women and Previously Ignored Areas of Psychosocial Development

Historically, psychosocial student development theory has assumed that the nature and process of development for persons of color mirrors that of Whites (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Assumptions of this nature were, and continue to be, inappropriate. To address and describe the experience of persons of color, theories of minority psychosocial development have been crafted. Helms developed a theory, for example, that is quite complex in order to address the varying racial identities and social influences in the United States (Evans et al., 1998). The theory is composed of four conceptualizations: (1) Black identity development theory, (2) People of Color identity development theory, (3) White identity development theory, and (4) People of Color-White Interaction model. The first three models delineate stages individuals

may experience, while the latter describes the nature of relationships. Specifically, Black persons move through the preencounter stage, encounter stage, immersion-emersion, and internalization. Similarly, People of Color may experience, in sequential order, conformity, dissonance, immersion-emersion, internalization, and integrative awareness. Persons sequencing through White identity development are said to experience contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independent, immersion-emersion, and autonomy. Finally, the racial identity interaction model describes the nature of subordinate/superordinate relationships of same-race and cross-race relationships as regressive (i.e., superordinate is unable to foster a subordinate's racial identity development), parallel (i.e., similarity in racial identity statuses of subordinate and superordinate members), and progressive (i.e., superordinate fosters development of subordinate's racial identity development). The importance of these developmental processes cannot be underestimated as students move through their college years and beyond. However, existing psychosocial student development theory has failed to include the concept of a racial identity. In fact, researchers have warned student affairs professionals not to assume Chickering's original theory appropriately applies to African American students, for example (McEwan, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 1990).

Sexual orientation as it relates to psychosocial development is also not addressed within existing psychosocial student development theory. However, it is likely that bisexual, lesbian, and gay students are not only dealing with the developmental stages Chickering discussed, but also their sexual and affectional orientation,

as well as their identity as a member of a sexual and cultural minority (Sullivan, 1998). A sexual orientation developmental theory has been developed that incorporates the notion of heterosexuals as the dominant group, and gay/lesbian/bisexuals as the target group in a society which is homophobic, disparages lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons and cultures, and oppresses their relationships. The stages include: (a) naiveté, (b) acceptance, (c) resistance, (d) redefinition, and (e) internalization. Another gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity development theorist is Cass (Evans et al., 1998). The theory is based upon the assumption that defining oneself as a homosexual is developmental and is based upon the interaction between the self and the environment. Stages include: (a) identity confusion (i.e., individuals first experience homosexual thoughts, feelings, and attractions, and often experience anxiety and confusion); (b) identity comparison (i.e., acceptance of the possibility that they are gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and begin addressing how to handle probable social alienation); (c) identity tolerance (i.e., acknowledgment of gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity); (d) identity acceptance (i.e., perception of gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity in positive terms); (e) identity pride (i.e., concentrate on gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual identity and issues, while minimizing contact with heterosexuals); and (f) identity synthesis (i.e., balance of gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity with other aspect of personality, accompanied by increased security and comfort with identity).

Another aspect of identity is that of spiritual development. Recent literature acknowledges spirituality as critical to students' psychosocial development (Love & Talbot, 1999). Processes that are critical to spiritual development include: (a) the

search for authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness; (b) continual transcendence of one's current locus of centrality; (c) development of greater connection with others and community; (d) attainment of meaning, purpose, and direction; and (e) increased openness to a power beyond rationalism and human existence.

In order to address the needs of all students ideas around racial, gay/lesbian/bisexual, and spiritual psychosocial development will inform the proposed research. Beyond the recent theories that have arisen, it is also important to keep in mind the needs of disabled students, non-traditional students, transgender students, feminists, and international students. The list may be limitless.

In addition, several theorists have directly addressed the injustice of excluding, and at times even pathologizing, women in the area of psychosocial development. It is important to include an in-depth discussion of their work.

Psychosocial Development and Demographics of Today's College Women

Female Psychosocial Development

From moral development, to cognitive development, to general psychosocial development, the importance of connection in women's lives is now acknowledged and celebrated (Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Jordan et al, 1991; Josselson, 1987). Perhaps it is time for student affairs to embrace the possibility that relationship and connection may play a major role in female psychosocial student development as well. The following section highlights the literature that addresses this breakthrough.

In Finding Herself (1987) Josselson discussed the differential pathways women follow as they develop their identities. She accomplished this by presenting Erikson's theory of identity and Marcia's concepts of identity statuses (i.e., foreclosure, identity diffusion, moratorium, and identity achievement) by way of female illustrations. Josselson interviewed 60 college senior women and conducted follow-up interviews with 34 of these women 12 years later. The women had diverse backgrounds (e.g., urban vs., rural childhood settings, college settings, social strata); however, the ethnicity of the participants was not identified. Josselson believed that it was important for women to have a voice, in order to define themselves. She recognized the absence of the feminine voice in developmental theory. Her methods empowered women, allowing the composition of female development to take shape through their narratives. Ultimately, the research design was informed by Eriksonian thought, but also allowed for discovery. Each woman was given Marcia's Identity Status Interview and an open ended, semi-structured interview. Josselson concluded her book with a reflection on the female experience that stressed the importance of connectedness and interrelatedness. "Women move along in the world through relational connections: Whom they know has much to do with whom-and how-they become" (1987, p. 169). It is likely college women are following their own path of development as they form an identity that is greatly impacted by their relationships with others.

Josselson continued her observations of 30 of the original 60 women in a second book, Revising Herself (1996). She considered it to be a "meditation on

women's lives" from age 21 to 43 (p. viii). Again, she employed Marcia's Identity Status Interview, as well as an open-ended, semi-structured interview. The interviews led her to believe that identity is continuous and greater than the mere sum of its parts. Not only do women move through different eras, they continue to make and remake their identities, allowing for both continuity and change. Josselson also illustrated four paths of female identity formation that are defined by the level of exploration and commitment (similar to Marcia's identity statuses): guardians, pathmakers, searchers, and drifters. The concepts were illustrated through women's personal histories. Josselson viewed the four categories as starting points, or gateways into adulthood for traditional college women. By understanding the paths of psychosocial development their students traverse during college, faculty and student affairs professionals can be more informed about and helpful to their students.

Another theorist who has been recognized for her extensive contribution to the field of the psychology of women is Carol Gilligan (Denmark & Paludi, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Rodgers, 1989). Although her formal theory is considered cognitive-structuralist, her groundbreaking work is relevant to a discussion of female psychosocial development. Based on a thorough analysis of developmental literature and interviews with women about moral decision making, Gilligan (1982) discussed the importance of care, connectedness, and responsibility, to women's identity. According to Gilligan, women tend to define themselves in the context of human relationship, which has historically been viewed as a weakness in a society that focuses on individuation and autonomy. Gilligan maintained that

women's appreciation of relationship is not a weakness, but merely a difference that commonly exists between men and women. Although she did not specifically address women's development in college, her recognition of the concept of care and relatedness as critical to women's lives should be taken into consideration as teachers, counselors, and others think about and work with college women.

Judith Jordan and her colleagues (1991) believe it is necessary to move beyond female deficiency models to models that value women's strengths as well. Their work focuses on the concept of "self-in-relation." "Self-in-relation" is one way to describe the way women develop and experience their lives. From infancy onward girls learn to be "beings in relation," learning to feel as others feel. For girls and women a sense of effectiveness stems from their emotional connections with others. Maintenance of relationships with key people in their lives is often the most important aspect of their sense of self. This is not to say that women do not develop a sense of competency, agency, or initiative, for example, but that those critical aspects of self are developed within the context of key relationships.

These recent developments on female psychosocial development inform the proposed research. In addition, the current study not only adds to the body of research on psychosocial student development, but general female identity development as well.

The Current Generation of College Women

It is likely women today are experiencing a college atmosphere that is quite

different than the environment their foremothers experienced prior to the middle to late 1960s when psychosocial student development theory was originally conceived. It is important to understand the demographic profiles of current college women in order to create a participant pool and theory that represents their experience.

Universities have been transformed from institutions that were previously typically Eurocentric in nature, into more culturally inclusive establishments. College curriculums have been revised to include special study programs that raise awareness and knowledge of issues and history surrounding diverse groups (Bowser, Jones, & Young, 1995; Roberts et al., 1994; Schuman & Olufs, 1995). Discussions around topics such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion are now critical to the college experience. For women, specifically, the Women's Movement has not only impacted the curriculum changes, but has led to the existence of women's programming, women's organizations, and women's centers that offer information, libraries, and counseling for female students and staff, providing a place for women to hold meetings and relax in the presence of one another.

Also, the roles of women have changed drastically since the time the original college student development research was undertaken. Women's career aspirations have been dramatically transformed, now almost mirroring that of their male counterparts' (Pearson, Shavik, & Touchton, 1989). Though men still dominate the physical and engineering sciences, and women dominate teaching and nursing, the doors of employment are opened much wider than they were in the early 1960's when college psychosocial theory was developed.

Finally, many identifying characteristics have changed over the course of the last thirty years. Demographic research has uncovered many defining characteristics of today's college students. First, over the past thirty years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women attending college. For example, women accounted for 93% of the increase of enrollment in colleges and universities from 1965 to 1978 (Lauter & Howe, 1978). Currently, more than half of all college students are women (Schuman & Olufs, 1995). Second, the university has become more multicultural in nature. Still, the vast majority of college students are White. Minorities (persons of Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American heritage) make up 25.7% of the college population (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). Whereas, the number of White undergraduates increased by 5.1% from 1984 to 1994, minorities increased 61%. Third, students are moving away from the "traditional." Most recently, 40-44% of college students were over 25 years of age, 54% were working, and 43% were attending part-time (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Schuman & Olufs, 1995). In addition, of those students age 18-24 ("traditional" college students) who were attending college full-time in 1996, 46% were also employed (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). Therefore, college women today are quite diverse, which presumably differs greatly from the demographic makeup of the small, liberal arts, religious university students that were studied in the original college psychosocial student development studies.

The current research is informed by an appreciation for recent demographic trends, psychosocial development of populations that were previously ignored, and the monumental strides in understanding female psychosocial development. Finally,

theorists who have researched the psychosocial development of college students in particular are of interest. A handful of theorists come to mind: Roy Heath, Douglas Heath, and Arthur Chickering.

College Psychosocial Student Development

In The Reasonable Adventurer (1964), Roy Heath presented his description of college male development and personality characteristics based on interviews with 36 Princeton males from freshmen to senior year. Heath (1969) postulated a theory of college development that was presumably based on the Princeton research and the work of others (e.g., Konrad Lorenz's work regarding aggression and Alden Wessman and David Rick's research on mood). Heath defined the following four hallmarks of a well developed person: (1) intellectuality (i.e., playing with ideas, altering between intense curiosity and relaxed reflection); (2) depth of interpersonal relations (i.e., open friendships which allow for continued discovery and sharing); (3) negative capability (i.e., the ability to live with uncertainty, mystery, and doubt); and (4) autonomy based upon inner form (i.e., autonomy which is based on an awareness and acknowledgment of urges, fears, beliefs, fascinations, and sources of satisfaction). Limited subsequent literature exists regarding Heath's theory or its application to women. It may not be appropriate for university faculty and staff to apply his theory to their work with all college students. Still, the four aspects of psychosocial development he posits are intriguing. For example, Heath acknowledged the importance of deep interpersonal relationships which are now widely accepted as extremely

important for women (Gilligan, 1982; Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987). Revisiting and updating Roy Heath's theory using research methods that include women and minorities may be beneficial in future.

During the 1960's researcher, Douglas Heath was also studying college psychosocial student development. His book, Growing Up in College (1968), explored the maturation process during college, based on "a small number of men in one college" (p. x). He described maturation as developing intellectually, forming guiding values, becoming knowledgeable about self, and developing social, interpersonal skills. Later, based on his extensive review of literature and philosophical thought, and empirical research, Heath proposed a model of maturity that consisted of "five interdependent dimensions in the four principal sectors of life" (Heath, 1977, p. 7). The five dimensions include: (1) symbolization (i.e., the ability to represent one's life through symbols such as writing, speech, music); (2) allocentricism (or "other centeredness"); (3) integration of self; (4) stability; and (5) autonomy (Heath, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Development along each of these dimensions impacts the following four personality characteristics (or the "four sectors of life"): (1) cognitive skills, (2) self-concept, (3) values, and (4) personal relations. The process of becoming is complex as the five dimensions interact with the four principal sectors of life.

Douglas Heath's (1977) model of maturation is compelling. However, there is no mention of the application of his theory to female college students (Heath, 1968, 1977). Heath did include women in his later book, Fulfilling Lives: Paths to

Maturity and Success (1991), as he continued his examination of healthy maturation into middle-age. He revisited the men from his earlier studies but included their wives as well at the wives' request. The wives wished to participate fully in the middle-age phase of the study and Heath readily agreed. It is difficult to assume, however, that his theory of maturation during early adulthood represents the experience of traditional female college students since they were not included in his original work.

Though Roy Heath and Douglas Heath have made valuable contributions to the field, no other theorist has made a greater impact on psychosocial student development theory than Chickering (Gilson, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Rodgers, 1989; White & Hood, 1989). Building upon the "identity" concept initially constructed by Erikson, Chickering (1969) created his original theory of psychosocial student development. The theory integrates Erikson's identity concept, psychosocial literature, and Chickering's research for "The Project on Student Development in Small Colleges." There has been much controversy over specific aspects of the theory that resulted in a recent revision (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Both the original theory, an analysis of the literature surrounding it, and the revised version of the theory are presented.

Chickering's (1969) original theory cites the following seven vectors (successive stages) as critical to college psychosocial student development: (1) developing competence, (2) managing emotions, (3) developing autonomy, (4) establishing identity, (5) freeing interpersonal relationships, (6) developing purpose, and (7)

developing integrity. The stages are considered to be "vectors," referring to the direction and magnitude of development as students react and adapt to the college experience. Developing competence refers to a heightened sense of intellectual, physical, and interpersonal competence. Managing emotions involves an increased capacity to manage the two major impulses of aggression and sex, as well as other emotions. The recognition of one's interdependence, and emotional and instrumental independence are tasks that are important during the development of autonomy. When the first three vectors have been accomplished it is likely a sense of identity has been formed. The resolution of these first four vectors allows for the development of the final three vectors. Freeing interpersonal relationships refers to an increased capacity to interact with others, capacity for and maintenance of intimacy, and tolerance and respect for diverse backgrounds and values. Clarifying purpose involves a heightened understanding of the future regarding self, lifestyle, and career. The existence of a personally valid set of beliefs that guides behavior is important to the development of integrity.

Chickering (1969) also recognized several environmental conditions that affect developmental change: (a) clarity and consistency of objectives, (b) institutional size, (c) curriculum, teaching, and evaluation, (d) residence hall arrangements, (e) faculty and administration, and (f) friends, groups, and student culture.

As discussed earlier, the grant that funded "The Project on Student Development in Small Colleges" was entitled, NIMH Grant MH 147780-04. The five year study of student development, student and institutional characteristics, and attrition

resulted in several papers, culminating in his book, Education and Identity (Chickering, 1969). Mainly quantitative instruments were used in "The Project on Student Development in Small Colleges" : College Goals Rating Scales, Guide to College Visits and Reporting, College and University Environment Scales, Experience of College Questionnaire, Omnibus Personality Inventory, Strong Vocational Interest Blanks for Men and Women, Questionnaire on Religious Orientation, Student Questionnaire A, Student Questionnaire B, Test of Religious Knowledge, SAT and ACT scores, Institutional Classification Sheet, Attrition Study Questionnaire, and the Withdrawal Follow-up Questionnaire (Chickering, 1971). The subject pool included both men and women from the following 13 small colleges: Bryan College, Earlam, Eastern Mennonite, Goddard, Malone, Messiah, Morris, Nasson, Sacred Heart, Salem, Shimer, Western New England, and Westmont (Chickering, 1966). Differences among the schools included: (a) patterns of curriculum organization, (b) religious emphasis, (c) patterns of regulation and supervision, (d) student-faculty relationships and sense of community, and (d) institutional objectives. Though not discussed, one can assume the ethnicity of the participants was primarily White because in the early 1960's small liberal arts colleges such as these enrolled few ethnic minorities.

Chickering's theory has received much attention from student affairs professionals and investigators. Researchers have studied Chickering's theory of psychosocial development at length (Greeley & Tinsley, 1988; Hood, 1982; Straub, 1987; Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991; Thieke, 1994; White

& Hood, 1989). The studies have differed according to focus, size of institution, and amount of demographic data presented. Aspects of Chickering's theory have been validated (Greeley & Tinsley, 1988; Hood, 1982; White & Hood, 1989). For example, there appears to be substantial growth in the development of freeing interpersonal relationships from the first year of college to the senior year (Hood, 1982). Also, a high level of awareness of emotions and the ability to effectively manage them (i.e., managing emotions vector) is related to progress toward understanding abilities, limitations, and personal standards (i.e., personal and social development) (White & Hood, 1989). Some of the studies have found inconsistencies in Chickering's theory, however. Hood (1982), for instance, reported no substantial change from the beginning of the first year to the senior year in the development of purpose, and negative growth in the establishment of identity.

Another area that has garnered much attention is the degree to which Chickering's original theory could be applied to students of color. McEwen et al., (1990) cautioned against applying existing student development theory, such as Chickering's to African American students. In fact, Branch-Simpson (cited in Rodgers, 1989) reported that Black students' development may differ from that proposed by Chickering, citing less alienation from self and family (than White students) during their development of autonomy. Research specific to the process and content of psychosocial student development of women of color is extremely limited.

Not only may Chickering's (1969) original theory be more applicable to

White students, it may be most applicable to White male students. Several researchers used the quantitative methods developed to assess Chickering's student development theory and unearthed ways in which his theory did not accurately apply to women (Straub, 1987; Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991). It has been discovered, for instance, that women sequence through Chickering's stages in a different order than he originally proposed. According to Chickering, men and women encounter issues around autonomy prior to freeing interpersonal relationships. Straub and Rodgers (1986), however, discovered that women focus on freeing interpersonal relationships before they develop autonomy. In fact, the capacity to develop healthy and stable relationships may create a secure foundation that allows autonomy to emerge (Straub, 1987; Taub, 1995). This finding runs parallel to recent theories of women's development that stress the importance of relationship and connection to others (Gilligan, 1982; Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987). It has also been suggested that if female student development focuses on connectedness, the attainment of autonomy may be less important for college women than it is for their male counterparts (Taub & McEwen, 1991). In sum, for women, the development of freeing interpersonal relationships often occurs prior to the development of autonomy and remains important throughout the college years. For this reason, Straub (1987) concluded that "Chickering's [original] theory may be more applicable to men than to women" (p. 199).

Chickering himself acknowledged the vast literature that pointed to concerns surrounding the theory. This led to the following updated version of his theory: (a)

developing competence; (b) managing emotions; (c) moving through autonomy toward interdependence; (d) developing mature interpersonal relationships; (e) establishing identity; (6) developing purpose; and (f) developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans et al., 1998). These updated vectors differ from the previously established vectors in several ways. The vector that addresses development of interpersonal relationships has been renamed (i.e., relationships are no longer identified as “freeing”), and the vector has been placed before the establishment of identity. Also, rather than identifying the third vector as the development of autonomy, the name has been changed to “moving through autonomy toward interdependence” (i.e., students develop independence which includes mobility and self-direction, and also come to recognize the importance of interdependence or interconnectedness with others). Chickering and Reisser’s updated version addresses many of the concerns surrounding the original theory (particularly in regard to women), highlighting the importance of connection and interrelatedness.

Summary

Appreciating the concepts surrounding psychosocial development across the life span, particularly the concepts surrounding college women, is important as one undertakes a project that explores psychosocial student development. Some aspects of the literature inform the research more than others, as concepts unfolded throughout the process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The use of existing psychosocial student development theory is prevalent among student affairs academicians and professionals (Gilson, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; White & Hood, 1989). The literature points to possible concerns regarding the appropriateness of applying existing theory to college women, indicating supplemental work is needed to move beyond the existing theoretical framework that may mask significant dimensions of psychosocial development (Straub, 1987; Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991). Such an undertaking rests on women's participation in a research project that is meant to describe their experience. A particular method of inquiry, grounded theory procedures and techniques, have been used to allow for themes of psychosocial development to emerge. Grounded theory methodology is guided by the research participants, the data, and the analysis throughout the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Information that informs existing psychosocial student development theory results. In order to best relay the methodology used in this study the chapter includes a presentation of: (a) the research question, (b) theoretical underpinnings and the researcher's perspective that serve as a foundation for data collection and interpretation, (c) the method of managing and employing a unique perspective, (4) the

participants, (5) Human Subjects Institutional Review Board procedures, (6) data collection methods, and (7) data analysis.

Research Question

The research examined psychosocial development of today's traditional female college students from a qualitative and multicultural perspective. Informing the research question was the definition of the term "psychosocial" as proposed by prominent theorists within the field of identity development, particularly those who have studied female identity development (e.g., Jordan, et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987, 1996; Levinson, 1996). According to their book on student development in college, Evans et al. (1998) describe psychosocial theory as that which "examines individuals' personal and interpersonal lives" (p. 10). Prominent psychosocial theories (e.g., Marcia's model of identity status, Levinson's theory of adult psychosocial development, and Josselson's conception of developmental pathways) focus on development as the psychosocial process of self definition (Evans et al., 1998; Josselson, 1987; 1996; Levinson, 1978, 1996; Marcia, 1966, 1980). However, in order to encompass recent theories as to the importance of connection pertaining to the definition of self for women, the concept of psychosocial within this study includes a definition of self, not only as separate, but also as a self-in-relation to others (Jordan, et al., 1991). Additionally, Erikson, one of the first researchers to study psychosocial theory viewed psychosocial development as a sequence of developmental stages or tasks encountered by adults when their "biology and psychology converge and

qualitatively change their thinking feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and oneself “ (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 2). In general, psychosocial development theorists view development as continuous throughout the life span. Therefore, drawing upon the work of previous psychosocial development researchers, the concept of psychosocial is viewed as one’s self definition, examining individuals’ personal and interpersonal lives. Development may be continuous and involve qualitative change in feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and values, relating to self and others. Therefore, the research question addressed the impact of college upon women’s sense of self, and can be dissected into the following: (a) a definition of self to include (but not limited to) feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and values, relating to self as autonomous and in connection with others; and (b) the impact of college upon one’s sense of self.

The Foundation

Theory

Appropriately drawing upon theoretical foundations of psychosocial and related literature was critical. Existing literature cited in the previous chapter informed the research. In particular, existing general and female psychosocial development, as well as college student psychosocial development theory served as the theoretical foundation. General life span psychosocial development theory is characterized by Erikson’s (1950) theory of identity development, Marcia’s identity statuses (1966, 1980), and Levinson’s theory of adult identity development (1978, 1996), for

example. Also, research that has been undertaken to acknowledge the experience of specific populations and particular developmental issues (e.g., racial and ethnic identity development, gay/lesbian/bisexual identity development, the importance of spirituality in reference to psychosocial development) informed the study (Cass, 1979; Cross, 1995; Evans et al., 1998; Helms, 1990; Love & Talbot, 1999; Sullivan, 1998). Further, literature that addresses female psychosocial development includes the work of Josselson (1987, 1996), Gilligan (1982), and Jordan et al. (1991) in reference to connection as critically important to female psychosocial development. Finally, the research, and the original and revised theory of psychosocial student development proposed by Chickering (1969) also informed the current study (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The above theories were presented at length in Chapter II.

Researcher's Perspective

Beyond a clear understanding of the theoretical underpinnings that are guiding the study, as a researcher engaged in the process of uncovering perhaps previously undiscovered themes that will serve to inform a readily applied theory, it is extremely important to be aware of one's biases and perspectives. I was raised in a White, upper middle class family from a small mid-western town. This environment was in no way diverse, and through the years I have worked to combat an uncomfortable feeling of "other-than" that existed when in the presence of minorities because of this. I honestly have trouble getting in touch with beliefs I may have had during those years, yet it is likely as a woman brought up in a racist, patriarchal society I had

notions about people that were quite stereotypical about minorities and persons whose lifestyles differed from my own. I remember simply feeling different and uncomfortable because my world did not include others that were unlike me.

The world began to broaden as I spent my undergraduate years at an extremely liberal, large Big Ten university, where I became involved in efforts to empower women, and majored in psychology. Though the university was extremely proud of the liberal underpinnings, experiences that fostered a non-judgmental attitude did not readily exist. The minority population was extremely low, and my experience with persons of color (beyond international students) did not increase significantly. However, I became a peer counselor at a women's center, and that was the first in a series of positions that encouraged female empowerment for several years to come. Work at the women's center was also my first involvement with persons who identified as lesbian. The idea that the lifestyle was significantly different from my own as a heterosexual was dismissed and I very much respected the women I knew who identified as lesbian. Any stereotypical beliefs of woman as "less than", and the lesbian lifestyle as offensive were beginning to unravel. Also, as a psychology major I began thinking in terms of how and why individuals think and behave in the ways they do, and how I might aid persons with difficult emotional issues.

My "liberal" college attitude was challenged as I enrolled in a master's Counseling Psychology program in a large public university in the South. My education that had engendered the "liberal" attitude had actually provided me with a whole new set of stereotypes about the South and its people. Stereotypes that characterized

all southern Whites as racist and stupid were readily challenged, and for the first time my immediate world expanded to include persons of color. I remained in the South and began work as a counselor in a homeless shelter, where my work involved persons of varied races and a socioeconomically disadvantaged population to which I had never before been exposed.

Several years later I began the student affairs program at Western Michigan University. I brought with me baggage from the past, including stereotypical beliefs. I had begun, and had made significant progress, challenging those ideas and had replaced them with the reality of individual difference, the importance of celebrating difference, and the dangers of generalizing about and judging races, lifestyles, and other non-majority attributes. At WMU I enrolled in course work that challenged me to explore stereotypical beliefs further, through readings, discussion, and experience. Once entering the present study, I challenged myself to confront the remaining vestiges of stereotypical thoughts that could enter into my mind, however fleeting.

Another bias that may have impacted the study (from participant recruitment, to selection, to the interview, to the analysis) is my identification as a feminist. As a feminist I believe that all women have been, and continue to be, treated unfairly on a number of levels within our society. Though women are afforded many personal freedoms in the United States, I believe the US remains a patriarchal society that rewards traditionally male characteristics. For example, on the professional front, jobs that embody traditionally male characteristics (i.e., aggression, individualism) are rewarded financially and with increased status, as compared to jobs that embody

traditionally female characteristics (e.g., compassion, nurturance). However, at present my passion as a feminist has not translated into extensive efforts to study feminist literature and research beyond literature reviewed in the current study.

Personal knowledge of psychosocial and related theory may be described as the researcher's theoretical sensitivity (i.e., a personal quality within the researcher that exposes the subtleties of the data) and impacted my perspective as a researcher (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For example, I began the study of general psychosocial development theory through limited exposure to Erikson's work as an undergraduate and continued during master's training in counseling psychology, and was discovered again as I began to write the research proposal in 1997. Appreciation for and analysis of psychosocial student development theory began seven years ago at the beginning of training as a student affairs professional and was soon utilized in practice as a professional in various student affairs positions. Working knowledge of psychosocial theory allowed me to identify consistencies and inconsistencies as they relate to existing theory.

The Method of Managing and Employing a Unique Perspective

The feminist bias may manifest itself in a number of ways, both positive and negative. A positive aspect of my history of working toward female empowerment, coupled with an academic focus on women's issues, allowed for a theoretical sensitivity that encouraged me to uncover subtle aspects of the research that an individual without such bias may not identify. This relatively unique perspective within the

world of psychosocial development research provided a lens that may have unearth previously undisclosed tendencies.

In reference to identification as a feminist, one negative result may have been a tendency to discount the male perspective. I did not include men in the study because their experience has been studied at length previously by male researchers (e.g., Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1950; Levinson, 1978; Marcia, 1966, 1980). However, further study that mirrors the proposed research may be beneficial to give male students of this generation a similar voice. Another example would be a tendency to look for and magnify differences between men and women. In addition, a tendency may have been to concentrate on aspects of the data that were consistent with the literature on female development and ignore aspects that discounted the literature. I worked to challenge myself to remain open to all possibilities of interpretation.

It was also necessary to manage other biases that could enter into the research process. As a student affairs professional and student I have a working knowledge of psychosocial theory that informs analysis in a positive way, but could cloud the possibility for discovery as well. It was necessary to monitor continuously my thoughts and interpretations, and rely on methods that enhanced the trustworthiness of the data described below.

In addition, it was important to monitor bias in reference to my personal history as a White woman from a small mid-western town. As I interviewed women and examined the transcripts, it was important to be aware of the need to challenge myself if I felt uncomfortable around those that disclosed traits or ideas that differed

from my thoughts or history. It was also necessary to acknowledge the discomfort and confront it by encouraging the reality of the situation to overpower the irrational thoughts or feelings.

Beyond being attentive to self (i.e., thoughts, reactions, or emotions that indicate I was acting upon stereotypes or biased perceptions), it was important to engage in specific methods that are said to limit researcher bias, increase credibility, and allow for the participants thoughts to be most authentically represented: (a) application of established grounded theory techniques and procedures (e.g., open coding, axial coding, selective coding); (b) allowance for creativity; (c) adherence to an attitude of skepticism; (d) engagement in peer debriefing; and (e) solicitation of member checking, (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It was important to be aware of methods that limit bias, but not allow them to be rigid standards that detract from the creative process, and for the research itself to guide the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Collection of data, coding, and analysis took place continually and cycled back upon one another. Such techniques allowed for responsiveness to the data itself and specific methods (e.g., interview protocol, coding procedures) to be modified if necessary. Embracing creativity encourages one to move away from existing theory and allow for new thoughts and ideas to be generated in keeping with the data. Also, in order to foster objectivity an attitude of skepticism was maintained (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Categorizations, hypotheses, questions, or theoretical assertions were considered provisional, and checked against the data again and again to verify their appropriateness. Ongoing and periodic discussions with a colleague

who is knowledgeable about the methodology but not engaged in the study herself, the process of peer debriefing, was necessary (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Though the colleague is also a White heterosexual with a psychology background, she did not consider herself to be a feminist. She was presented with samples of the data and asked to discuss her observations and interpretations. Conclusions were presented to her and she was asked that she be mindful of misinterpretations or biases.

In order to further enhance authenticity, built into the data collection procedures was the solicitation of member checking in which participants were asked to react and respond to my reconstruction of the information they had provided in interview form. Upon coding the transcript, meetings were scheduled in which interpretations were discussed, asking if the inferences made were consistent with her meaning. The above techniques assisted in the management of researcher bias, while at the same time employing a theoretical foundation that provided a unique, informed perspective, that added to the existing psychosocial literature in a meaningful way.

The Participants

The basic criterion used to select participants was the likelihood that their participation addressed the research question and led to meaningful data to inform existing theory. The purpose of the proposed research was to explore the conceptual themes of female psychosocial development during college. Therefore, the participant pool included college women from each class year. Based on the critique of previous psychosocial student development literature, it was extremely important to

include women who represent a variety of demographic constituencies. However, one also must be careful to place boundaries upon the research as it is impossible to study all aspects of the research phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, the participant pool included female students of different ethnic identities, age 18- 22, from each class year (e.g., first year, sophomore, junior, senior, fifth year). (Because interviews took place in the fall it was important to include fifth year students or graduates in order to get their perspective on psychosocial development senior year.) This purposive sample was selected from a small, liberal arts university in the north-eastern region of the US. Approximately 75% of the students graduated in the top quarter of their senior class, and approximately 33% of those students were valedictorians. Seventy-five percent of the undergraduates held financial aid awards in the forms of scholarships, grants, loans, and part-time campus employment. As it was necessary for this researcher to place realistic boundaries on the research due to time constraints a total of 15 students, three from each grade level were recruited for the interviews. Five were recruited for the focus group.

The 20 women participating varied extensively, but shared the common experience of “growing up” (as one woman put it) within the college setting. The demographic data for the women participating may be seen in Tables 1-6.

Students ranged in age from 18 to 22. Ethnic origins included: Dominican/ Italian (one participant), Hispanic (two participants), African American (one participant), African American/ Caucasian (one participant), Indian (one participant), Filipino (one participant), Chinese/Malaysian (one participant), and Caucasian (12

Table 1
First Year Participants

<i>Student</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Cluster*</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Finances</i>	<i>First Generation</i>	<i>Highest Degree Mother</i>	<i>Highest Degree Father</i>	<i>Unique Circumstance</i>
1	18	Econ	Stats/ Spanish	Dominican /Italian	Parents/ Aid/ Schlrshp	No	College	Grad/ Profesnl	
2	18	Stats/ Poli Sci		Caucasian	Parents/ Aid/ Wrk Stdy	No	College	Grad/ Profesnl	
3	18	Econ	Italian	Hispanic	Aid/ Other	First in US, but not fam	College	Grad/ Profesnl	

Table 2
Sophomore Participants

<i>Student</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Cluster*</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Finances</i>	<i>First Generation</i>	<i>Highest Degree Mother</i>	<i>Highest Degree Father</i>	<i>Unique Circumstance</i>
4	20	Span/ Latin Amer Stud/ ASL	Math/ Anthro	Hispanic	Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp	Yes	High School	High School	Commuter First Year/ Quite Sick First Year
5	19	Psych	Bio/Chem ASL	Caucasian	Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp Other	No	High School	College	Grew Up Mainly with Mom
6	20	English/ Anthro	Stats	African American/ Caucasian	Parents/ Aid/ Stud Emp	No	Grad/ Profesnl	No Parental Fiure	

Table 3
Junior Participants

<i>Student</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Cluster*</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Finances</i>	<i>First Generation</i>	<i>Highest Degree Mother</i>	<i>Highest Degree Father</i>	<i>Unique Circumstance</i>
7	20	Brain & Cog. Sci	Psych/ Religion	Indian	Parents/ Aid/ Wrk Stdy	No	Grad/ Profesnl	College	
8	21	Poli Sci		Filipino	Parents/ Aid/ Other	No	High School	College	Transferred 2nd Semester First Year
9	21	Anthro		Caucasian	Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp	No	College	Grad/ Profesnl	Married/ Transferred Junior Year/ Live Off Campus

Table 4
Senior Participants

<i>Student</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Cluster*</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Finances</i>	<i>First Generation</i>	<i>Highest Degree Mother</i>	<i>Highest Degree Father</i>	<i>Unique Circumstance</i>
10	21	Health & Soc/ English	Chem	Chinese Malaysian	Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp	No	Grad/ Profesnl	High School	Raised by Aunt with Sister in US/ Parents Live in Malaysia with Brother
11	21	Psych	Bio/ ASL	Caucasian	Parents/ Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp	Yes	High School	High School	Recently Came Out as Bisexual
12	21	Psych/ Religion Classics	Brain & Cog Sci	Caucasian	Parents/ Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp	No	College	College	

Table 5
Fifth Year Participants

<i>Student</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Cluster*</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Finances</i>	<i>First Generation</i>	<i>Highest Degree Mother</i>	<i>Highest Degree Father</i>	<i>Unique Circumstance</i>
13	23	Psych/ Poli Sci	Legal Studies	Caucasian	Parents/ Aid/ Stud Emp	No	Grad/ Profesnl	College	
14	22	Psych/ Poli Sci	Brain & Cog Sci/ Music	Caucasian	Parents/ Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp Other	No	Grad/ Profesn	College	Father Died Junior Year
15	22	History/ Italian	Chem	Caucasian	Parents/ Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp	No	High School	High School	

participants). Many students were relying on multiple methods to finance college (including student employment while attending college). Two students considered themselves first generation college students. A third student's father attended college, but she has mainly been in contact with her mother who did not attend college. Unique circumstances worth noting include: (a) a sophomore participant was a commuter the first year due to illness; (b) a junior participant transferred the second semester of the first year; (c) a junior participant married, transferred the first semester of her junior year, and lives off campus; (d) a senior participant was raised mainly by her aunt with her sister, while her parents live in Malaysia raising her brother; (e) a senior participant recently began her first same sex relationship; and (f) a fifth year

Table 6
Focus Group Participants

<i>Student</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Cluster*</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Finances</i>	<i>First Generation</i>	<i>Highest Degree Mother</i>	<i>Highest Degree Father</i>	<i>Unique Circumstance</i>
16	21	Bio/ Anthro	Phil	Caucasian	Parents/ Stud Emp Other	No	Grad/ Profesnl	Grad/ Profesnl	
17	22	Honors Psych/ Bio	Phil	Caucasian	Parents/ Stud Emp Schlrshp	No	Grad/ Profesnl	College	
18	21	Brain & Cog Sci/ Honors Psych		Caucasian	Parents	No	Grad/ Profesnl	Grad/ Profesnl	
19	22	Econ/ Span	Psych	African American	Parents/ Aid/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp	No	College	College	
20	21	Anthro/ Bio	Econ	Caucasian	Parents/ Wrk Stdy Stud Emp Other	No	High School	High School	

* Cluster is an academic requirement in which students complete three thematically linked courses unrelated to their major.

participant's father passed away her junior year. In sum, the women varied significantly in respect to their personal histories, bringing diverse experiences and perceptions to the focus group and interviews.

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Upon approval by the committee the research proposal was submitted to the

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) at the host university (see Appendix A). The HSIRB proposal included: the project description (i.e., purpose, procedure, design, location, and duration), the benefits of the research, subject selection and risk, protection for subjects, confidentiality of the data, instrumentation, and a copy of the consent form (see Appendix B). The study proceeded when granted HSIRB approval.

Data Collection

Data collection adhered to explicit methods in accordance with grounded theory procedures and techniques that actually allowed for and necessitate continued examination and adjustment of data collection methods and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The qualitative method of triangulation was utilized in which multiple data collection methods are used (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Data collection methods included interviews, a brief psychosocial development questionnaire based on Chickering's revised theory, and field observation. A focus group of senior women was facilitated initially in order to ascertain the value of the interview protocol which allowed for modifications to be made before interviews took place soon after.

Recruitment

Recruitment involved the use of flyers that were distributed throughout campus (see Appendix C). The flyer included an email and phone number. Respondents

contacted me and were screened according to the following selection criteria: female gender, age, grade level, ethnicity, and college affiliation. The initial phone contact involved a brief description of the study, the criterion used to select them, and possible interview dates (see Appendix D). Once each criterion was met, screening was complete. A second phone call (or email message) was made to confirm the time for an initial interview.

Focus Group and Interviews

The focus group and interviews begin with a brief introduction, and, from there, follows the focus group and interview protocols, respectively (see Appendices E, and F). The focus group and interview began as the participants were asked to review and sign the consent form (see Appendix B), complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix G), and complete a brief psychosocial development questionnaire (see Appendix H). The specific focus group and interview questions were driven by the larger research question that delves into the impact of college upon women's sense of self, were supported by psychosocial development literature, and could be dissected into the following: (a) a definition of self to include (but not limited to) feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and values, relating to self as autonomous and in connection with others; and (b) the impact of college upon one's sense of self. In order to address the above, participants were first asked to describe themselves before coming to college. Interview participants were asked this question by inviting them to relay words or phrases that came to mind to describe themselves before

entering college. When finished, each word or phrase was read back to her and she was asked to expand upon each. A similar format was used to explore the participants' current self definition. After, participants were asked how they believe college had impacted any changes as to who they had become and how they believe they had developed/grown/changed during college. Each phase of the interview continued until answers became redundant and/or the participant expressed that she had no more information to divulge about her self definition and the impact of college upon it.

Psychosocial Student Development Questionnaire

An extremely brief psychosocial development questionnaire was given to the participants as an additional, but minor, method of noting how women perceive their development along Chickering's revised seven dimensions (see Appendix G) (Chickering & Reisser, 199; Evans, et al., 1998). The questions on the Likert scale questionnaire addressed each of the seven vectors, and were based upon the definitions of the vectors themselves. Their ratings were compared to the results of the interviews and field observations.

Field Observation

Another form of data was field observation (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Examples included letters, journals, and newspapers. The data was viewed as supplemental and was checked against more formal data (i.e.,

interview transcriptions), but it was intended to add depth to the themes and concepts that were discovered. As I interviewed women I observed their surrounding residence hall rooms or apartments. It was necessary to ask if some of the pieces were gifts, as they may have been less likely to represent their identity.

Analysis of Data

Within the framework of grounded theory methods and techniques the guidelines for data analysis are explicit (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theoretical sampling was utilized whereby collection of data, coding, and analysis took place continually and cycled back upon one another. Three types of coding data were actually the critical aspects of the analysis: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding occurred initially (though often the different forms layered upon one another and took place simultaneously). Open coding involves labeling phenomenon by breaking the data down, taking apart each sentence, phrase, observation, and document. Once the data had been broken down in such a way, it was brought back together into basic conceptual themes through axial coding. Toward the end of the process these themes were analyzed further, and developed into more abstract theoretical constructs via selective coding. An audit trail in combination with thick descriptive data increased dependability, confirmability, and transferability was carried out in which all ideas, categorizations, and interpretations were recorded and easily traceable (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Data analysis was continuous, and was based primarily upon the data itself.

The analysis also drew upon theoretical foundations, and allowed for creative exploration within the management and appropriate application of the researcher's perspective. These grounded theory methods led to the discovery of themes that highlighted the psychosocial development of college women in order to inform existing theory.

Resulting Methodology

In accordance with qualitative grounded theory and techniques, some valuable procedures were adhered to, while others were modified. The following is a description of the actual methodological process that simultaneously involved recruitment, data collection, data coding, and data analysis.

The Methodological Process

Recruitment

Recruitment flyers were posted on bulletin boards and kiosks throughout campus. In order to reach a diverse group of women on campus, flyers were specifically posted outside the Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA) as well. OMSA also sent an email version of the flyer to the students on their private email listserve.

Also, to reach graduates from the Class of 2000, students were emailed the recruitment flyer. No graduates responded. Instead, students who were participating in the "Take 5" program were included in the study exclusively due to the on-campus recruitment efforts. In order to spend a fifth year at the university, "Take 5" students apply to the college, outlining their desired area of independent study.

A total of 29 women inquired. Three women were not included either because they responded quite late or they did not meet the demographic requirements. Six women met the protocol, but chose not to participate. Participants were screened according to the approved protocol. Women were asked to participate based upon class year, age, and ethnicity (i.e., at least one minority out of the three needed per class year). The desired demographic profile was reached in all cases, but the fifth year students. Because it was difficult to recruit graduates or fifth year students, the directive to vary ethnicity was compromised as all three responding women were included.

Immediately after the flyers were posted women began phoning or emailing, relaying their interest. Five senior women responded within the first four days after the flyers were posted. The five women were identified as potential focus group participants, because, as seniors they would provide a four year perspective. The focus group was held in the conference room at the university Career Center. One week after the focus group met, interviews began.

Making Meaning

A Gathering of Women

Data collection began during the focus group of seniors. The focus group protocol was used as a guide as the women reviewed and signed the consent form, and completed the demographic and psychosocial student development questionnaires. The women spoke of their definition of self and the influence of college

readily. As the facilitator, I followed the protocol, asking occasional questions for clarification. Questions as to the definition of self were asked until answers became redundant, and the women relayed they had nothing else to add. The discourse included a lengthy discussion of career choice and related issues (e.g., influences, pressures, concerns), competency, and increased tolerance and appreciation of newly discovered thoughts and cultures. A more thorough description of the themes of discussion is presented below.

Initially the transcription of the focus group was reviewed, without coding. Mental notes were made of elements within the conversation that had the potential to be thematic as they were either consistent with the literature and/or were discussed repeatedly. As the focus group was meant to serve as a type of trial run, the transcription was also reviewed to acknowledge ways in which the format needed to be modified. The one way I found the protocol to be problematic was that the women tended to focus mainly on two aspects of self (career and diversity), and possibly ignored other critical components. I thought the interview protocol might remedy the situation because the protocol begins with students relaying words or phrases that come to mind when asked to describe themselves. They were then asked to expand upon each. It was hoped that this would encourage the women to present a more comprehensive view of self. If this aspect of the protocol did not correct a tendency to focus on limited aspects of self, it would be necessary to make further changes.

After reading over the focus group transcript twice, extremely open coding procedures began by using a color coded system, underlining the subjects of each

sentence. Each subject was underlined in a different color, or variations of different colors. For example, if a woman discussed her academic major, the academic major was underlined in red. If another student in the focus group discussed her academic major it was also underlined in red, though the actual major may be different. At times sentences were underlined in multiple ways. For example, if the same woman not only discussed her major, but also talked about wanting to major in this subject due to her parent's influence, the sentence is underlined in a color representing parental influence as well. If a subject appeared more than once it was assigned a color and was considered an initial code.

Interviews

The first interview took place one week after the focus group, and continued steadily. Initially, interviews took place in the student's residence halls. The fourth student, however, asked if the interview could take place in my office on campus. I agreed. I noticed the interview lasted significantly longer and the woman seemed to be more comfortable, offering more information. I decided to schedule the next interview in my office as well to test my theory. Again, the student seemed more at ease and the interview lasted almost twice as long as the previous interviews. After the sixth student I gave the women an option to either participate in the interview in their residence hall room or in my office. All students chose to come to my office, stating that it was easier to come to me or that a roommate would be around and it would be better to schedule the interview elsewhere. In order to observe their living

environment I simply asked the women if I could visit them briefly after the interview to get a sense of their living space and they agreed.

The interview protocol was used as a guide, as women read and signed the consent form, and completed the demographic and psychosocial student development questionnaires. During the initial interviews I deviated readily from the protocol in order to ask for clarification of meaning. Women discussed their sense of self extensively. The variation within the interview protocol remedied the problem that occurred during the focus group in which women seemed to focus on limited topics. Instead, women discussed a number of aspects of self. The subject became saturated as I asked them a number of questions based upon the protocol that related to the concept of psychosocial development. When the women began repeating themselves and relayed that they could think of no other ways in which to describe themselves or ways in which college has impacted them, the interviews ended.

Though it was the intention to review each transcription before heading into the next interview, issues around the professional transcriptionist arose, and in order to continue progressing it was necessary to continue interviewing without such a review. After the third interview the problem was remedied and a thorough analysis of the first three transcriptions took place. I began to note themes that were consistent with those noted during the focus group as well. In particular, defining self in terms of relationships with others, a focus on career for upperclassmen but not underclassmen, and an appreciation for the introduction to diversity. Also, I noticed ways in which I was deviating from the protocol that seemed to detract from my goal.

I was asking questions that I believed were helpful in terms of clarification, but I noticed they actually seemed to interrupt the women's train of thought. The value of the clarification did not outweigh the cost. In future I intended to limit such interruptions, and follow the very open ended questions outlined in the protocol.

The transcriptions were then reviewed according to open coding procedures that were informed by initial codes emerging from the focus group protocol. I took mental note of the many codes and general themes that were appearing, in order to observe consistencies or inconsistencies during the interviews, and perhaps probe further if thoughts around those themes arose.

Interviews continued steadily. Flooded with questions about the significance of certain phenomenon and the insignificance of others, the data itself began generating exciting thoughts and ideas around women's definition of self. I considered changing aspects of the protocol to somehow address the themes that were emerging, but it seemed the extremely open ended manner was allowing for the most self expression and still themes were emerging that were quite consistent with the literature (as well as ideas that appeared relatively novel).

As the process of open coding continued, the procedures first became more complex, and then more streamlined. For example, one theme, "people in relation" became so prevalent (i.e., came up repeatedly within various contexts) it was necessary to dissect it further into "parents", "sisters", "brothers", "partners", and "friends. As the number of codes became excessive at 28, it was necessary to review the codes before heading into the final five interviews. Some themes were dropped because

they were not discussed by more than one individual. Also, a few codes could be merged (e.g., discussion of “sisters”, “brothers”, and “parents” were condensed into a code of “family”). Upon the merging of several codes, 21 survived. The final five transcriptions were coded according to those 21 codes. Codes were counted line by line, as well as by occurrence. In order to count the occurrences of the codes, each time a woman spoke about a certain code without changing subject, the code would be counted once.

In order to make meaning of the codes, it was necessary to review them once again, paying particular attention to ways in which the data could be categorized in meaningful ways in reference to the concept of psychosocial development. This rather elusive practice was a combination of intuition, knowledge of the literature, and, above all, driven by the data itself. Twenty-two codes emerged as a result: competence, autonomy/reliance, relationships (family, friends, partners), people, diversity of people, diversity of ideas, culture, career, purpose, academics, emotions, confusion, naiveté’, spirituality, pressure/opportunity, degradation, feminism, eating disorders, strength, maturity, and insecurity. The codes are presented in a more meaningful way in the following chapter.

Enhancing the Trustworthiness of the Data.

Member Checking

The process of member checking took place, but in an alternate form than had been proposed. As it was difficult to schedule follow-up interviews with students

due to their time constraints or other issues they did not relay. Instead, after their interview was open coded, a summary of the codes as well as the transcription itself, were emailed to each participant. The women were asked if the codes were consistent with their meaning, and whether or not they would like to add anything at that point. Only six women responded, and those women replied very briefly with comments such as “sounds great”, or “go for it”. It cannot be assumed that the member checking procedures were successful, decreasing the trustworthiness of the data.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing was also employed in order to enhance rigor. A colleague with a master’s degree in counseling psychology was presented with five transcriptions, one from each grade level. She was asked to review the transcripts. We met to discuss her ideas around the themes that arose within the data. The themes she presented had all been included in my analysis, though she had not categorized them in a meaningful manner, and had left out codes that I had noted. For example, I dissected career into: (a) purpose; (b) career and motherhood; and (c) career wanting to make a difference in the lives of others. I presented all codes that had arisen in my analysis and asked if they made sense to her. I also presented the categorizations and again asked if the classifications seemed appropriate. Small adjustments were made as to labeling phenomenon (e.g., separating diversity into diverse perspectives, and diverse people). After a lengthy discussion as to the rationale behind the coding and classifications, and small adjustments, we both felt extremely comfortable with the resulting

categorizations.

Unintended Modifications

A handful of unintended modifications took place that may impact negatively upon the trustworthiness of the data. Deviations involved recruitment and interviews, as well as general methods and techniques.

It was the intention to email the recruitment flyers to the entire female student body. To send an email to all women it would have been necessary to use a university database in a way that differed from its original intent. Ethical concerns led me to instead post the flyers throughout campus and enlist the services of the Office of Minority Student Affairs. Also, because the process of gaining approval from the host school took many months, the interviews took place later in the year than had been proposed. In future it may be beneficial to replicate the study, interviewing students earlier in the year. Such a modification may be most advantageous in terms of first year students as it may be helpful to survey their perception of self upon initially entering into the environment before the experience of college has impacted their development.

Unintended modifications were made regarding the enhancement of trustworthiness of the data, involving member checking, peer debriefing, and the use of a software package. As students were engaged in finals and departing from the university, it was difficult to meet a final time to engage in member checking. Instead, a summary of the interpretations of the interview was sent via email.

Participants were asked to comment on the interpretations regarding their accuracy. Response was minimal and inconclusive.

Also, access to the peer debriefer proved somewhat difficult, instead of engaging in ongoing discussions throughout coding, one lengthy discussion took place after she had reviewed the transcriptions, perhaps altering the impact her participation may have had upon the interpretation of the data. Also, though it was the intention to use a qualitative software package, I found the software to be awkward and felt more comfortable to be immersed in the hard copies of transcriptions, making notes in the margins, and tallying the codes by hand again and again. Employing more reliable member checking techniques, engaging in peer debriefing on a continuous basis, and employing the assistance of qualitative software may be employed in future as the research is replicated.

Finally, though it was the intention to engage in open, axial, and selective coding procedures, only open and axial coding procedures were employed. Selective coding involves integrating all categories of codes into a grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For a time, efforts were made to code selectively, looking for answers within the data that had yet to emerge. Follow-up research, exploring individual categories (e.g., self in community) or codes (introduction to diversity; confrontation of women's issues) may lead to theory building, but at present the data serves as a very intriguing, yet somewhat illusive, compliment to existing psychosocial theory.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

The study was intended to explore female psychosocial student development in order to inform existing theory, allowing women to present their perceptions around a definition of self and the impact of college upon that definition. Rich, descriptive data that is thought provoking and filled with personal insight emerged from facilitation of the focus group and interviews. Several interesting and novel themes around psychosocial development were detected: (a) self in community with others to include the student's immediate community (i.e., friends, family, partners) and less immediate community ("people," diversity, culture, and career within community); (b) defining personal issues (i.e., emotions, academics, competence, spirituality, first generation college issues, women's issues, sexual orientation); and (c) transformation from a lack of self-confidence to self assuredness. In addition, field observations and the administration of a brief psychosocial student development questionnaire took place. A comprehensive description of the results follow. (Refer to the tables in Appendix I for a more detailed presentation of the data.)

Results of Supporting Instruments

Field Observations

Resulting data from the field observations produced little relevant information. The following 22 codes resulted, and were categorized in three groupings: (1) people (family, friends, partner); (2) posters (artwork, movie/Broadway shows, collage, cultural (India print, representative, religious), message (political, humorous, poetry, inspirational), celebrity); and (3) music (rhythm and blues, pop, jazz, alternative, cultural). No apparent patterns of development emerged. The codes that directly relate to overarching themes (i.e, friends, family, and partner) are presented in the corresponding section later in this chapter.

Psychosocial Student Development Questionnaire

In addition to the observations, in order to informally observe the degree to which developmental patterns emerge when participants were asked to assess themselves along Chickering's vectors, the women were asked to complete a brief psychosocial development questionnaire (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans et al., 1998). The questionnaire was not meant to lend statistical support to the study due to the minimal number of participants. Also the questionnaire was simply developed for this study and has not been validated through more thorough investigation. No patterns emerged along vectors 1 (developing competence), 2 (managing emotions), 3 (moving through autonomy toward interdependence), and 5 (establishing identity).

Very slight patterns of development resulted along vectors 4 (developing mature interpersonal relationships), 6 (developing purpose), and 7 (developing integrity). Because the sample size is so small, no formal statistics were run. Instead a simple comparison of means among grade levels were observed. Though patterns of development according to Chickering's theory were not supported via the questionnaires, the following overarching themes do validate his theory to a large degree. A more extensive discussion around Chickering's theory is presented in the following chapter.

Overarching Themes

The heart of the study is the focus group, interviews, and resulting data. Several themes emerged: (a) self in community with others to include the student's immediate community (i.e., friends, family, partners) and less immediate community ("people," diversity, culture, and career within community); (b) defining personal issues (i.e., emotions, academics, competence, spirituality, first generation college issues, women's issues, sexual orientation); and (c) transformation from a lack of self-confidence to self assuredness. To express the degree to which each theme was discussed the following descriptors are used: "a couple" denotes 2 of 20 participants; "a few" denotes 3-4 of 20 participants; "some" denotes 5-8 of 20 participants; "many" denotes 9-12 of 20 participants; "a majority" denotes 13-16 of 20 participants; and "most" denotes 17-20 of 20 participants.

Self in Community

Throughout the interviews and upon analysis of the transcripts it became overwhelmingly clear that the participating women could be described as women in community with others. During college women were involved with those around them, developing within the context of their relationships. The ways in which the notion of self in community manifested itself varied greatly, and can be described in reference to their immediate community (i.e., friends, family, or partners), and less immediate community (i.e., “people“, diversity, culture, and career within community).

The title “self in community” is intentionally similar to the concept of self in relation (Jordan et al., 1991) because the data supports the notion of women defining self via connection with others. In this case the notion of community seemed fitting. Community represents their academic social environment, the college community, but also can be applied to the larger global community as they speak of their culture or the decision to choose a career where they are making a difference in the lives of others, for example.

Immediate Community

Friends

References to friends were evident throughout the observation, focus group, and interview process. Pictures of friends appeared on their bulletin boards, dressers,

or refrigerators. When asked to discuss a definition of self a majority of women spoke of their friends. Specifically, one senior referred to her friends as "her entire world."

For a few women, particularly younger students (i.e., first years and sophomores), boundaries between self and friends were nearly non-existent, as they described their friends as mirrors of themselves: "To see who I am would be to meet my friends. They are my strength. When I am with them that's who I am" (sophomore). "If I didn't have [my friends], I wouldn't be who I am" (sophomore). A couple of young women discussed a separation from friends. These women were disillusioned and cynical. One sophomore spoke at length about having to learn "who your friends really are" as her trust in others had been challenged: "True friends are important to me. Those are hard to come by because I've lost a lot of friends. Not really lost, but our friendships aren't the same." "Dealing with people changing" had been her biggest challenge since starting college, and she is not longer a "trusting" person: "Relationships have made me a little more weary. Definitely more cynical." A first year participant expressed the situations with friends and resulting disappointment in this way: "Now I'm very picky of who [I] call a friend, because a friend is there for you if you're down, but not everyone will be there" (first year).

As the women matured through college the importance of friends remained evident, but the degree of intensity with which they spoke about friends lessened. Older students appeared to have worked through issues around expectations, and were appreciative for the friendships that remained:

I think that I am more in tune with what I need out of a friendship and what I expect a friendship to be like, and I think that has a lot to do with college and growing up (fifth year).

"My close friends that I have are really important to me (fifth year)."

I am very grateful for the friends I have, and I am definitely dependent on friendships. Without them I feel like my life would be meaningless, kind of. I need that interaction and need people that I can depend on and talk to. Friendship is definitely still important (fifth year).

For women, in general, friendships are key to their perception of self. The nature and intensity of the relationships may change, but the presence of others is consistent: their definition of self.

Family

Another aspect of the self in community is the degree to which references of family emerged during the observations, focus group, and interview. The majority of women displayed photos of family members, or drawings and collages relatives had made for them in their living spaces. Also a majority of women spoke at length about their families.

Discussions around family members varied. Many women referred to the presence of family in positive terms, speaking about how "very important" they were.

The love and support these women receive is a powerful influence:

My family is really important. I talk to my mom once or twice a day partially because she is by herself and my sister is very far away and I'm close. So it is really important for me to be there for her (fifth year).

"My sisters are my two favorite people in the whole world" (senior).

[My parents] always spoil me with love. They are like, "Oh, our child, blah,

blah,” and I’m like, “Yeah.” So I have unconditional love with them and that is all that matters. I don’t have to find it somewhere else because I have it with my parents. Your friends are your parents, they are going to love you regardless of what you do, they had you so. So I’m happy (first year).

“I have a really close relationship with my parents so that helps a lot.”

In addition, a few women spoke about the influence of family members in reference to their decisions, particularly about career choice. A fifth year student expressed it this way: “I’m really close to my mom and her opinion means a lot to me, and she has very different ideas about what I should be doing with me life.” Another student, a sophomore, referred to a new found ability to cope with the disappointment her parents express in reference to career choice: “I’m not so fearful of letting my father down.”

A few students made reference to an increased appreciation for family since coming to college. For one senior there was a need to first “break away” characterized by “tense moments.” The break allowed for a “realization” of the degree to which family is important. A few other students acknowledged an increased appreciation for family as well: “I think family life is more important to me now that it ever has been” (junior). “You need to have good bonds to live life fully and I didn’t know that then. I think I know that now” (junior). “My relationship with my family now is much closer and I think about them. Being far apart and having to adjust to that is really important” (fifth year).

One senior was struggling with specific issues in reference to family. Her negative comments deviated greatly from the generally positive comments of the other participants. As a bisexual, she spoke at length about the role of “daughter”

and how her parents actions have led to stress and anxiety: “I think about being a daughter every day because I just want them to change and they’re just so stressful to me. So it’s just every day, every day you’re a daughter.”

In general, the majority of women spoke at length about the presence of family members in their lives. From general statements as to their importance, to their influence, to the stress they cause when moving through difficult personal issues, family was ever present.

Partner

Along with friends and family, a third relationship, partner, was discussed. However, only one woman identified photos of her partner. Also the topic was only discussed by some women, and not at length. One woman spoke about the importance of “having her relationships in place before she can concentrate.” Two women spoke about how their identities are less “wrapped up in boys”, than they had been when they first arrived at school, and one woman spoke adamantly about not wanting a relationship during college:

I definitely don’t want to get married any time soon, but you know things happen that... I don’t want to get married until I’m 30. Now I say I’ll wait until I’m 22, and I’m telling myself don’t do that. Just stay away from all that stuff and get what you want first and then you can start thinking about that stuff (first year).

It appears that while partnered relationships (particularly relationships that are not all consuming) are helpful for some women to feel comfortable, other women wish to concentrate on their education before focusing on their relationships.

One woman did discuss her relationship at length. As a senior coming out of the closet as a bisexual she spoke about the difficulties she and her partner have faced, and how they have dealt with them. For this woman, her relationship and the issues around the relationship are extremely consuming.

In general, relationships not only with partners, but friends and family are extremely important for college women.

Less-Immediate Community

In addition to one's immediate community, the importance of a less immediate surrounding community was expressed. Themes involving diversity, culture, career within the context of others, and people emerged.

People

All women made obtuse references to "people." Some women referred to general connections with others as important, as evidenced by the words of this first year student: "[I will] always be there looking for people and creating connections." A couple of women talked about their love for other people, as expressed by this senior: "[I] love meeting people. [I] love being around people. [I] love talking to people." Another senior referred to her desire to have "the opportunity to have an unending amount of people to meet and figure out." In general, creating connections, and being in the presence of others, was important for the women.

Diversity

The topic of diversity appeared repeatedly, as many women discussed the impact college had upon the development of self. Women talked about the impact of being exposed to varied perspectives and ideas, and a non-homogeneous environment.

Women were exposed to novel ideas and perceptions, which resulted in broadening their perspectives and interests: “Your world just expands.” One fifth year student referred to the exposure as a broadening of horizons:

So I think being in college and taking a variety of classes and knowing people with different majors and learning about different things definitely broadened my horizons. Things I never thought I would be interested in, I am more interested in.

Another woman, a junior transfer student, referred to college as showing you “how little you know: I mean, realizing how much there is out there, and just broadening your mind. What an experience. This is just so wonderful.” The student went on to illustrate the broadening perspective in this way:

[College] really enhances...you see a tree and you realize the biological mechanisms by which that tree grows. Everything you see and do after going to college just has so much more meaning to you. It is like going to an opera, if you’ve not read the story beforehand, you’re not really going to get what is going on, but if you’re familiar with it you get a lot more out of it. That is kind of what it is. College is like reading the program before going to see life, or going to act in life. That is kind of a good analogy.

Women’s worlds were expanding as they were exposed to different thoughts and ideas, and learned how to appreciate life by “reading the program.”

Beyond exposure to novel ideas, many women spoke about their involvement

with persons who were different from those they had been involved with before college. The majority of the women who made reference to the impact of this involvement were Caucasian. The women spoke about their history, and “being sheltered.” Their “worlds expanded” as they were introduced to the university student population, as they learned that society is not all “White and middle class”. The experience “pushed [them] to be more open minded.”

I came from a very sheltered and very non-diverse area. I don't think people in my area are prejudice. I just don't think they know much. Everybody is basically White, Christian, and not very different. Since coming to college I've been introduced to more people and really tried hard to be open minded about everybody and about any different type of background.

[I was] naive [before I came to college]. I came from a small town and it was mostly Catholic, middle-class and Caucasian. I didn't know anything about diversity and when I came here, I was surrounded by people of different cultures and I didn't know how to react to it. One thing that sticks out in my mind is that I never had anyone who was Indian at my high school, so I really didn't know anything about them and then I started having some friends who were Indian. It was kind of weird because I felt awkward because I didn't know anything about them, so I kind of felt out of place compared to other people who might have went to a more diverse school. I was definitely naive (fifth year student when asked about the impact of college).

In meeting people, at this school especially, I have learned a lot more about people. I didn't live in a very diverse city and my roommate for four years is Indian and I was a little White girl in the group of Indian students. And I really learned about a part of the world and people and kind of appreciated that the world is not White and middle-class. So that was really good for me and even as far as class material, I think it just opened my eyes to a diverse experience. It was really good (senior).

Beyond broadening one's mind in reference to diversity, a few White women had incorporated an appreciation for people unlike themselves:

I think I am more diverse and more accepting of people's views. I think coming from a small town where everyone was the same kind of puts you in a mindset and you don't have to worry about other people. Whereas here you

are forced to deal with other people. So I think I am more accepting of other people, and their qualities and am more able to look at the positive things in people (fifth year).

In addition, the experience of being exposed to diversity had made such an impact that one senior wanted to share her new attitude with her mother in the hopes that her mother's level of tolerance would increase: "Being able to go back and share with my mom and see my mom actually making difference in how she sees other people has been really interesting."

One may think about exposure to diversity in reference to persons raised in predominantly White areas, but women from non-White cultures were also affected by a different kind of diversity on the college campus. One Hispanic student's tolerance for others increased. She expressed the thought that "not everybody is the same and you have to respect that." Another student was not as tolerant of others, however:

Well, the people up here are totally different from New York City. Like, I'll speak to somebody and we're not on the same level. Like, someone from India, I don't know, we're totally not there. What they think is interesting, I don't. So I'm still friends with them, but its not like I speak to them everyday, because you really don't have anything in common. So I'm trying to learn little things from them. I [said] to my roommate, "Why the hell am I here?" There are so many different people, I'm like, "Oh wow!" I mean, they can be different. I don't care about different cultures or whatever, but in NYC everyone has different cultures, but you're on the same level in a way like intellectually. Or the way you think of things. The people from India or Oklahoma or Nebraska, I don't think they'll get along. It's totally different (first year).

The above quote also illustrates another aspect of diversity. Though the exposure to diversity led to increased appreciation of others, a few women were in turmoil and were working through issues around the experience of increased exposure to

diversity. One woman referred to the difference in terms of not being able to understand her foreign teaching assistant, for example. Another woman described how strange it is that her Indian friend does not want a boyfriend until after college:

I guess I've met a lot of people here that I'm not used to, as far as at home everyone wants to have a family, but here people are like I'm never going to have kids, never going to get married. Like my roommate, that is one thing that we are so different on, she is like, "I'm never getting married, I don't believe in it." I'm like, "What?" I come from such a traditional background, and she is just like, "No, I just want a job, I'm going to live with my aunt and have my cat." It is totally different and I've never heard that before. I'm like, "You're so weird, you know?" And then finally I'm hearing more and more people say that, and it is so weird because I've never been exposed to that before I came here. And you think you're coming to ___ and you think that you're going to be around everybody that you're used to because you live in [New York City], but that is so not the case (junior).

These women seem to realize the exposure to difference is affecting them in some way and perceive that it is important to speak about diversity when discussing self, but may not have made sense of "their strange new world."

Culture

Another aspect of self in community is the degree to which minority students have incorporated their native culture into their sense of self. Six of eight minority participants discussed their native culture.

A few students described working through issues involving their cultural identity. For example, one student had not thought of herself as a minority person until she arrived, and dealing with being labeled as such has been a challenge:

Adapting to this country, to different people, to being pointed at [is a challenge]. Oh Hispanic, like we are a big thing here for some reason. I've never thought of myself as a minority, and then I came here and then minority,

minority. I'm like, "Okay."

The senior participant who at times referred to herself as Malaysian Chinese and at other times as Chinese American also worked through issues around her cultural identity:

People used to call me a banana, because I'm yellow on the outside but white on the inside. I've always felt like it has always been a struggle between my Chinese culture and I feel that I am very American and I hold very American values, but I am still trying to find a good balance between the two. I classify myself as both, instead of one or the other.

The senior had identified herself as Chinese growing up, but when she came to college she did not get involved with the Chinese groups on campus and had been criticized for that. She began being more involved in both American and Chinese cultures and claimed: "The four years have helped me sort of put the two together instead of keeping that separation. I was always very confused about my culture, whereas now I am a Chinese American."

A final example is an illustration of the move from a lack of cultural pride to an appreciation for heritage: "I wasn't proud. I knew my heritage, whatever, but I wasn't too proud of it because of the accent and I wasn't good at English." At the end of the first year of college she is "proud":

I don't let anyone mess with my heritage. I like that I am myself. I mean it is okay that people are different and I respect that. I don't care if people think bad about my heritage, I'm proud of it and I enjoy being who I am.

Finally, a couple women referred to the importance of connection with others within one's culture:

Like, there is not that many Hispanics and stuff here, but when I look for Hispanics, it is not just because they are Hispanic it is like you feel part of a

connection. Some people look at it...it's just a connection I get. Sometimes I think it's weird, but it's not. So you just feel more part of home or something like that (sophomore).

For the majority of minority students, their cultural identity was paramount as they spoke about who they were. The two minority women who did not speak about culture were biracial (African American/Caucasian) and African American. This is not to say that culture was not important to these women, but that they did not discuss it in the focus group or interview. In both situations the women were the only minorities present.

It is clear that for some women, their cultural heritage plays a major role in the perception of self. In addition to culture and the above mentioned aspects of self in community, several women made mention of a career within the context of community.

Career Within Community

When discussing career, some women spoke directly about the importance of assisting others, or making a difference in the lives of others. One senior wanted to "make a difference, even if it is just for one person." Another senior wanted to "say that [she] lived a good life and that [she] helped people": "It doesn't have to be a huge group, but like if I just helped one person." These women had decided to dedicate themselves to assisting others in some way as a vocational choice.

Not only did women want to help others, a few women wanted to have a career that allowed them to be mothers. For one junior, being a mother was her

primary concern:

Plus another aspect is that I want to have a family. Like my primary purpose in life is to be a mom, not a political scientist, not a doctor, or whatever. I want a family, and my job is secondary.

The other students discussing motherhood did not express the desire as their “primary purpose.” Instead they wanted a career that allowed them to be both a career woman and a mother:

[I’m] traditional in the sense that I would want a family. I want kids, and, you, know, I want to fall in love, get married. The husband who works and everything like that. The opposite of that is the change of it because I want a career too. I don’t just want to sit down, maybe at some point I would be, but I do want my career, so if at any point something was to go wrong I could take care of myself (sophomore).

For some women ideas around having a job that allows women to make a difference or having a career that allows them to have a family has been incorporated into their self definition.

The overarching theme of “self in community with others” was repeated again and again, as women referred to different areas of their lives. Women referred to connection with others as they spoke about friends, family, partners, people, diverse persons and their ideas, culture, and career. However, though women’s sense of self was strongly tied to the persons around them, not all references to self directly involved connection to others.

Defining Personal Issues

Several topics were communicated repeatedly, but did not directly involve connection with others (i.e., self in community). These “defining personal issues”

are: emotions, academics, competence, spirituality, first generation college issues, sexual orientation, and women's issues (i.e. pressure to embrace opportunity, degradation of traditionally feminine career choice, reference to segregation of career fields, feminism, and eating disorders).

Emotions

Most women discussed both positive and negative emotions. At times references to emotions were quite abstract (e.g., "I don't like being in silence"). Discussions that were questionable such as this were not included in the tally of codes.

Some women referred to themselves in positive emotional terms. For example, women were "happy," "strong," and "comfortable" with themselves. One senior spoke about how being at peace with who she is allowed her to "fulfill [her] own dreams and [her] own potential."

A couple of women discussed all that they had learned about themselves by coming through difficult times. One student realized the need to take advantage of opportunities as a result of her experience, denoting positive mental health:

At least I realize more how time flies and you have to take what you can while you can, because if you don't you're going to regret it. It has definitely changed me and I look at things, things that I might have blown off before and I look at it more and ask myself what can I get out of this opportunity (fifth year).

Some women were also not afraid to discuss negative emotions. One junior spoke about being "miserable" and homesick when she first arrived at college. A couple women spoke of being "stressed out." In addition, some women were

handling emotions in somewhat destructive ways: “Lately I have been a lot moodier. I go through up and downs. I guess everybody in college does. Lately I just seem like I can’t control them as much” (junior). “[If] I’m really stressed out and something is just not going right, I’ll just go into shut down mode. Where I’m just kind of like, ‘Forget it.’ And I might lash out in anger” (sophomore). Finally, one senior was quite fatalistic, had very low self esteem, and was “overwhelmed” by school: “There is so much that I feel like I need to learn and I’m dumb and it makes me feel like I don’t have motivation to learn it and I’m overwhelmed by it.”

In general, most women expressed their emotions, speaking about the ways in which they were (or were not) adapting to the college setting and life in general. In their eyes, their emotional health was tied to their perception of self. Women also referred to the importance of academic life.

Academics

The majority of women spoke about their role as student. Learning and studying is important to them, and the way in which “college [teaches you] how to think.” One senior spoke about her major being her identity, and the shift from first year to senior year in reference to the importance of academics: “When you are a freshman or sophomore, who really cares, but when you get to that point when you’re a senior, that is your identity. You are a psych major or anthropology major. I mean that is you.” At the same time, one first year student acknowledged the significance of other aspects of college: “Studying is very important but it is not the only thing

that counts when you go to college. It's an experience that you take with you and the learning that counts." The majority of women recognize their role as student and take it seriously.

Competence

The majority of women felt competent, discussing intellectual prowess, accomplishments, successes, and a general confidence in their abilities. Some women believed themselves to be smart: "[I am] intelligent. I do good in school. I do well. I can juggle a lot of things at once, so I think you need a certain level of intelligence to do all that stuff" (first year). "Well, I certainly derive a large portion of my psychological satisfaction with myself from being smart in my life. I've never had issues of feeling dumb or stupid, because I know it is not true" (junior). "[I am] intelligent" (fifth year).

A few women took credit for their accomplishments. One woman credits college for increasing her perceived level of competence, speaking about the great satisfaction she receives from completing a task:

It is great because by the end of the semester you just have the sense of "I did it" and "I made it happen". And of course you had that teacher prodding you the whole way, but you did it. I never realized that, especially before coming to Rochester, I never realized what the power of taking little steps can do, if you do it enough. I just feel a lot more competent that I used to. I never really understood why people needed to go to college, and now I understand (junior).

A few women referred to having a great deal of confidence, though one senior does not believe the "outside world" believes her to be competent: "[I am] confident.

I don't care if I have to give a speech or have to present or something, I'm usually the first person that does everything" (first year). "I feel confident in my own competence" (senior). "I was decently confident in high school, but I am more confident now" (fifth year). "I feel like I am competent to do things, but I don't feel like the outside world views me as such" (senior focus group member). One woman had channeled that confidence into believing she could accomplish anything she wished to pursue in life: "I don't know exactly what I want to do with my life, but I know that whatever I want, I get it."

There were a few women who spoke negatively about self, relaying perceptions of incompetence. These negative occurrences of competence were evident as women discussed low levels of self esteem and a lack of pride in, or even acknowledgment of, their accomplishments: "The more you learn the less you know. I think that comes to me a lot and I feel that I don't know anything" (senior focus group member).

I wouldn't say that I'm proud of [accomplishments]. I think I'm doing a pretty good job, oh I wouldn't say a pretty good job. I'm very involved and I think that is something that I guess I am proud of. Nothing else really. Just that I am involved (sophomore).

Issues around competency were addressed in reference to a belief in self and acknowledgment of accomplishments.

Spirituality

In addition, some women discussed spirituality as very important to their sense of self. A few students mentioned their involvement in organized religion,

while one student did not want to commit to an [institution]. Though only some women spoke about their spirituality, those who did spoke with great enthusiasm: “I think church defines a big part of who I am” (sophomore). “So I’m incredibly spiritual. I believe all these things, and I’m very passionate about them, but I can’t bind them to an institution” (senior). Their involvement in the church has helped a couple women move through difficult times. Other women did not discuss the impact that spirituality had upon their lives, but made minor mention of it. In general, for some women, spirituality appeared to be strongly tied to their sense of self.

First Generation College Issues

A few students referred to issues related to their status as first generation college students. For one Hispanic first year student it was a “big step to go to college at all.” Another Hispanic participant, a sophomore that commuted from home her first year due to health reasons, spoke about how no one in her family could relate to her experience as a college student:

I was in Rochester, I was home, but yet I was still all alone. No one in my family really knew college life. My dad went to a trade school and that was years ago and life was really different. So college life is different. My mother could be there. She could say I love you and I know that you’re going through a lot right now, but she could honestly tell me, “I have no idea what you are going through because I’ve never experienced it.”

The third student, a Caucasian sophomore, was determined not to “end up like” her mother who did not attend college. She spoke passionately about “making something of [her] life.”

I guess I just don’t want to end up like she is. Like right now she’s working, I

don't even know what she does. It's at a company called _____ and they make rulers and pencils for different logos. I think she's a proof reader, whatever that means. I don't know what she proof reads. But it's just a little office job and it's a fine job, whatever, but I want to be better off than she is.

For a few women, dealing with issues that may be related to being a first generation college student affect their sense of self. Issues around being a first generation college student manifest themselves in the form of appreciation for being offered the experience, to feelings of loneliness and being misunderstood, and finally, to increased motivation and drive.

Sexual Orientation

A couple of women, seniors, who were interviewed, discussed their sexual orientation. One woman defined herself as heterosexual and briefly described the recent focus on men since she had not been allowed to date in high school. The other woman who discussed sexual orientation identified as bisexual, and spoke at length about the coming out process, the effect coming out had upon herself, her partner, her parents, and her hopes for the future. The following are excerpts from our conversation, and highlight the profound impact dealing with issues around sexual orientation can have upon a college woman's sense of self:

I was the one to initially have feelings and I was freaked out and there's no other way to describe it. Freaked out. Freaked, like freaked out. I couldn't even say it out loud to myself. And just thinking it in my head that I'm having these kind of feelings for this person that's a female I was like I can't handle...I was staying up 'til like 1:00 in the morning like in January and February of last year while this was going on just like, "This is whacked. This is out of control and whatever."

So that's where our relationship started a year ago and there were tears tears

tears tear tears tears because she's the same. [She] never thought that she'd be in a same sex relationship. Um, we just were like freaked.

Acknowledging to herself that she had feelings toward another women threw her into a tailspin, affecting both her emotional and physical health due to a lack of sleep. Slowly she moved out of the "freaked out" mode, only to confront issues involving her parents' reactions and beliefs:

She was just saying that like most people in their relationships their first year is their best year and like you know whatever. And for us it's been like that for sure but it's also been I'm in individual counseling. She's individual counseling. We're in counseling together and my family knows which has turned my life upside down.

And the real reason why I had to go to counseling was because when [my parents] found out was when I had to go to individual counseling because when they found out both my parents contemplated suicide when they found out and really really negative things. They wanted to send me to a reform camp. Take me out of college and send me to a place to be not bisexual or whatever which is how I define myself.

Struggling with issues around coming out have overwhelmed this student's life over the past year. Issues around sexual orientation greatly impact her sense of self.

Women's Issues

Another aspect of self was expressed in discussions about women's issues. Topics discussed were: (a) pressure to embrace opportunity, (b) degradation associated with traditionally feminine career choice, (c) eating disorders, and (d) feminism.

Pressure to Embrace Opportunity

During the focus group, three of the five women discussed the pressure the women felt from older women in their lives to embrace the opportunities that were not provided in previous generations:

I don't think that they would want me to do something that I wouldn't be happy at, but more just the idea that all these things are open that weren't open before and I have the opportunity, "Why don't you take it?" (senior focus group member).

The women spoke passionately about the pressure they feel to take advantage of the many opportunities that were not available years ago. One woman discussed this pressure in reference to her desire to choose a career that allowed her to have a family. She felt that even though new opportunities are available, she would still like to have a family:

I think I felt this real pressure just from women, relatives and even other women who haven't had those opportunities. 'I didn't have those opportunities and now you take them.' If you have this opportunity run with it. But I think a lot of people forget the fact that times may be changing, but we still want families, and we still are women in the same way they were women (senior focus group member).

In particular, because the students were skilled in the areas of math and science, the more mature women in their lives were encouraging them to go into those traditionally masculine fields:

And I guess back in middle school, there started [to be] a lot of not pressure, but things from both my teachers and my parents, being like, 'You're a woman and you're good at science and math; that means that you have to be in science and math.' Because you, know, my mom was always telling me that she didn't have the opportunity. She is a teacher, and when she graduated women either became teachers or nurses, and so I was always cheered on by my parents (senior focus group member).

“I really think that happens to most people, most women. Most people that I’ve talked to, who did really well in elementary school, middle school, and high school were pushed in the same direction” (senior focus group member). The young women were working toward managing the pressure, wanting to listen, instead, to their own voice: “I am trying really hard and have been getting a lot better at it, about not listening to them and listening to myself” (senior focus group member).

Degradation Associated With Traditionally Feminine Career Choice

Related to the phenomenon above, a couple women discussed experiences that involved being thought of as stupid because they were choosing to major in psychology, a traditionally feminine career choice. The women had to prove that they were smart when others on campus discovered they were psychology majors. In fact, according to one woman, she retained her biology minor in order to give evidence of her intellect:

When I started telling people [about majoring in psychology], you can see the difference. If you tell people you are in genetics, wow. That is, you’re incredible. If you tell people that you’re in psychology, then they immediately lose all respect for you and they think that you are not smart, and they think all this stuff. That was such a huge thing for me because I just always felt an internal pressure from first grade on, that I needed to prove that I was smart (senior focus group member).

I’ve had people who say that all psych majors are stupid, and then I’ll take classes with them and do better than them in a different area and they will be like, “Oh well, maybe you are the only smart psych major” (senior focus group member).

But I had to stick with at least the minor, because when I am talking to someone and introducing myself, “Well, I’m a psychology major and I am minoring in biology,” so I’m not so stupid. I can at least pull a minor in biology

(senior focus group member).

Perceptions of others in reference to their intellect affected the women in negative ways. The result was the need to perform a balancing act of trying to prove themselves intellectually on one hand and, on the other hand, remain true to their voice in reference to career choice.

Feminism

A couple of senior women identified themselves as feminists, though hesitantly. Interestingly, these were the only participants who referenced their female identity. One woman was working through the “negative connotations” tied up in being a feminist, but ends her statement by stating, “I don’t think you can be a woman and not be a feminist.” Another senior identified herself as a feminist, but clarified the statement in the following manner:

Maybe I would say [I’m] a feminist, but not an active feminist and not an extreme feminist. When I get together with my friends we are all feminists and we all believe that woman should be strong and independent. Then when we get together we male-bash left and right. So I guess that I’m a feminist, but I don’t take active roles. I don’t go out and march in D.C. and stuff like that.

While one woman referenced feminist issues (employment inequity and abortion), the other woman spoke about being a woman in a very personal manner:

[Being a woman] is something that I am constantly aware of, the fact that I am a woman. I think what adds to it is that I am Chinese and I sort of live with the knowledge that had I been born in China, I wouldn’t be alive.

Defining self as a woman and feminist was critical to the women’s definition of self.

A final topic particular to women’s issues, eating disorders, was discussed.

Reference to Eating Disorders

One senior referred to a history of eating disorders, and spoke at length about body image:

I'm definitely a lot more secure with who I am. I'm not bound up so much with eating. I've become a lot more comfortable. I work out three times a week and my family is cursed with horribly round faces, so even when I was anorexic I still looked so round. Just because my friends had little cheekbone structure and I just didn't. There was nothing I could do about it (senior).

Though she referred to herself as more comfortable than she had been previously, the intensity with which she spoke relayed the power the disease has had, or still has, upon her. It is also important to keep in mind that though others did not discuss eating disorders, the presence of the disease, or issues around body image, may be present in the lives of others.

In addition to the many themes that are included under the umbrella heading of self within community, the defining personal issues highlighted above are powerful influences in the lives of women as well.

Lack of Self Confidence to Self Assuredness

When asked to discuss their sense of self when they first arrive women discussed a lack of self-confidence, characterized by insecurity, confusion, naiveté, and loneliness was discussed by a few women. In contrast, a few women were self assured as early as the first year and experience feelings of strength, maturity, purpose, and independence.

Lack of Self Confidence

When asked to discuss who they were when they first arrived, a few women used words that described a lack of self confidence: “afraid, petrified, alone, not knowing, feeling stable, scared, depressed, kind of wandering, and not having security.” This same woman, a sophomore goes on to describe the experience further:

[I was] depressed because I was alone, afraid, all of the above. Just not knowing was pretty much, I was like, “Oh God, when is this going to end?” Part of me just wanted to drop off, which just wasn’t myself. I just wasn’t myself my first semester at all. My family could see it, my friends couldn’t see it because they didn’t see me, but my family could see it.

Another woman, also a minority who identified herself as Malaysian Chinese, spoke about her experience as “feeling small:”

I think the insecurity mirrors myself in the way that I found myself when I look in the mirror. I was like, “I am so small compared to everyone else, my voice is small, my worth is small.” I felt very not worthy.

Other students made reference to the transition from high school. A few students spoke about leaving their friends and family, and coming to a school where they knew no one. They may have been confident in high school, but their demeanor changed drastically once they arrived at college:

I graduated from high school and was completely fine. Upon entering college I was a commuter and that was hard, for health reason I thought it would be better to be home. But it wasn’t a good idea. I should have been on campus. I was afraid not knowing anybody on campus. You get to school and all these people had already met each other because they live near each other and you don’t know anybody. I get to these classes and there are like 200 or 250 people in these big lectures. I’m the kind of person who likes more one on one, smaller. I wasn’t sure where to go for help, so kind of like really petrified (sophomore Hispanic student).

“As soon as I got here, I don’t know what happened to me, but I switched into this

different person” (junior Filipino transfer student). “I had left a big social situation at home and coming here I was just not secure in anything” (Malaysian Chinese senior). A few women spoke about needing to “find their niche,” and get involved with others as their remedy. “I thought that I could find a support system that I could be with, maybe without much effort, and there would be a structure there for me and I think I was very naive” (senior Malaysian Chinese student). “I couldn’t find my niche, and I couldn’t get into anything” (junior Filipino transfer student).

One woman, the only Caucasian student who spoke about the process, discussed the importance of “fitting in” and “being a part of a group” when you first arrive. As college progresses you move out of being concerned about what other’s think and what others are doing: “You can do your own thing and be really happy.” Her reference to the importance of others initially had to do with approval from peers. In contrast, the minority women seemed to be searching for more of a support system.

A couple women referred to their experience upon arrival as quite different. They felt confident from the outset. In particular, a sophomore first generation, Caucasian student stated her position this way: “Nothing was really hard. I came here and I loved it right away.” When probed, she spoke about having only a few friends in high school, and was much more at home at the university. She was also leaving a home in which she “hated” her stepfather. In contrast, the women who felt insecure were mainly minority students (three of four), who had left behind friends, family, and perhaps a cultural foundation that was important to their sense of self.

Self Assuredness

In contrast to feelings of insecurity, confusion, naiveté, as students proceeded through college feelings of purpose, independence, strength, and maturity developed. The majority of women experienced a sense of purpose. A focus on career illustrated the concept of purpose. For some women, the sense of purpose increased as they moved through college. A slight pattern was observed upon informal analysis of the questionnaire assessing psychosocial student development along Chickering's development of purpose vector as well. Women became more "focused" and "ambitious:" "I think each year you go through and you focus more on what you want and what your goals are" (fifth year). "I would say more so now than ever, I am more focused on what I want to do. So I know what I want to do career wise and I know what I have to do to get there." In contrast to some younger students who made statements referring to "not knowing exactly what [they] are going to do with their lives," older students had made decisions about career, (and, for some, family) and were committed to them.

A slight pattern of independence emerged as well. Many women spoke of increased independence throughout college, though slightly more older students discussed the concept than younger students. Women were in the process of separating from parents or perceived cultural constraints. Relying on others decreased, as did the influence parents, in particular, had upon their lives: "In a way college and moving away, actually it is teaching me to be independent, and not always relying on my family" (first year).

It has taken me a lot of time to come to the point in my life where I feel that I have the right to make decisions for myself. Again, it traces back to my culture, in that I have always felt this pressure from my parents to do certain things that they expected. But finally, I am making decisions for myself and excepting that. I always felt like the decisions that I made had to take into account other people and their expectations of me and their feelings that maybe the good of the group and family honor was better than the good of myself (senior Malaysian Chinese student).

“Before it would always be my parents saying why don’t you do this or that, but now it is me who comes up with the ideas beforehand, so that is a big change” (fifth year).

One senior thought of her mother as her mirror image. Breaking away, then returning, allowed her to experience a separate sense of self:

I don’t think that until the very end of my senior year, I defined myself as anybody different from my mom. I thought that my mom and I had the same opinions on everything and I felt that whatever my opinion was, was the same as my mom’s. That was who I was, and I think it has taken a long time and I haven’t gotten completely away from that...It has been really amazing because for the past year or so I have actually been able to go back and redevelop my relationship with my mom. I needed to break away.

Women were “breaking away,” “speaking their minds,” making their own decisions, following their dreams, and “writing their own lives:”

[I] speak my mind always because now I’m my own person and [on] my own. I have to make my own contribution to society in my own way and, therefore, I can’t be quiet about things that I don’t like anymore (senior).

“I’m more driven to fulfill my own dreams ad my own potential; to write my own life” (senior focus group member). “I’ve learned that I can make a decision and not just follow in this path that was set” (senior focus group member).

One senior’s experience illustrates the move from a rather precarious mental state to a strengthened position in which she has “found her voice,” feels “worthy,” and confident in her future:

In terms of my voice, I find that I have come to the place in my life that I don't think that (pause) your voice will be small as long as you think it will. One voice can be pretty loud if you want it to be. With the building of everything and seeing my life move in a direction and feeling more confident about my decisions, has made me feel better about that I could do something worthy in life, worthwhile. I'm not so small anymore. senior talking about how has changed.

Beyond heightened senses of purpose and independence, a few women spoke about increased strength after experiencing college. A couple of women referred to a heightened sense of strength having experienced difficult times. the first year: "[I'm] back to my old self, but different in the sense that I'm stronger than I was in high school. I'm a lot stronger" (sophomore). "I'm glad I experienced [the difficult time]. It made me a better person and made me stronger" (junior).

The term "maturity" was more elusive, as a couple fifth year students talked about being more mature and "grown up", but offered little in the way of context or illustration: "[I'm] a little bit more mature," and "I have grown up." Perhaps becoming more mature can be illustrated in the tapering off of stuffed animals housed in the living spaces as the women progressed through college. (One first year, and three sophomores had stuffed animals on display.) The third student, a senior, discussed her process more specifically. She had had time to be on her own and reflect, allowing herself to be less influenced by others:

I think I am more mature this year than I was last year. [In what way?] Just because I think that I've had more time to myself and I think without the influence of others it has helped me to really look at who I am and what I need and what I want to do, whereas before a lot of it had to do with other people. So I have had a lot of time to sit back and think about things, and look at things. I think that I have definitely grown up.

Eventual self assuredness involving purpose, strength, and maturity may also

take place within the context of connection with others. Even the development of independence for women is not considered an entirely separate endeavor. For example, being in the presence of other independent women actually influenced the development of autonomy for one senior: "College helped me in that because I was able to surround myself with people who showed me that it is possible to make decisions for yourself and be okay with it."

In general, a few women experienced feelings of insecurity, confusion, naiveté, and loneliness when they arrived at college. In contrast, by the end of college these women are purposeful, independent, strong, and mature.

Summary

Three overarching themes emerged from the data: self in community, defining personal issues, and transformation from a lack in self-confidence to self assuredness. Women develop in the context of others from friends and family members, to the diversity of persons surrounding them. Also, women are confronted with a myriad of defining personal issues including academics and competence to spirituality and issues unique to women. Finally, some women experience profound feelings of insecurity initially that are replaced by feelings of confidence in the latter years of college.

Data collection and analysis were extensive. Women unselfishly gave of themselves, expressing personal thoughts and feeling around their sense of self and the impact of college. Ideas around the ways in which the present data informs

existing theory, modifications, and implications for student affairs professionals are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The study was meant to inform existing psychosocial student development theory by exploring female development from a qualitative, multicultural perspective. This objective was met as the results hint at the complexities of the female experience during college. Many interesting and novel themes around psychosocial development were detected that can be used to inform existing theory: (a) themes of self in community with others to include the immediate community (i.e., friends, family, partners) and the less immediate community (i.e., “people”, diversity, culture, and career within community); (b) defining personal issues (i.e., emotions, academics, competence, spirituality, first generation college issues, women’s issues, sexual orientation); and (c) a transformation from a lack of self-confidence (characterized by insecurity, confusion, naiveté, and loneliness) to self assuredness (characterized by strength, maturity, and purpose) developed through the course of college. In addition, research objectives were met, signifying the importance of studying female psychosocial development within a modern context as issues around diversity, multiple identities, and women emerged.

Overarching Themes Relative to Existing Psychosocial Student Development Theory

Support for Prominent Psychosocial Theory

Several resulting themes referenced existing prominent psychosocial student development theory to a large extent (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The majority of Chickering vectors were supported: vector 1 (competence), vector 2 (managing emotions), vector 3 (moving through autonomy toward interdependence), vector 4 (developing mature interpersonal relationships), vector 5 (establishing identity), and vector 6 (developing purpose). Women felt competent and confident, particularly as older students. Women were dealing with emotional issues, resulting, for some, in increased strength having moved through difficult issues. In reference to vector 4, women were aware of their own needs as well as their responsibility toward others, referring to “making a difference” in the lives of others. Relationships were not only significant but paramount, and perhaps acted as the foundation upon which other areas developed (denoting an intensity that actually deviates from Chickering’s theory). In reference to identity, women were moving through issues around their comfort level of self. From one senior’s struggle with sexual identity to another senior’s feeling of being “more comfortable” with who she is. Finally, a majority of women were focused on their goals. Perhaps experience of the seventh vector, the development of integrity, will occur later in the lives of the participating women as they were concentrating on other aspects of self (e.g., academics, career).

Support for Lesser Known Psychosocial Student Development Theorists

In addition, the resulting data referenced the ideas of two lesser known psychosocial student development theorists, Roy Heath and Douglas Heath. Ideas around intellectuality (i.e., references to diversity of ideas, academic focus), depth of interpersonal relationships (self in community), and autonomy emerged from discussions with the women, possibly supporting three of the four hallmarks of a well developed person as proposed by Roy Heath (1969). Direct references to the development of maturity coincides with the name of a model proposed by Douglas Heath (1977), but only references to allocentrism (or “othercenteredness”) (i.e., self in community) and autonomy lend further support.

Emerging Themes Informing Existing Psychosocial Student Development Theory

Though existing psychosocial theory was supported, developmental themes also emerged that have not been acknowledged previously. The idea that women are developing in connection with others to include friends, family, partners, diverse acquaintances, culture is paramount. Women overwhelmingly spoke about themselves in reference to others. Having a career that makes a difference in the lives of others, or speaking about career in reference to motherhood, also illustrate the point that women are not moving through college, or, perhaps life, as individually minded people. Even independence was expressed in the context of others. In addition women believed that a remedy for a lack of self confidence was to get involved with

others. Existing psychosocial theory may be informed by the idea that connection is not one aspect of development as Chickering proposes, but a foundation upon which other developmental issues are resolved (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Also, several defining personal issues emerged that are not included in existing psychosocial student development theory: academics, spirituality, first generation college issues, women's issues (i.e., pressure to embrace opportunity, degradation of female career choice, feminism, and eating disorders), and sexual orientation. Though some of these areas are gaining some attention within the student affairs community (i.e, spirituality, first generation, and sexual orientation), little attention is given to the importance of their academic life and issues that are relevant because they are women. It would be beneficial for student affairs researchers to study these dimensions further in order to increase understanding and appreciation.

Also, as students are dealing with issues particular to their status as women, it is important to address those concerns. Beyond the intense women's issues that have been given attention in the past (e.g., eating disorders, feminism), new issues have emerged. A shift has taken place as women are afforded opportunities women before them were not. As a result women may feel pressured and degraded if they choose a stereotypically feminine career path. It may be helpful for counselors to encourage women to explore the influence of others upon career choice, allowing women to express their feelings as a result of any perceived pressure.

The transformation from a lack of self-confidence (characterized by insecurity, confusion, naiveté', and loneliness) to self assuredness (characterized by strength,

maturity, and purpose) has not been explored in the area of student affairs. Minorities in particular, experienced difficult times when they first arrived. In order to more fully appreciate this phenomenon, it is important to attend to these struggles in the research and in practice. (A more extensive discussion of implications for practice is presented at the end of the chapter.)

Overarching Themes Relative to Identity Development Literature

Female Development

Self in Relation Theory

The results of this study point to the significance of women developing within the context of a community of others, as women discussed friends, family, diversity, culture, and career. The finding is not surprising as it confirms literature around female development. Ideas around the importance of a self in relation to others has been discussed at great length in recent years in the area of female identity development, as well as development in the areas of cognition (e.g., Belenky et al., 1986) and morality (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987, 1996). In fact, researchers have theorized that not only is the idea of self in relationship with others an important aspect of psychosocial development, it is the foundation upon which development in other areas takes place (Jordan et al., 1991; Josselson, 1987, 1996). According to Josselson, whom women know has very much to do with who they become (Josselson, 1987).

Not only were more obvious connections such as family, friends, and partner important to women, they also referred to less immediate connections. Diversity, culture, and career were spoken about in the context of relationships. Existing literature does not point to these areas as relevant in reference to connection and a definition of self. It would be beneficial to explore the relevance of these concepts through additional research, perhaps employing quantitative methods specifically addressing diversity, culture, and career as concepts relevant to identity within the context of relationship.

According to the women in the study, the process of transformation from a lack of self-confidence to self assuredness may also take place within the context of connection with others. Specifically, women referred to the importance of involvement with others as a remedy to feelings of insecurity, confusion, naiveté', and loneliness. Beyond connection with individuals, perhaps ideas around the importance of involvement in reference to the degree of engagement within the environment or activity may also apply as hypothesized by Astin (1984). As women became more involved in the college community, and found their "niche" (as one woman described it), they felt self assured.

Social Change

The results support the idea that continuous theoretical exploration is necessary as colleges are more multicultural, populated with students from different backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures. This setting is quite different from that of the mid

1960s when original existing psychosocial student development theory was created. A few women are struggling with issues that have emerged as a result of social change. Also, social change may have affected the degree to which women are experiencing a layering of identity development.

Issues Unique to Women

Women are confronting issues that are quite different than concerns prior to the Women's Movement. For example, during the focus group women spoke about the pressure placed upon them by the older women in their lives to embrace opportunities that were previously unavailable (e.g., opportunities in math and science). Women of previous generations expressed their desire for the students to take advantage of careers other than "nursing and teaching," and had pressured the young women to choose careers in either math or science. Instead a few women were choosing traditionally female careers (i.e., social work and counseling). The same women were apparently degraded by their peers for choosing careers that are traditionally feminine, as the women questioned their level of intelligence. During college the students were dealing with those pressures, and questioning their intellectual abilities because they were not choosing more traditionally male careers. In general, emerging issues unique to the student's identity as a woman have an influence on their experience as college students, but have not been explored in reference to psychosocial student development.

Diversity

Women discussed the impact of being exposed to varied persons and thoughts at length. The exposure may be due to the multicultural face of the college setting, and a change in curriculum to include programs that raise awareness of issues surrounding diverse groups (Bowser et al., 1995; Roberts et al., 1991; Schuman & Olufs, 1995). Exposure to novel ideas have been addressed in reference to cognitive development (i.e., moving from dualistic to relativistic thought), but the impact of today's diversity of people and cultures upon a definition of self within the college setting has yet to be addressed.

Multiple Identities

Another domain of literature consistent with the present results is the concept of multiple identities. The concept of multiple identities refers to the notion that women are experiencing multiple layers of identity at one time. In particular, aspects of identity supported in this study but are not fully acknowledged within general psychosocial student development theory include racial, sexual, and spiritual identity formations.

The data supports the concept of multiple identity development as evident in the discussions around culture and race. For example, one woman moved from being embarrassed about her accent to the eventual attainment of pride in her heritage. Another woman began college not knowing which race(s) with which to identify. As a senior she felt she had clear idea of her cultural identification. In addition, the

women who spoke about their cultural identity felt it was important to be involved with other persons on campus who shared a common heritage in order to move through the difficult time that arise as a first year student. It is likely racial identity development is occurring in conjunction with more general psychosocial student development.

Another layer of development is sexual identity formation. One woman spoke at length about issues around her identity as a bisexual person. Theorist Cass (cited in Evans et al., 1998) might describe her as moving through identity tolerance toward identity acceptance as she defines her sexual orientation in positive terms. More specifically, in reference to bisexual identity development, ideas proposed by Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor (1994) may be appropriate. According to their theory, she may be settling into the identity of bisexuality, but may be confronted with continued uncertainty due to a lack of validation in reference to this form of sexual orientation. Whatever stage she may be cycling through, this participant illustrates the point that she is experiencing issues around a definition of self beyond general psychosocial student development.

It is possible women develop along a spiritual dimension in connection with others as well (Love & Talbot, 1999). A handful of women referenced spirituality indirectly; therefore it is difficult to ascertain where they may fall in terms of development. However, spirituality may be another layer of development that co-exists with general psychosocial student development.

As a result of social change women are moving through a whole range of

previously unacknowledged issues that involve layering of multiple identities, accommodation of diversity, and are experiencing relatively novel issues around their identity as women. In addition, women are moving through these phases in their lives in connection with other people. Further research that explores each phenomenon at length may lead to more substantive findings, and corroborate the current study. The student affairs community would also benefit by acknowledging the existence of these issues in their research, instruction, and practice.

Meeting Proposed Objectives

This study met the proposed objectives. Psychosocial student development was examined from a multicultural, qualitative perspective in a way that acknowledged the experience of women in a modern setting, incorporating newly developed ideas around female development.

As a result, some original developmental themes were revealed. For example, emerging issues unique to women, and the tendency to broaden one's perspective of and appreciation for the diversity that now exists on college campuses may not have been expressed if female identity development had not been studied from a qualitative, multicultural perspective. Women were free to discuss any aspect of their definition of self, and as a result topics that were not indicated in the literature emerged. Also, women representing different ethnicities brought multiple perspectives that have not been previously explored when discussing psychosocial theory.

Therefore, the resulting data support the study's rationale that it is important

to explore the process of female psychosocial development using qualitative methods, within a modern, multicultural setting.

Operationalizing Overarching Themes

It would behoove student affairs researchers and practitioners to be aware that women are developing their identities in community with others. The extent to which women develop within the context of connection cannot be overemphasized. It is likely relationships provide the foundation for student psychosocial development. Practice that acknowledges connection would better meet the needs of students. Programming that is based on peer involvement, such as rape awareness programs and student judicial boards are likely to be most effective. One purpose for programs such as these is to encourage student development. Because women develop in connection with others, providing programs that incorporate peer groups would be most effective.

As little attention has been given to two defining personal issues, academics and emerging women's issues, it is important for student affairs professionals to acknowledge these concerns in their practice. The intellectual side of the student may sometimes be ignored by student affairs professionals because that aspect of self may be seen as a concern primarily for academic advisors and faculty. However, the pressures of being a student leads to stress, and, therefore, plays a crucial role in women's experience in college. In order to ensure student's needs are met it is important to acknowledge all aspects of their lives.

Also, it is important for student affairs practitioners to be aware of the possibility that many of their first year female students may be experiencing a lack of self assuredness and are in need of support. According to the data, minority students are the majority of women experiencing this phenomenon pointing to the need to further study the experience of minorities on campus and addressing their possible struggles. Programming and institutional policies that encourage involvement with others, particularly within their minority group, would assist these women.

Modifications

Proposed Modifications

Overall Method

Upon completion of the project it is necessary to review the methodology to assess possible modifications that may have strengthened the study. A number of issues are worth noting. As a novel qualitative researcher, I may have relied too heavily on only a handful of resources regarding qualitative methods and procedures. Follow-up work would involve extensive review of qualitative resources outside the realm of those included in this work. Also, it may have been more beneficial to work in collaboration with other qualitative researchers to add to my knowledge base and to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, data collection, and data analysis.

Another proposed methodological modification would be to enlist the services of a peer debriefer who differed from me on many levels. In particular, a peer

debriefers from a different ethnic background could have been helpful as I reviewed the data from the diverse participants in this study. The assistance of a peer debriefer from a different ethnic background to a large extent would strengthen the validity of the conclusions.

In addition, one code, “emotions,” proved very difficult to analyze. Women repeatedly spoke about emotions or states of mental fitness. The code was difficult to analyze because I was hesitant to pathologize women as had been done in the past by presenting issues around mental fitness, and the comments themselves were often elusive. Future replication of this type of study should include extensive analysis and exploration of emotional issues that are particular to college women.

Finally, in reference to the general methodology, a rather serious deviation from grounded theory methods and procedures occurred as a pre-determined number of participants were included in order for the study to be completed within imposed time constraints. More appropriate theoretical saturation should have taken place (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to “pure” grounded theory methodology, as the data was analyzed and codes were determined, participant interviews should have continued until specific codes or categories became saturated. Saturation of this sort could have resulted in a larger number of participants, strengthening all aspects of the study, including the quantitative piece. Consistent with grounded theory methodology, transcriptions were analyzed continuously, allowing the development of codes to inform the interviews. However, the method was not applied as it should have been to be entirely consistent with well established grounded theory methods and

techniques. Additional research that allows for theoretical saturation may be most beneficial.

Participants

Other proposed modifications are specific to the participants, interviews, field observations, and questionnaires. First, it would be helpful to replicate the study at another educational institution, drawing upon the present results to further investigate the process of psychosocial development in another university context, in order to include a larger variety of women. Also, though extensive efforts were undertaken to recruit participants who represented various races and cultures, including involvement with the Office of Minority Student Affairs, the response from African American students was extremely limited. In addition, more substantial efforts to track recent graduates to represent a fifth year perspective should have taken place. Inclusion of only fifth year students, rather than graduates, may have limited the perspective represented. Finally, to truly represent the experience of all college women, it would have been most interesting to include the perspective of non-traditional students. Future efforts to include the psychosocial experience of non-traditional students is necessary.

Interviews

Beyond the inclusion of a more representative sample, revisions to the interview process would also be beneficial. Though relative adherence to the

interview protocol rendered extensive data, perhaps further revisions should have been made. For example, in reference to the idea of maturity, it would have been most beneficial to delve further into the meaning behind the concept. Perhaps it would have proved beneficial to delve further into the thoughts behind many of the codes. Instead, following the open ended nature of the protocol seemed to allow students' thoughts and ideas to flow most freely. Follow-up work that perhaps delves further into specific themes could probe deeper into meaning and significance.

Field Observations

In addition, though well meaning, field observations of the participant's living spaces proved somewhat fruitless. As a method of triangulation, the observations did support ideas around self in community through the existence of photos of significant others. Beyond this observation, little was gained from the method. In future, more relevant data may be gained by asking the participants to describe their environment, allowing them to give evidence of the elements they believe are representations of self.

Questionnaires

Finally, the questionnaires could have been modified as follows. The quantitative piece may have been more beneficial as a method of triangulation if altered. Rather than using a self-made psychosocial student development questionnaire that had not been verified through previous research, it may be beneficial to employ a

more reliable questionnaire. Also, alternate results may have resulted if the questionnaire had been given at the end of the interview after the participants had been engaged in introspection. It may also have been interesting to give the questionnaire both before and after to assess the impact of the interview itself.

Beyond modifications to the psychosocial questionnaire, it may also be helpful to make adjustments to the demographic questionnaire. In particular, one type of financial contribution, scholarship, was unintentionally excluded though many students may be awarded in this way. This option was not provided. It would also have been interesting to ask if they had come from a rural or urban setting, and the size of the urban setting. As many students discussed the introduction of diversity as a critical aspect of self, it would be interesting to note if the nature of their home environment may relate to the impact of the introduction.

Final Remarks

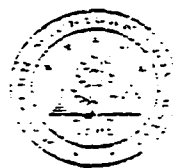
As proposed, psychosocial student development was examined from a multicultural, qualitative perspective in a way that acknowledges the experience of women, incorporating newly developed ideas around female development. Three overarching themes emerged: (1) self developing within the context of community; (2) defining personal issues (i.e., emotions, academics, competence, spirituality, first generation college issues, women's issues, sexual orientation); and (3) transformation from a lack of self-confidence to self assuredness. In addition, research objectives were met, pointing to the importance of studying female psychosocial development

within a modern context as issues around diversity, multiple identities, and issues particular to women emerged.

The data informs existing literature, as some themes support current psychosocial student development theory and others suggest new topics to be explored through research. Upon further examination and application student affairs practitioners will more appropriately meet the needs of their female students.

Appendix A
Human Subjects Institutional Review
Board Approval Letters

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-5162
616 387-8293

 WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: 20 November 2000

To: Donna Talbot, Principal Investigator
Elizabeth Maier Marietta, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Michael Pritchard, Interim Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael A. Pritchard".

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 00-10-09

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Psychosocial Development of Traditional-Age Female College Students" has been **provisionally approved** under the **expedited** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. *Before you begin collecting data, you must provide us with an approval letter from the University of Rochester IRB.* The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may not begin to implement the research as described in the application until we have the approval letter from University of Rochester IRB.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 20 November 2001

UNIVERSITY OF
ROCHESTER

RESEARCH SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD

DATE: December 29, 2000

TO: Elizabeth Maier Marietta

FROM: John Loughner, Pharm.D.
Chair, Research Subjects Review Board

Chin-To Fong, MD *CF*
Assistant Chair, Research Subjects Review Board

RE: RSRB Exemption
Protocol Title: Psychosocial Development of Traditional
Age Female College Students

The RSRB has reviewed this study and determined that it does not require continuing review for the following reason:

☐ Study does not qualify as human subjects research (45 CFR 46.102)

- ☐ Activities being conducted do not meet the federal definition of research
- ☐ Research does not involve human subjects as defined in the federal regulations

☒ Study is exempt from federal regulation under the following category (45 CFR 46.101):

- ☐ 1. Educational research conducted in educational settings
- ☒ 2. Survey/interview/observational research *
- ☐ 3. Survey/interview/observational research involving public officials or candidates for public office
- ☐ 4. Secondary use of anonymous pre-existing data
- ☐ 5. Evaluation of public benefit or service program
- ☐ 6. Taste and food quality studies

Important Notes:

An exemption means that you do not need to submit an annual progress report to the RSRB, or seek re-approval on an annual basis.

The RSRB requires that investigators submit an amendment before any changes to a study are implemented.

* Studies involving interviews or surveys with subjects 17 years of age or less are not exempt.

By University of Rochester policy, all studies involving subjects 17 years of age or less must include parent/guardian permission.

Exemptions are not allowed in categories 1-6 if the study involves fetuses in vitro, pregnant women, human in-vitro fertilization or prisoners.

601 Elmwood Avenue, Box 315
Rochester, New York 14642-8315
(716) 275-2398

Revised 8/23/00

Appendix B
Consent Form

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

H. S. I. R. B.

Approved for use for one year from this date:

NOV 20 2000

x Michael A. Pitchard
HSIRB Chair

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
Principal Investigator/Advisor: Donna Talbot, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Elizabeth Maier Marietta, MA
Consent Form: Psychosocial Development Study of Traditional-Age College Women

I am invited to participate in a study on female identity development during college. By participating in the focus group/interview, I am consenting to participate in this study. The information obtained during the interviews may potentially help college administrators and faculty better understand the way in which women develop during college.

I will participate in at least one, possibly two interviews which may last approximately two hours; all interviews will be audio taped, and handwritten notes will be transcribed during the interview. I will also be asked if I am willing to do a "member check" of the narrative that is compiled from the interviews; this should take no more than one hour. My participation is completely voluntary. I may discontinue participation in this study at any time without penalty or prejudice.

The anticipated risks are expected to be minimal. The only anticipated risks are the effects of thinking about and disclosing the issues discussed. As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or treatment will be made available to the subject except as otherwise stated in this consent form.

All of the information collected from me will remain confidential. That means that my name or other identifying information will be removed once the tapes are transcribed; any identifying information will be removed from the transcriptions. If participating in the focus group I must also respect the privacy of others and not repeat any aspect of the discussion to others, and expect that the other participants will not repeat anything that I may say. The results from this study may be used for publications and presentations. The majority of the information used from this study will be reported in aggregate form; some individual quotes may be used without any identifying information. All data will be kept in the principal investigator's locked office for a minimum of three years and then it will be destroyed.

If I have any questions or concerns, I may contact the Student Investigator, Elizabeth Maier Marietta (716-241-3972 or 716-275-9059 or maer@mail.rochester.edu), or the Primary Investigator/Advisor, Dr. Donna Talbot at Western Michigan University, Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology (616-387-5122 or talbot@wmich.edu). I may also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (616-387-8293) the Vice President for Research (616-387-8298), or the University of Rochester Research Subjects Review Board Protection Specialist, Gloria Fish (716-275-2187) if questions or problems arise.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not show a stamped date and signature.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C
Recruitment Flyer

ATTENTION

**PARTICIPANTS ARE NEEDED
TO HELP WITH A STUDY ON
FEMALE DEVELOPMENT
DURING COLLEGE.**

**HELP US TO UNDERSTAND
HOW COLLEGE HAS
AFFECTED YOU.**

\$10 PER HOUR!

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
PARTICIPATE,
PLEASE CONTACT:**

Elizabeth Maier Marietta
Doctoral Candidate, Western Michigan University
maer@mail.rochester.edu
716-241-3972 or 716-275-9059



Appendix D
Screening Protocol Script

Screening Protocol Script

(Telephone or Email Script Communicating with a Potential Participants)

Hello, my name is Elizabeth Maier Marietta. I am a doctoral student at Western Michigan University, and I work as a career counselor in the University of Rochester Career Center. The project title is the "Psychosocial Development of Traditional-Age College Women", and the study is intended to explore themes around women's development of self, including your interests, priorities, values, etc., and how college has impacted that development. Participation will include at least one (but no more than two) one to two hour interviews. And one follow-up "member check" session where I will ask you to check my interpretations. You will receive \$10 per hour for your participation. Are you still interested in participating in the study?

May I ask you a few questions regarding the criteria for participating in the study?

What is your class year? _____

What is your age? _____

Define your ethnicity. _____

A) It appears you meet the criteria for the study, and it would be wonderful to have you participate. Would you like to schedule an interview?

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Interview Time _____

Interview Location _____

I can be reached at 716-241-3972 if there are any complications.

B) It appears that you do not meet the criteria for the study. Thank you so much for your time and efforts. Good bye.

Appendix E
Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Protocol

“Welcome and thank you for joining me today (tonight). I really appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I am the focus group facilitator, Elizabeth Maier Marietta. The focus group will last about two hours. Before we begin, we need to make sure that everyone has had a chance to read the consent form. [pause] Are there any questions about it? [pause--answer questions and ask them to sign]. Also, could you please take a moment to complete the brief demographic questionnaire.

You read in the consent form that the focus groups will be audio taped. Please be assured that any identifying information will be removed when the tapes are transcribed. I will keep your identities and the discussion confidential. This means that unless I have concerns about your safety or the safety of others, or your participation in some illegal activities involving minors, I will not share your name and individual information with anyone. I also need all of you to agree to maintain this confidentiality as well. It is very important that we respect the privacy of the other group members and not repeat what we hear others disclose today. [Check this out and respond to possible questions]

I want you to know that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions I will ask. I am simply looking for your honest perspectives. This is an opportunity for you to share responses to questions and listen to others talk about the same issues. I expect that you will not always agree with others’ opinions; however, I ask that you be respectful of and do not attack other peoples’ views during this discussion.

If there are no other questions or concerns at this point, let’s begin...”

- **Facilitator will ask participants to introduce themselves (first names only).**
- **Facilitator will ask participants to describe themselves (e.g., their interests, their priorities, their capabilities, their difficulties, their values, what they like to do, etc.) before coming to college.**
- **Facilitator will ask participants to describe themselves today.**
- **Facilitator will ask how the participants think college has impacted any changes in who they’ve become.**
- **Facilitator will ask the participants to talk about how they believe they have developed/grown/changed/ during college.**
- **Facilitators will summarize and wrap up group.**

Appendix F
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

“Thank you for allowing me to ask you some questions today (tonight). I really appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. The interview will last approximately one-two hours. Before I begin, I need to make sure that you had a chance to read the consent form. [pause] Are there any questions about it? [pause-- answer questions and ask her to sign].

Outlined in the consent form is a piece about the interview being audio taped. Please be assured that any identifying information will be removed when the tapes are transcribed. I will also be taking notes of our conversation. Nowhere within my notes will there be any identifying information. I will keep your identity and our discussion confidential. I will be discussing the content of our talks with the professor who is supervising the research, Donna Talbot. Again, no identifying information will be disclosed, however. This means that unless I have concerns about your safety or the safety of others, or your participation in some illegal activities involving minors, I will not share your name and individual information with anyone. [Respond to possible questions]

I want you to know that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions I will ask. I am simply looking for your honest perspectives. This is an opportunity for you to share responses to questions about who you are and your identity development during college.

If there are no other questions or concerns at this point, let’s begin...”

- Interviewer will ask the participant to introduce herself (first name only, and year in school).**
- Interviewer will ask the participant to think of as many words as she can to describe herself before entering college. (I will transcribe her words as she speaks)**
- Interviewer will read each word back to her and ask her to tell me more about each of the descriptors.**
- Interviewer will ask the participant to think of as many words she can to describe herself now. (I will transcribe her words as she speaks)**
- Interviewer will read each word back to her and ask her to tell me more about each of the descriptors.**
- Interviewer will ask how the participant believes college has impacted any changes in who she has become.**

- Interviewer will ask the participant to talk about how she believes she has developed/grown/changed/ during college.
- Interviewer will summarize and wrap up group.

Appendix G
Demographic Questionnaire

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology
Principal Investigator: Dr. Donna Talbot
Student Investigator: Elizabeth Maier, M.A.

Demographic Questionnaire/Brief Psychosocial Student Development Survey
Psychosocial Development of Traditional-Age College Women

In order to better understand your cultural background please provide the following demographic information:

Age _____ Year in College _____

Academic Major(s) _____

Academic Cluster(s) _____

Ethnicity:

Asian American _____ African American _____ Caucasian _____

Native American _____ Indian _____ Asian (please list country) _____

Other (please define) _____

Financial assistance during college includes:

Parental Contribution _____ Financial Aid _____ Work Study _____

Student Employment _____ Other _____

Are you a first generation college student (i.e., are you the first person in your family to attend college)? Yes _____ No _____

Highest Degree Completed by Mother (if relevant):

Middle School _____ High School _____ College _____

Graduate/Professional School _____ No Maternal Figure _____

Highest Degree Completed by Father (if relevant):

Middle School _____ High School _____ College _____

Graduate/Professional School _____ No Paternal Figure _____

Appendix H
Brief Psychosocial Student Development Survey

Brief Psychosocial Student Development Survey

Please rate yourself along the following developmental dimensions on a scale of 1-5 (1=low; 5=high). It may help to think about how you would assess yourself compared to other students or friends your age.

1. Developing Competence: The degree to which you feel competent intellectually, physically, and interpersonally (or socially).

1 2 3 4 5

2. Managing Emotions: The degree to which you believe you are capable of handling emotions such as anger, sadness, anxiety, caring, and optimism.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence: The degree to which you believe you have achieved independence (freedom from a strong need for reassurance and approval from others) as well as interdependence (an awareness of your connection with others).

1 2 3 4 5

4. Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships: The degree to which you believe you have developed an acceptance of others for who they are, respecting their differences, and appreciating what you have in common.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Establishing Identity: The degree to which you feel comfortable with who you are (i.e., your appearance, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, lifestyle, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

6. Developing Purpose: The degree to which you have developed a strong sense of future goals for self, lifestyle, and career.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Developing Integrity: The degree to which you have developed a personal set of beliefs and core values which guide your behavior and lifestyle.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix I

Tables

Field Observations: Images of Immediate Community

Year	Photos, Cards, Drawings: Family	Photos, Cards, Drawings: Friends	Photos, Cards, Drawings: Partners
first years	2/3	3/3	0/3
sophomores	3/3	2/3	0/3
juniors	3/3	2/3	0/3
seniors	3/3	2/3	1/3
fifth years	3/3	2/3	0/3
focus group	NA	NA	NA

Field Observation: Artistic Expressions

Year	Artwork	Movie/Musicals	Celebrity	Collage	Cultural	Message
first years	3/3	1/3	1/3	0/3	0/3	1/3
sophomores	2/3	0/3	1/3	2/3	0/3	0/3
juniors	2/3	1/3	1/3	0/3	1/3	0/3
seniors	2/3	1/3	0/3	0/3	3/3	0/3
fifth years	2/3	1/3	0/3	0/3	0/3	3/3
focus group	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Field Observations: Music Collections

Year	Rythm & Blues	Pop	Jazz	Classical	Folk	Rock	Cultural	Alternative
first years	3/3	3/3	0/3	0/3	0/3	1/3	1/3	1/3
sophomores	1/3	2/3	1/3	1/3	0/3	1/3	0/3	1/3
juniors	2/3	3/3	2/3	0/3	1/3	2/3	1/3	1/3
seniors	2/3	3/3	0/3	1/3	0/3	1/3	1/3	0/3
fifth years	1/3	3/3	0/3	0/3	1/3	2/3	0/3	0/3
focus group	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Chickering's Vectors of Psychosocial Development

Year	Competence	Managing Emotions	Autonomy	Identity	Relationships	Purpose	Integrity
first years	4.33	4.00	4.33	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.33
sophomores	4.00	3.67	3.67	4.00	4.67	4.33	4.67
juniors	4.33	4.00	3.33	4.00	4.33	4.33	4.67
seniors	4.67	3.30	4.33	4.33	5.00	4.00	5.00
fifth years	4.50	4.17	3.83	4.67	4.67	5.00	4.67
focus group	4.60	4.00	4.40	4.20	4.40	4.20	4.60

Self in Community: Friends

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines	Number of Participants Displaying Photos
first years	3/3	14	41	3/3
sophomores	3/3	18	52	2/3
juniors	2/3	12	35	2/3
seniors	3/3	12	38	2/3
fifth years	2/3	13	29	2/3
focus group	2/5	10	25	NA
Total*	15/20	79	220	11/15

Self in Community: Family

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines	Number of Participants Displaying Photos
first years	2/3	8	34	2/3
sophomores	3/3	16	74	3/3
juniors	2/3	9	43	3/3
seniors	3/3	30	54	3/3
fifth years	2/3	11	38	3/3
focus group	2/5	11	59	NA
Total	14/20	85	302	13/15

Partner in Reference to Self

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines	Number of Participants Displaying Photos
first years	1/3	1	2	0/3
sophomores	1/3	1	4	0/3
juniors	1/3	2	6	0/3
seniors	2/3	6	167*	1/3
fifth years	1/3	1	4	0/3
focus group	2/5	3	8	NA
Total	8/20	14	191	1/15

*Of the 167, 159 from one woman discussing the experience around her first same sex relationship.

Self in Community: "People"

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	3/3	10	20
sophomores	3/3	26	59
juniors	3/3	12	26
seniors	3/3	6	18
fifth years	3/3	8	17
focus group	5/5	11	25
Total	20/20	73	165

Self in Community: Diversity

Year	Number of Participants	Intro to Diverse Perspectives	Number of Lines/ Diverse Perspectives	Intro to Diverse People	Number of Lines/ Diverse People
first years	1/3	3	5	1	9
sophomores	1/3	3	10	3	11
juniors	2/3	3	18	4	21
seniors	2/3	4	18	5	26
fifth years	2/3	3	13	7	22
focus group	3/5	4	20	5	27
Total	11/20	20	84	25	116

Self in Community: Culture

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	2/3	4	21
sophomores	1/3	3	19
juniors	1/3	1	3
seniors	2/3	5	46
fifth years	0/3	0	0
focus group	0/5	0	0
Total	6/20	13	89

Self in Community: "Making a Difference"

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	0/3	0	0
sophomores	1/3	6	15
juniors	1/3	1	4
seniors	0/3	0	0
fifth years	1/3	2	4
focus group	2/5	7	24
Total	5/20	16	47

Self in Community: Career and Motherhood

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	0/3	0	0
sophomores	1/3	2	8
juniors	1/3	2	5
seniors	0/3	0	0
fifth years	0/3	0	0
focus group	2/5	5	15
Total	4/20	9	28

Emotions

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Positive Occurrences	Number of Negative Occurrences	Number of Positive Lines	Number of Negative Lines
first years	3/3	7	6	19	13
sophomores	3/3	10	8	33	18
juniors	3/3	11	2	26	7
seniors	3/3	8	19	25	47
fifth years	3/3	12	1	24	3
focus group	4/5	7	6	19	12
Total	19/20	55	42	146	100

Academics

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	3/3	6	19
sophomores	2/3	10	17
juniors	3/3	12	22
seniors	3/3	15	39
fifth years	3/3	12	33
focus group	5/5	16	45
Total	19/20	71	175

Competence

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Positive Occurrences	Number of Negative Occurrences	Number of Lines/ Positive	Number of Lines/ Negative
first years	3/3	11	2	26	4
sophomores	2/3	14	2	30	5
juniors	2/3	5	2	12	5
seniors	3/3	7	2	23	4
fifth years	2/3	6	3	12	7
focus group	4/5	8	5	17	13
Total	16/20	51	16	120	38

Women's Issues

Year	Pressure to Embrace Opportunity/ Number of Participants	Degrade Feminine Career/ Number of Participants	Eating Disorders/ Number of Participants	Feminism/ Number of Participants
first years	0/3	0/0	0/3	0/3
sophomores	0/3	0/0	0/3	0/3
juniors	0/3	0/0	0/3	0/3
seniors	0/3	0/0	1/3	2/3
fifth years	0/3	0/0	0/3	0/3
focus group	3/5	2/5	0/5	0/5
Total	3/20	2/20	1/20	2/20

Spirituality

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	0/3	0	0
sophomores	1/3	6	13
juniors	1/3	1	3
seniors	2/3	3	15
fifth years	1/3	1	2
focus group	0/5	0	0
Total	5/20	11	33

First Generation College Student

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	1/3	2	7
sophomores	2/3	4	23
juniors	0/3	0	0
seniors	0/3	0	0
fifth years	0/3	0	0
focus group	1/5	0	0
Total	4/20	6	30

Sexual Orientation

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	0/3	0	0
sophomores	0/3	0	0
juniors	0/3	0	0
seniors	2/3	3	149
fifth years	0/3	0	0
focus group	0/5	0	0
Total	2/20	3	149

Lack of Self Confidence

Year	Number	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	0/3	0	0
sophomores	1/3	5	20
juniors	1/3	3	9
seniors	1/3	5	17
fifth years	1/3	3	11
focus group	0/5	0	0
Total	4/20	16	57

Purpose

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	1/3	4	17
sophomores	2/3	5	14
juniors	2/3	5	17
seniors	2/3	4	18
fifth years	3/3	14	38
focus group	4/5	6	52
Total	14/20	38	156

Independence

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	2/3	5	16
sophomores	1/3	2	10
juniors	2/3	6	27
seniors	2/3	9	25
fifth years	2/3	7	22
focus group	3/5	9	31
Total	12/20	38	131

Strength

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	0/3	0	0
sophomores	2/3	2	5
juniors	1/3	1	2
seniors	0/3	0	0
fifth years	1/3	1	2
focus group	0/5	0	0
Total	4/20	4	9

Maturity

Year	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
first years	0/3	0	0
sophomores	0/3	0	0
juniors	0/3	0	0
seniors	1/3	1	2
fifth years	2/3	2	8
focus group	0/5	0	0
Total	3/20	3	10

Comparison of Themes

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of Occurrences	Number of Lines
People	20/20	73	165
Emotions	19/20	97	246
Academics	19/20	71	175
Competence	16/20	67	158
Friends	15/20	79	220
Family	14/20	85	302
Purpose	14/20	38	156
Independence	12/20	38	131
Diversity of Perspectives	11/20	20	84
Diversity of People	11/20	25	116
Partner	8/20	14	193
Women's Issues	8/20	18	73
Culture	6/20	13	89
Spirituality	5/20	11	33
Making a Difference	5/20	16	47
Career & Motherhood	4/20	9	28
First Generation	4/20	6	30
College Student	4/20	16	57
Lack of Confidence	4/20	4	9
Strength	3/20	3	10
Maturity	2/20	3	149
Sexual Orientation			

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