Phenomenology of Social Justice on Leadership Development of

Marginalized College Students

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Dissertation Submitted to the Doctoral Program

of the American College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Leadership

June 2021

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Abstract

Although the body of research on social justice in educational or service-related contexts is growing, knowledge regarding the phenomenology of social justice impact on college student leadership development remains limited. The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and understand the lived experiences, context, and perceived impact of how social justice leadership, advocacy, and work influence the leadership development of marginalized college student leaders. The research questions focused on understanding the influence and impact of social justice on leadership development of marginalized college students. A combination of social justice leadership theory and college student development theories was the theoretical framework used to guide the study. Sixteen participants were involved in the study, responding to open-ended questionnaires, submitting documents listing leadership and social justice work, and participating in semistructured interviews, to provide information on the lived experiences of marginalized college student leaders. After downloading the questionnaire results, renaming the submitted documents, and recording and transcribing the interviews, inductive thematic, constant comparison, and classical content analyses were used to identify the following themes: advocacy, Black, community, learning, mentorship, and organizing. The results of the study highlighted the unique lived experiences and perceptions with social justice leadership as academic, personal, and student leadership related, and caused changes in leadership behavior and/or leadership perspectives described as highly meaningful and valuable. Stakeholders can use the results of the study to improve college student leadership development using social justice leadership.

Keywords: leadership development, marginalized college student leaders, social justice

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Norma Lorraine McFarlane, my brother Dylan, and my sisters, Kendall and Kierstin. My family has always been the reason why I persist toward excellence and success. It was always in the presence of my family where I was able to keep going with the doctoral journey, getting lost in the research, interview transcription, and data preparation. Mom, thank you for your guidance, love, and for always cheering me on at every single stage of this extended journey. My participants and their shared experiences helped me realize even more how fortunate I am to be raised by a resilient and strong Black woman whose unconditional love helped me love and accept myself despite my flaws and imperfections. Dylan, Kendall, and Kierstin—I appreciate your ideas, understanding, willingness to help, always checking up on my progress, and for reaching individual levels of academic and intellectual greatness I never could at such young ages. You inspire me to be a big brother worthy of your love.

Acknowledgments

Thank you for the self-reflection and service work of my research participants who shared their lived experiences and perceptions of social justice and leadership development. Below are the names of Black lives mentioned by some participants. It was because of their violent and sudden deaths that influenced experiences, perceptions, and involvement for some of my participants and so I believe it is vital to #SayTheirNames: Alton Sterling   Anthony Lamar Smith   Breonna Taylor   Freddie Gray   George Floyd   Jordan Edwards   Michael Brown Trayvon Martin.

Thank you to my grandmother, Audrey, and my aunts Denise and Susan for your love and prayers. Special shoutout to my best friends and cheerleaders: Jhaneel, Bernice, Robert, and Krystie who endured endless tedious updates throughout this process. To my friends Yanira, Amrita, Kristie, Cassandra, Ana, Paige, Nada, Hailey, and Jacquelynn—thank you for your friendship and for inspiring me to be a better person, and to keep striving for success.

I thank my beloved mentor, Dr. Nicolette James, for her constant inspiration and role modeling. Thank you to Shirley, Alvin, Annie, Percy, and Shadia for believing in me and nurturing my leadership skills when I was younger and learning how to serve as a leader. Thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Scott Bailey for your patience, words of encouragement, and guidance throughout this entire process. Thanks to my committee member, Dr. Dennis DeBay, for reviewing so many drafts and revisions, for Dr. Amanda Evans whose genuine excitement made me excited to research my topic, and finally gain IRB approval. Thanks to Dr. Joshua Reichard for getting me through RES6551 and for making me feel proud of my data analysis process and excited to write. Thank you to my versatile supervisor Tara, Dr. Kennedy Turner, Iris, Vynessa, Michael, and Dr. James for helping me design my instrumentation for the study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Approximately 40-50% of 1,000 people shot and killed by the police every year are ethnic and racial minorities (J. M. Jones, 2017). Wells (2017) explained Black boys and young Black men in the 15–24 age group are nine times more likely than White boys and young White men ages 15–24 to be killed by the police. Based on incarceration rates in the United States, one out of three African American men may go to prison (Temin, 2018). Social justice accentuates equal access to resources, the termination of power hierarchies, and the endorsement and promotion of wellness among marginalized people (Albright et al., 2017). American colleges and universities are complex institutions for undergraduate student leaders to navigate and develop through the experiences of learning, leading, and deepening knowledge through new, challenging academic and nonacademic opportunities. Social justice involvement and leadership can influence the development of college students and college student leaders, the new and future generation of change agents. Advances in college student development theory were determined by the growing interdependency of research and practice and can highlight the importance of the backgrounds, intersecting identities, and respective agency for students (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016).

The role of context is present in the social justice causes being championed on American college and university campuses, such as climate change, immigration, #BlackLivesMatter, police brutality used against people of color, and gun violence. Intersectionality is represented in the strength of diverse college student leaders using the power of intersecting identities, lived experiences, and voice to create change on college campuses and beyond. Finally, college student resistance and resilience on social justice issues help college students develop understanding and promote their ability to articulate identities (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016). The

background of the problem, problem statement, purpose and significance of the study, research

questions, theoretical framework, definitions of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations,

limitations, and chapter summary are covered in the following sections.

Background of the Problem

In times of high violence, racism, and political tension around the nation, college students

and college and university campuses are not exempt from the social justice issues inspiring

student involvement or the challenges impacting an entire generation. President Trump was

elected on a platform of villainizing immigrants, American isolationism, and increased

aggression using armed forces abroad, greatly reducing diplomatic liberties in the name of

patriotism and the advancement of exclusionary, racist, and xenophobic policies criminalizing

communities of refugees (Negrón, 2017). College and university mission statements often

include aspirations connected to development, leadership, change, knowledge seeking and

application, and unique contributions in what higher education hopes students gain and utilize in

the real world. Several groups of students face profound barriers to full inclusion in American

society, yet these same students band together as organizers, activists, and leaders to launch

movements and campaigns against more powerful and political regimes (Negrón, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Examples of marginalized groups of people affected by unethical and immoral values of

people in power or authority are undocumented individuals, minorities, and poor families in

America (Wells, 2017). Marginalized college students in positions of leadership or involved as

social justice activists, organizers, and advocates are impacted by the prolific racial and

sociopolitical tension in the United States. College students who care about social justice causes

and issues may benefit from research on the essence and lived experiences of social justice and

college student leadership development. Educators and administrators tasked with designing,

implementing, and evaluating leadership programs and with supporting, advising, and mentoring

college and university undergraduate student leaders may also benefit from research on the

influence and impact of social justice on college student leadership development. A gap in the

literature exists in the leadership development of minority college students with intersecting

identities using a specific lens such as trauma-informed practices, healing justice or restorative

frameworks, and social justice leadership to build and increase peace, healing, justice, and

restoration on college and university campuses.

According to Buschman (2017), understanding the experiences of college student leaders

in a developmental context in connection with social justice leadership contributes to attaining

the vision of achieving a more democratic, just, equitable, respectful, rational, and diverse

society capable of navigating out of the political wilderness. Activism, organizing, protesting,

collaborations, partnerships, speaking out, and building capacity are but a few social justice and

college student leader activities. Students of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer

(LGBTQ) students, low-income students, and first-generation college students are a few

examples of marginalized student demographics of college student leaders. With a plethora of

social injustices both inside and outside higher education, identifying and understanding how

diverse college student leaders related to social justice and how social justice influenced and

impacted development could address the problem at large.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and understand

the lived experiences, context, and perceived impact of how social justice leadership, advocacy,

and work influence leadership development, gaining insight into motivations, actions, and beliefs

through unpacking of the experiences of marginalized college student leaders. The qualitative

approach was selected to understand the unique experiences of marginalized college student

leaders as a group of people and to explain the meanings assigned to certain experiences and the

relevant factors influencing perspectives (Ramani & Mann, 2016). Leveraging the collective

experiences and voices of a diverse sample of marginalized college student leaders was a major

aspect of this phenomenological study. Phenomenology emphasizes the understanding of the

research participants' experiences and the meaning attached to the experiences (Buckley &

Waring, 2009). Social justice and leadership development for marginalized college student

leaders was the phenomenon under investigation. A diverse group of college student leaders

were selected to describe their unique experiences as marginalized student leaders who made

decisions about varied social justice issues prevalent in the college setting.

Significance of the Study

The study contributed to the knowledge base by providing postsecondary educators and

administrators working with marginalized college students and college student leaders in the

leadership development space with a context of how social justice influences experiences and

perceptions. Organizations able to presuppose specific conceptions of justice should prepare

students in making claims of justice because of certain perspectives or positions (Kliewer &

Zacharakis, 2015). The results of the study yielded insight for people, groups, and institutions

looking to include more social justice leadership opportunities, activities, strategies, and methods

after learning from diverse and marginalized college student leaders about how social justice

influences leadership development. Answers to the research questions will benefit people

responsible for supporting, training, advising, mentoring, and developing college and university

student leaders, especially students from diverse, underresourced, and marginalized

communities.

Based on the patterns and themes of data found in participants' social justice experiences, colleges, universities, and student affairs professionals may be able to learn new ways to influence and impact college student leaders. Many college and university mission and vision statements traditionally promote civic and social engagement for students in college and beyond graduation (Torres-Harding et al., 2015). Social justice work and college student leadership development are not activities done in isolation but through connecting with others. The results of the phenomenological study provided an understanding of college student leader experiences in the era of social justice. Most leadership development opportunities for college students occur outside of the classroom through participation, involvement, and membership in cocurricular student activities and organizations. Some colleges and universities emphasize values in mission and vision statements in the hope the educational experiences for students include the intentional seeking of learning, leadership, service, and success in a diverse world (Clancy & Bauer, 2018).

Research Questions

The research questions exploring social justice and college student leadership development were constructed through the lens of the theoretical framework, a combination of social justice leadership theory and college student development theory. Phenomenology was used to discover the essences and experiences of people (Reiter et al., 2011). The following three research questions guided the phenomenological study:

Research Question 1: What experiences do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds have with social justice?

Research Question 2: How do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds develop as leaders because of social justice leadership and/or advocacy work?

Research Question 3: How valuable and meaningful is social justice leadership and/or advocacy work to the leadership development of college students with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used to guide the study was a combination of the social justice leadership theory and college student development theories (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016; F. Wang, 2018). F. Wang (2018) explained leadership involves the transformation of values, including the transformation of beliefs and values into practice, to address social values such as democracy, inclusion, justice, and equity. Social justice leadership work allows college students to reflect on personal values and socioeconomic, justice, activism, access, and unequal power structures and work in partnership with others in the community to make a difference. Student development theories are helpful in seeking to affect social justice outcomes (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016). Critical reflection, dialogue, trust, and interaction are essential elements of leadership practices (F. Wang, 2018).

Social justice leadership theory as a learning theory is about leadership as a mechanism to translate democratic ideals and inclusive notions into concrete practices and redress injustices to meet the needs of diverse groups of people (F. Wang, 2018). The qualitative study explored how social justice is lived and experienced by diverse, marginalized, and underresourced college student leaders from around the country and whether student leadership development is impacted and influenced by social justice. Rawls's theory of justice is connected to civic leadership education and development (Kliewer & Zacharakis, 2015). With civic leadership education and development, incorporating social justice elevates leadership work centered on deepening and sharing an understanding of meaning and experiences. Kliewer and Zacharakis (2015) described

Rawls's theory as useful in preparing students to design, execute, and assess public forums to engage questions of inclusion across modes of communication, class, race, and gender and to demonstrate strategies to make the results of public forums consequential. More detail about the theoretical framework is included in the next chapter.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were crucial for the qualitative study and are defined as follows.

College Student Development. College student development includes the processes of change, influence, growth, and maturation during the undergraduate/collegiate experience categorized in the following outcomes: academic, civic, social, and professional (Myers, 2020).

College Student Diversity. College student diversity refers to the races/ethnicities, nationalities, socioeconomic status or social classes, genders, disabilities, gifts or talents, sexual identities, languages, religions, and geographic areas of individuals enrolled in an institution of higher education (Sanchez et al., 2018). According to S. R. Jones and Stewart (2016), focusing on the increasing student diversity of higher education results in theories describing different experiences and developmental paths by incorporating specific social identities like ethnic identity, racial identity, and sexual identity.

College Student Leader. A college student leader is a college student in a position of leadership, power, management, authority, and influence on a college or university campus or college-affiliated club, organization, office, or department as a form of service developing certain leadership competencies (Seemiller, 2016). Examples of college student leaders include student representatives on the board of trustees, resident advisors/assistants, peer mentors, and class presidents.

Leadership Development. Leadership development includes the processes of change,

influence, growth, improvement, and maturation a leader undergoes because of an experience or series of experiences across certain categories such as civic responsibility, communication, group dynamics, interpersonal interaction, learning and reasoning, personal behavior, self-awareness, development, and strategic planning (Myers, 2020).

      Marginalized People. Marginalized people can be part of a minority or majority but are still treated as peripheral or insignificant, such as individuals who are both racial and sexual minorities and may experience less currency in membership and social capital because of being different (Satinsky et al., 2017).

      Social Justice. Social justice includes the processes of working toward equity in society and engaging societal members, specifically individuals from minor social groups, as co-decision makers around issues involving society (Torres-Harding et al., 2015).

      Social Justice Leadership. Social justice leadership is a leadership practice used by individuals oriented toward social vision and change by focusing on bargaining powers, the distribution of resources in society, basic human rights, obligations, and equitable and fair opportunities across both dominant and lesser social groups (Torres-Harding et al., 2015; F. Wang, 2018).

      Social Justice Leadership Theory. Social justice leadership theory describes how social justice leaders engage in democratic, inclusive, and transformative practices to alter and improve social structures and influence certain stakeholders to collegially promote equity and justice in educational and other environments (F. Wang, 2018).

      Student Development Theories. S. R. Jones and Stewart (2016) explained student development theories represent a diverse range of perspectives used to understand college student developmental changes, influences, psychological and social processes, and

encouragement factors.

Assumptions

According to J. A. Creswell (2013), phenomenological research requires researchers to have some broader understanding of philosophical assumptions and to identify assumptions in the qualitative study. The phenomenological study focused on diverse, marginalized, under-resourced college student leaders as the research participants. One critical relevant assumption for the qualitative study was college students and college student leaders who identified as being members of diverse, marginalized, and/or underresourced communities and backgrounds have more lived experiences, opinions, and beliefs about social justice leadership or social justice work and are inherently qualified and eligible to share and reflect on college student leadership development regarding social justice. According to F. Wang (2018), social justice encounters involve recognizing unequal circumstances of marginalized people with directing actions toward the elimination of inequalities.

Scope and Delimitations

In phenomenological research, the scope and delimitations surround the object of the human experience or the concept or phenomenon in question by identifying commonalities in experiences (J. A. Creswell, 2013). The subjects of the qualitative study were diverse, marginalized, and underresourced college student leaders. F. Wang (2018) explained the phenomenon of social justice focuses on specific student groups defined by race and social class and strongly emphasizes the accomplishments and socioeconomic well-being of marginalized students. Given the research participant recruitment model, the subjects were enrolled and matriculated college students between the ages of 18 and 21in the United States, students of color or non-White students, and/or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ)

college students who were in social positions of leadership, power, and/or authority for a

college/university campus community and were working toward a first bachelor's degree. Data

collection began in early October 2020 and ended in January 2021, when most of the research

participants were enrolled in academic courses. Class of 2020 college seniors finished

undergraduate degree programs in May, June, September, or December 2020 and were eligible to

participate. Members of the Class of 2024 starting college during the Fall 2020 quarter or

semester were not eligible to participate in the research study since first-year freshmen college

students would not have had college student leadership roles during the recruitment timeline and

length of the research study.

Qualitative research studies have found participants engaging in social justice service

engagement work developed enhanced multicultural interpersonal skills and increased

attachment, compassion, patience, respect, and trust for other individuals (Torres-Harding et al.,

2015). Over the three-month data collection period for the phenomenological study, the average

college student had ample time to participate in the study. As the research study was not mixed

methods nor quantitative, more time was spent on data collection and analysis because of the

qualitative instruments administered and analysis of data for all 16 research participants. All data

were collected virtually or remotely as not all the college students were in the same time zone,

state, or city.

Limitations

Transferability and dependability were limited as the chosen research methodology was

phenomenology and not a case study, ethnography, or narrative inquiry, and not all the college

students were from the same college or university. Phenomenological studies are concerned with

experiences of human life (Reiter et al., 2011). The sample of college student leaders was not

representative of all human experiences with social justice. For phenomenological research, human interactions and experiences are not necessarily limited to the ways people relate to occurrences in the world but rather through other experiences; a person's characteristics can also limit openness and understanding (Valentine et al., 2018). Data collection variety was less than ideal given the 2020 coronavirus pandemic preventing the research study from including in-person interviews. Biases included the researcher identifying as Black gay man who is liberal–democratic and a former college student leader, studying leadership as a doctoral candidate, and working professionally as a college success counselor and program director for a college access nonprofit dedicated to diversifying the national leadership pipeline. The research plan called for experience working remotely and using virtual communication tools such as social media and Zoom to collect data and communicate with participants.

Chapter Summary

Using a social justice framework to empower student leaders is a form of social change (Albright et al., 2017). The problem was the violent political tension and social injustices around the nation being felt by college and university campuses left diverse and marginalized college student leaders to contend with the ramifications, learn, lead, and develop. The purpose of the exploratory qualitative study was to understand and explain the lived experiences of diverse, marginalized, underresourced college student leaders in connection to the phenomenon of social justice leadership and work using phenomenological instruments to address the three research questions. The exploratory research methodology was appropriate for the connection between social justice and college student leadership development in the context of leadership development to be investigated (Mahler et al., 2018). An extensive review of the literature is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In times of high violence and racialized political tension around the nation and on college and university campuses, the problem of this study was not knowing how college student leadership was evolving and how college student leaders were developing in the context of social justice and the sociocultural context for college students, colleges, and universities in America. The purpose of the exploratory qualitative study was to understand how college student leadership was being shaped and developed at a time when colleges and universities were seeking to minimize tensions between diverse student populations and address issues of negative campus climate affecting the experiences of low-income students, queer students, students of color, and other marginalized groups (Hopkins & Domingue, 2015). For example, between 2014 and 2016, the United States experienced increased African American deaths due to police violence, affecting new generations of college student activists and leaders interested in addressing the structural powers and systemic forces harming minorities across communities (Ingram & Wallace, 2019; Martin et al., 2019). The American political climate continues to shape students' and teachers' lives in and out the classroom as well as leadership-centric approaches to be taken when combining social justice and leadership (Cashmere, 2018; Wagner & Pigza, 2016). Dugan et al. (2015) suggested the literal educational practice of leadership development has not kept up with prioritizing social justice.

The best antidote to an overly passive political moment was the creation of college student-scholar-activists ready and equipped to tackle hard conversations and understand the political and social justice components of doing so (Clancy & Bauer, 2018). Different educational or instructional formats existed on college and university campuses, such as seminars, lectures, workshops, training, discussion groups, debates, and town halls, discussing a

variety of difficult topics and related interventions. Increased attention to social justice principles was needed in the creation, evaluation, and implementation of educational and mentoring interventions (Albright et al., 2017). Beginning in the 1980s, intergroup dialogue was used to advance social justice by bringing together different social groups to communicate with one another, make connections across social differences, and cultivate relationships (Hopkins & Domingue, 2015). The literature review specified the social justice leadership theory and college student development theories to understand social justice's influence on college student development, with a focus on college student leadership development, student diversity issues in American higher education, social justice, experiential learning such as service-learning and civic engagement, and college student emotional health. Increasing awareness of social justice issues is still important within educational settings in which issues of power, privilege, and systemic causes of inequality are part of the translatable learning occurring in and out of classrooms (Engberg et al., 2018).

A small amount of literature existed on social justice leadership used in K–12 school environments, and a growing body of literature existed for college and university student affairs educators to support college student leadership development and to center student affairs work on social justice. Understanding the lived experiences, essence, and meaning of social justice on the leadership development of marginalized college student leaders will contribute to research. Little to no research existed on the leadership development of minority college students with intersecting identities using a specific lens such as trauma-informed practices, healing justice or restorative frameworks, and social justice leadership to build and increase peace, healing, justice, and restoration on college and university campuses. Furthermore, almost no research was found on social justice leadership at the higher education levels to affect meaningful community

change. The following sections include the literature search strategy, theoretical framework,

review of the literature, and chapter summary.

Literature Search Strategy

Peer-reviewed journal articles between 2015 and 2020 were the primary sources of

information used for the literature review. The articles were found using the library database of

the American College of Education (ACE) with search engines such as EBSCOhost and

ProQuest. The list presented in Table 1 identifies some of the words associated with the main

topic areas of the qualitative research study on college students. The words and phrases included

in Table 1 are connected to leadership development, marginalized college students, and/or social

justice in some way. By identifying exact or similar keywords in the literature, several peer-

reviewed articles were used for the literature review process (see Table 1).

Table 1

Literature Review Search Words and Phrases

Emotional safety	Leadership	Social justice
Coddling	Authentic	Agents of change
College student emotional safety	Civic engagement	Best practices
College student well-being	College student	Campus civility
Microaggressions	Culturally competent	Change agent
Psychosocial harm	Development	College campus protests
Safe college environments	Servant	Equity, diversity, & inclusion
Safe classrooms	Socially responsible	Healing justice
Safe spaces	Transformational	Racial justice work
Safetyism		Restorative justice
Sense of belonging		Social change
Socioemotional wellness		Social justice leadership
Student trauma		Student activism
Traumatized college students		Systemic oppression
Trigger warnings		Theory of social justice
Unhealed students		

Theoretical Framework

Social justice leadership theory is about engaging in democratic, inclusive, and transformative practices to change social structures and influence stakeholders to promote equity and justice in schools collaboratively (F. Wang, 2018). College student development theory is helpful for understanding how both marginality and privilege frame and inform each other in individuals' identity meaning-makings and with environments (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016). The theoretical framework used to guide the study was a combination of the social justice leadership and college student development theories. Application of the social justice leadership and college student development theories supported the purpose of the study to understand how college student leadership was being shaped and developed at a time when social justice was more popular. Kliewer and Zacharakis (2015) described Rawls's theory of justice as useful in preparing students to design, execute, and assess public forums to engage questions of inclusion across modes of communication, class, race, and gender and to demonstrate strategies to make the results of public forums consequential.

Social Justice Leadership Theory

Social justice leadership theory is grounded in the proactive way of bringing about changes evident in the successes and economic well-being of marginalized student groups (F. Wang, 2018). Examples of marginalized groups on college campuses include Black or African American; Latinx; Asian; Muslim; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ); international; veteran; and disabled students. Perspectives critiquing, challenging, and seeking to destroy unequal power structures were significantly changing college student development theory evolution (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016). Some marginalized college students noticed the inequitable power structures back home or on college and university campuses but lacked the

voice, advocacy, and agency to challenge, critique, or dismantle them. Inequitable power structures are examples of complex problems that need to be solved. In solving complex problems, leadership quality is critical because leaders from different levels of an organization, with or without authority, must engage people in confronting certain challenges, adjusting specific values, exploring various perspectives, and learning new behaviors (Yukawa, 2015). Dugan et al. (2015) discussed the concepts of *power consciousness* and *power literacy* helpful for critical self-reflection and educational dialogue.

According to Celoria (2016), social justice leadership focuses on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools using inclusive educational practices for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) or bilingual learners, and other students usually segregated in school environments and settings. Social justice leadership theory was used in efforts to build communities with a strong sense of belonging, of collective concern for all individuals, of individual responsibility for the collective good, and of appreciation for the rituals and celebrations of diverse group members (F. Wang, 2018). As an example, social justice leadership theory was applied for college students exploring activism activities such as social media organizing, building political or social movements connected to social justice causes to seek long lasting change and completing acts of student advocacy on campuses to discuss long-term solutions to contentious issues (Martin et al., 2019).

Most of the social justice literature has been about K–12 school leadership and principals. The following research questions were for college students involved in social justice work, social change, or activism and used as a model for this research study:

[a] In what ways are principals enacting social justice in public schools? [b] What

resistance do social justice-driven principals face in their justice work? [c] What

strategies do principals develop to sustain their ability to enact social justice in light of

the resistance they face in public schools? (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223)

Due to the diversification of American society, leaders in education need to be responsive to the

needs of the local community while prioritizing global ideals of social justice and informed of

liberalist social justice theories and practices (Colton & Holmes, 2018; Gardiner, 2015). John

Rawls, a liberal philosopher from the 1970s, noted the economic and social inequalities of a

social system exist only for the most advantaged members of society to benefit (Colton &

Holmes, 2018). Researchers found social justice leadership concepts to have ties in the literature

to culturally responsive and transformative leadership (Galloway et al., 2015). Student diversity

on college and university campuses was connected to culturally relevant leadership, and

transformative leadership correlates to activism, social change, and college student leadership

development. Galloway et al. (2015) found the need for other researchers to enhance the

definition of key concepts in social justice leadership theory and practice as well as the

leadership learning process, centering on differentiating structural change versus planning

aspects. Research has connected social justice theory to Jacques Rancière, a 1940s political

philosopher, to create a practice of active fairness to enable the enactment of social justice rather

than waiting for systems to be corrected (Colton & Holmes, 2018).

College Student Development Theory

In the higher education field, student development theories reflect guiding tenets first

presented in the 1937 *Student Personnel Point of View*, a document framing the student

development and student affairs profession and, notably, emphasizing the development of the

whole student (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016). The combination of theory and experience was not

visible or prevalent in the formal academic curriculum for college students, and thus failed to

have a powerful impact in the lives of young adults (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016). Wagner and

Pigza (2016) suggested the theory and practice of leadership and service-learning shared

common elements making service-learning an apt pedagogical choice for facilitating and

teaching leadership education in colleges and universities. In the intersectionality of theory and

practice, research gaps existed. Student development theorists asserted unfair power dynamics

such as ableism, classism, genderism, heterosexism, racism, and sexism inform how people and

social groups function within respective power structures (S. R. Jones & Stewart, 2016).

Student development theory is helpful for student affairs educators and professionals to

manage complexity in the work and in supporting the lives of college students; the theory plays

an essential role in establishing and nurturing the leadership capacities of college students

(Bishundat et al., 2018). According to Yukawa (2015), managing complexity requires the ability

to adapt one's thinking, beliefs, and behavior. College student development and learning

intersect if campus–community partnership assists with the development of student learning,

student development, and community impact objectives and if knowledge becomes action,

transcending the limitations of college classrooms (Silva, 2018; Wagner & Pigza, 2016).

In educational leadership, an educator's ability to implement theory to practice is an

example of demonstrating leadership competency and mastery. Galloway et al. (2015) suggested

using theory to increase the presence of equitable leadership aligned with a set of standards

across a continuum of four types of leadership practice: beginning, emerging, proficient, and

exemplary. Such a continuum suggests college students are able to develop and grow like

educators and educational leaders along a spectrum regarding leadership ability and

demonstrating leadership skills. Relevant focus areas for the qualitative study are presented in

the next several sections detailing findings from peer-reviewed literature. The focus areas

include college student leadership development, student activism and social change, social

justice, and diversity.

Research Literature Review

This section includes the literature review. Student leadership development was the

context of the research study. Social justice and leadership development experienced by

marginalized college student leaders was the phenomenon of the research study. The connection

between social justice leadership and college student leadership development was explored in the

literature review.

Student Leadership Development

Leader development was defined by Dugan et al. (2015) as the experience of a person

engaging in leader processes and roles successfully. Wagner and Pigza (2016) defined the

preparation for leadership development as self-reflection on a leader's or individual's traits,

behaviors, or skills. Bishundat et al. (2018) identified critical hope as a vital part of leadership

development because critical hope allows the leader to evaluate the environment using the lens

of equity and justice and maintain commitment and passion for social change. Similarly, because

leadership and leadership development can be considered processes, collaborative actions

college students can learn were connected to the outcome and not the final product by

contributing to a process for social change (Silva, 2018). In higher education, administrators and

faculty can support the development and learning of the holistic student for the sake of

leadership development and growth to become social change agents (Martin et al., 2019).

Educators play a role in shaping the learning environment whereby college students are

supported to pursue the natural course of understanding personal struggles and elevating lived

experiences into a paradigm in which students emerge as victors rather than victims (Bernardo &

Baranovich, 2016). Concerning social justice, Berkovich (2017) presented three designs of

leadership preparation programs: traditional, attitude development, and activist. Activist

programs, in comparison with traditional and attitude development programs, tend to be more

radical and connected to social change or improvement. Scaling learning and developing skills

through dialogue, experiences, reflection, and peer engagement is effective for exposing college

students to social justice (Clancy & Bauer, 2018). Dugan et al. (2015) discussed the social

change model of leadership development detailing the vital function of leadership as a means for

social justice and responsibility and as a process of perspective development. Owen (2016)

concluded power exists in connecting critical reflection and leadership to enhance the

transformative possibility of leadership efforts for communities, groups, and individuals.

Leadership learning outcomes for college students with differing sociopolitical views and

identities are a result of learning across different cultures (Wagner & Pigza, 2016).

According to Bernardo and Baranovich (2016), colleges and universities have used

leadership and educational programs to cultivate an environment for both coherence and

disruption, allowing room for college student development and growth. Hopkins and Domingue

(2015) concluded college students can be moved from recognition to action by preparing college

students with important skills for productively addressing group and interpersonal conflict, for

utilizing campus diversity, and for evolving into thoughtful leaders in a multicultural world.

Researchers have suggested educators focus on helping activist leaders, including all college

student leaders, embrace moments of vulnerability as opportunities for growth using elements of

servant leadership: empathy, integrity, and sacrifice (Martin et al., 2019). Developing college

student leadership is a responsibility for some college and university staff. Presenting new

concepts and experiences to colleges students while providing intellectual tools and personal

skills to cultivate self-awareness helps to prepare educational leaders devoted to equity, inclusiveness, and social justice (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016; Celoria, 2016).

Martin et al. (2019) suggested educators can support students in teaching methods to organize peacefully, negotiating techniques for working with college and university campus administrators, and logistical skills such as organizing a group, obtaining buy-in from different group members, and understanding campus or university policy and relevant legal issues. Hopkins and Domingue (2015) posed two research questions in a qualitative study on skill development of intergroup dialogue to understand skills learned concerning experiences and associated challenges with skill development; they found students were able to explore understanding and development of skills, such as listening actively, taking perspective, delaying judgment, critically working through challenges and problems, speaking up, and identifying social identities and oppression. Leadership in the contexts of social justice, community engagement, and service-learning is a dynamic process and beyond the individual traits of one leader and more about the ability to be collaborative with others using influence (Wagner & Pigza, 2016).

Collaborative Leadership

Developing collaboration in college students prepares future leaders to value equitable, respectful engagement with communities (Bromley et al., 2015). According to Miller and Vaccaro (2016), collaborative leadership conflicts with the desire to lead for college students who have intersecting identities, such as being queer and a student of color, as these students navigate marginalization on college campuses. Owen (2016) noted creating spaces for conversations about one's place in society and community establishes a movement of solidarity and helps to build coherence, human connection, and group identity, establishing the means for

community reflection and dialogue for action. According to Torres-Harding et al. (2015),

prioritizing a feeling of community serves as an essential resource for college students hoping to

experience enhancing their confidence or self-efficacy to explore making a difference by

engaging in social activism. Bishundat et al. (2018) asserted critical hope allows leaders to

encourage the work of the collective and contribute to a process with the understanding people

could see little to no progress concerning resolving specific issues within a lifetime.

College Student Activism and Social Change

Acting and contributing to making positive differences are the goals as reflection is not

nearly enough but striving for change and justice is important (Owen, 2016; Wagner & Pigza,

2016). According to Bernardo and Baranovich (2016), college student activism is an important

agenda of student development in higher education. One can argue student activism and the

strive for social change from campus grounds while a member of the college and university

community is a form of leadership. Social activism is an essential goal for the educational

experiences involving social justice in college because college students learn about collaboration,

equity, and social change (Silva, 2018; Torres-Harding et al., 2015). An example of a class

project to raise college student awareness and activism is the Practical Activism Project, a

collaborative group project facilitating interest in social change and action between 45 college

students learning about social justice and community psychology values (Lichty & Palamaro-

Munsell, 2017; Silva, 2018). The class project resulted in the college students organizing a

campus walkout and protest for a diversity center because community psychology values

compelled educators to treat classrooms as more than just information transmission spaces

(Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Silva, 2018). Martin et al. (2019) offered the term *leader*

activist to acknowledge the acts of leadership in which college student activists engage while

working toward social change on college and university campuses and in local communities.

Dugan et al. (2015) argued collective movements are described as "activism" instead of

"leadership" and are typically considered unsustainable, positioning collective movements as

both disconnected and unwanted. Clancy and Bauer (2018) believed in helping college students

in the classroom evolve into active and empowered participants. College students, transformed as

political subjects could be able to advocate for equity and social justice within different types of

communities, both present and future, as an obligation to the broader community (Clancy &

Bauer, 2018).

Activism is defined as mobilizing groups of people for common causes, highlighting

issues affecting the common good and in the achievement of democratic goals (Bernardo &

Baranovich, 2016). The mobilization, coordinating, organizing, and collaborating work of

college student activists allows for student development on the part of administrators and

educators working in student affairs to support students in causes meaningful to marginalized

people. Although radical activism is sometimes a solitary experience, radical activism can also

be collaborative or communal. Activism is learned from fellow college students through

involvement in student clubs, organizations, and cocurricular activities and is a way to combat

social and sociopolitical issues for college students from campus and community service projects

(Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016; Martin et al., 2019). Martin et al. (2019) found college students

involved in a plethora of college student organizations or clubs or involved only in advocacy

organizations exhibited the highest scores on senses of civic engagement and responsibility in

social change behaviors. Such involvement suggested the type of student organization to which

an individual belongs or the total of several types of organizations, influences important student

activism-related outcomes (Martin et al., 2019). Cashmere (2018) noted homogeneity, discord,

and impetuousness among different activist groups only impeded progress. However, when the

activist groups brought on allies, worked together, and carefully crafted and followed through on

plans, a significant change resulted.

Social change is connected to transformational leadership theory and social justice

advocacy work. Student activism on college and university campuses represents one way for

college students to live out democratic ideals and for the country to develop democratically

(Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016). College and university campuses are considered complex social

systems, and such complexity can be a good practice ground for strengthening reflection-based

action-oriented activism, expressing the ability or wish to bring about great change involving

both risks and opportunities (Berkovich, 2017). Social justice work and education in the form of

curriculum, student clubs, activities, or organizations, experiential learning opportunities, or

student leadership positions increase exposure and awareness to social inequality on and beyond

college and university campuses (Albright et al., 2017; Berkovich, 2017). Such social justice

exposure increases the development of critical consciousness for future agents of social change

(Albright et al., 2017). Yet Berkovich (2017) noted new leaders still developing and aiming to

become social change agents necessitates working with experienced leaders already seasoned in

the process of reflection. Leadership educators are examples of people who have experience with

reflective processes and can instill such practices, specifically critical or in-depth thinking, to

effectively cultivate social change leadership (Owen, 2016). Martin et al. (2019) found exposing

student activists to leadership training grounded in the social change model had the potential to

teach college students important social change skills such as negotiating social and political

capital, navigating, and working within a system, allocating limited resources, organizing a

group of people, examining one's attributes and limitations, and using collaborative skills.

Regarding the prerequisites of activism and qualities of activists, Bernardo and Baranovich (2016) explained to be effective activists promoting social change, college students must be able to view social problems and issues from many different points of view and hence understand choices of solutions for what is best for society at large. Silva (2018) concluded college students' understanding of social change requires careful assessment, logical planning, and an understanding of past struggles and triumphs. Ginwright (2015) discussed the concept of *collective action* where people are given the opportunity to simplify and interpret the complicated social world in meaningful ways and functions to categorize belief systems promoting specific cooperation. Climate change, immigration, abortion, police brutality, mass incarceration, the removal of confederate statues, and the renaming of campus buildings or university mascots are just a few examples of students utilizing collective action, reflective learning, and action-oriented activism to demonstrate leadership and affect social change. Bernardo and Baranovich described collective identity and context as the impetus for student activism, with *collective identity* referring to how student groups define themselves within the wider social context. According to Ginwright (2015), forms of systemic exclusion such as classism, homophobia, racism, and sexism are inserted in social institutions, causing harm to communities and groups in society.

For educators or instructors who identify as activists, empowering college students to become activists is fruitful to help develop and transform college students into leaders (Clancy & Bauer, 2018). Clancy and Bauer (2018) argued the activism-based discourse instruction model for working with college students utilizes dissent and discomfort as its primary modes of inquiry to teach and learn about social justice issues and to create opportunities for college students to make a change in communities. Silva (2018) found the intention for college students to express

frustrations regarding institutional or organizational politics, society, and the greater community by applying theory into action to be effective.

Social Justice

Some of the work and responsibilities of college student leaders are closely aligned with the definition of *social justice*. According to Torres-Harding et al. (2015), *social justice* is the process of engaging diverse people and working toward equity throughout society, especially individuals from marginalized social groups, as co-decision-makers in processes around issues in society. Wagner and Pigza (2016) found social justice to be both a process and a product. Albright et al. (2017) noted utilizing a social justice framework is vital if programs are committed to using youth empowerment to both reject negative messages in society and to help the youth evolve into critically conscious social change agents.

College students exposed to racism or oppression were eventually able to share empowering feelings and engage in education, advocacy, organizing, and/or activism through taking social action for social justice (Ingram & Wallace, 2019). Zerquera et al. (2018) agreed social justice development is useful for student development and advocacy on college campuses by student affairs professionals and higher education leaders. K–12 teachers and professionals working in higher education or student affairs who identify as social justice educators play an integral role in implementing and promoting social justice ideals through the arrangement of the classroom spaces, classroom behavior management, and classroom instruction (Woodrow, 2018). Clancy and Bauer (2018) argued, due to the politicization around teaching social justice in the classroom, the learning design of incorporating diversity into discourse instruction is both a high-yield technique and a political statement. Educators and teachers helped students understand how systems of inequality worked within a given institution and comprehend how

social justice movements fought back against such inequality (Cashmere, 2018).

Incorporating social justice education and programming into youth empowerment leadership programs helps make society fairer and more equitable for all people and provides a way to link moral education to the developing a citizenry with the potential to tackle issues of inequity and social justice (Nucci, 2016). Educational leaders seeking to address relevant societal issues applied an equity, inclusion, and social justice lens in the way leadership practices were carried out to achieve a specific vision where problems of class, disability, gender, gender identity, language proficiency, race, sexual orientation, and other historically and marginalized conditions in America were essential to advocacy (Celoria, 2016). Incorporating social justice into educational and programmatic models develops a critical consciousness and in-depth comprehension for college students on topics like class structures, heterosexism, misogyny, poverty, power relationships, and White privilege in the nation (Celoria, 2016).

Social justice is about inclusion whereby leaders and social change agents demand questions to be raised, such as what kind of world the leaders/change agents want and how the leaders/change agents educate students for the world (Celoria, 2016). According to Torres-Harding et al. (2015), measurable components of social justice engagement include general attitudes, the perception of behavioral control, the perception of social norms, and the intent to engage in activism or social justice work. College student leaders who were action-oriented and experienced with certain social justice causes focused on topics such as promotion of inclusion and equity, respect, and cultural sensitivity; they targeted goals on communal, ecological, and systemic levels to help increase awareness to address social inequalities (Berkovich, 2017). According to Smith et al. (2015), being focused on equity involves a certain consciousness of the ways higher education and the complex expectations, practices, policies, and unspoken rules

place responsibility for college student success on marginalized groups who experience

marginalization instead of the individuals and institutions responsible for remedying the

marginalization.

Healing Justice

According to Ginwright (2015), younger social justice leaders utilize the framework of

healing justice to transform schools and policies doing harm to youth. The healing justice

framework lends itself to the social justice cause and has the potential to maximize the

effectiveness of student leaders on college and university campuses where racial and cultural

tension exists. Many college students who encountered racism talk about the racism experiences

to cope and heal from negative situations (Ingram & Wallace, 2019). Healing justice is an up-

and-coming movement seeking collective healing in the form of transforming environments,

relationships, and spaces causing the original harm to promote well-being (Ginwright, 2015).

Bishundat et al. (2018) suggested the importance of taking care of oneself in the spirit of the

healing process on the leadership journey for social change activities like engaging in

mindfulness, hobbies, meditation, prayer, rest, and therapy to protect one's well-being and

prioritize joy and inner peace.

Value of Dialogue and Reflection

Dialogue is different from mere conversation and discussion. Galloway et al. (2015)

found sociocultural learning theories helpful not only in facilitating reflection and learning but

also in necessitating action. The system established through the processes of group dialogue,

intergroup dialogue, and relationship building amid college students not only connects people,

but the defined identity of the people raises consciousness, builds relationships across conflicts

and differences, and strengthens collective and individual capacities to highlight social justice

(Bishundat et al., 2018; Cate & Russ-Eft, 2018). For the Black Lives Matter movement, the associated healing work was a process for members and participants to learn more about economic, social, and political structures, alongside dismantling and reshaping the same structures (Green et al., 2018). Clancy and Bauer (2018) suggested discourse instruction uniquely lends itself to teaching issues of social justice to college students, privileges active student learning, and conversation over lectures or professor-facilitated instruction. Such instruction asks college students to use dialogues as a means of better understanding academic content, and challenges college students engaged with the academic material across a variety of methods (Clancy & Bauer, 2018).

Wagner and Pigza (2016) suggested leadership courses and programs include specifically designed and multimethod components of reflection for lifelong learning about the content, process, self, and the world, and serves as an evaluation of whether a person's actions are aligned with community intent and values. For the self-reflection of leadership educators, to be authentic with college students without projection, oversharing, or unduly influencing students, role modeling, problem solving, and being resilient are needed to apply critical hope in social justice work (Bishundat et al., 2018).

Clancy and Bauer (2018) concluded conversations enabled college students to reimagine one's place within the world, improve community building, preserve democracy, and envision dialogue and were an effective tool to bridge differences among people. According to Ingram and Wallace (2019), students' voices best convey student experiences dealing with racism or oppression as well as the how they cope. Examples of questions to engage in dialogue and reflection include

What does social change mean to me, our group/class, the organization where we are

serving, and the people being served? How does the manner in which I practice

leadership and service represent a justice orientation? How does this course or program

model reciprocal partnerships, characterized by a primary concern for positive

community impact? (Wagner & Pigza, 2016, p. 19)

Silva (2018) noted the process and experience of the Practical Activism Project resulted in

college students collaborating, honing needed skills to challenge dominant narratives, and

developing the ability to facilitate a sense of empowerment. The project exposed college students

to acts of collaboration, collective action, and understanding differences, the college students

gained a powerful tool for transforming intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally (Silva, 2018).

Through intergroup dialogue, leadership educators and youth gain the necessary skills,

knowledge, and awareness for crucial leadership development while building vital connections

with each other to maintain leadership efforts through adversity (Bishundat et al., 2018).

College Campus Climate

College and university campuses are not immune to social justice causes occurring off

campus. Social justice can be experienced on campus as well. Civic engagement and service-

learning, campus diversity, and student emotional trauma are connected to social justice's

connection to higher education.

Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

Service-learning is an example of civic engagement and experiential education in higher

education, allowing college students to connect academic studies to the larger social problems of

society, and was highlighted as a top leadership development method as early as 1996 (Torres-

Harding et al., 2015; Wagner & Pigza, 2016). Social justice is connected to service-learning

programs through the intentional design allowing for participating members of the process and

experience to see multicultural difference as a precursor to change entire value systems in

education (Cate & Russ-Eft, 2018). Researchers explain service experiences are created for

students to work with communities and individuals as opposed to working for the benefit of

groups receiving the assistance, providing opportunities to analyze additional leadership

knowledge and skills needed to sustain complicated work. Any tension between activism and

service-learning can be minimized for college students trained in completing service work

(Martin et al., 2019; Owen, 2016).

Researchers have presented three programmatic elements essential for service-learning

programs: peer-to-peer mentoring situations, integrating networks of social support, and social

consciousness expansion via exploring identities (Cate & Russ-Eft, 2018; Martin et al., 2019).

Engaging in forms of activism included the expanding of social consciousness and using social

media and social platforms as one of many tools for college student leaders to bring awareness of

social issues within contexts and constructs (Cate & Russ-Eft, 2018; Martin et al., 2019). In

response to the decline of civic participation among American youth and young adults, service-

learning was created to integrate service experience and academic learning and draw connections

between unique components through reflective activities to increase three types of

responsibilities in college students: justice-oriented, charity-oriented, and participatory-oriented

responsibilities (Y. Wang, 2013). Cate and Russ-Eft (2018) described service-learning programs

as methods to empower multicultural college students and the respective demographic of student

communities; if the service-learning programs promoted social justice, cultural imperialism and

Western assumptions in educational environments and curriculum were addressed.

Wagner and Pigza (2016) discussed four steps to the service-learning process for college

students: preparation, action, reflection, and evaluation. Rawls's theory of justice was connected

to civic leadership education and development and correlated to the expected outcomes of social justice of traditional college and university missions prioritizing civic engagement for college students after college graduation (Kliewer & Zacharakis, 2015; Torres-Harding et al., 2015). With civic leadership education and development, incorporating social justice elevates transformational leadership work centered on core values. Torres-Harding et al. (2015) concluded normalizing service-learning courses and directing skills training experience into learning efforts for college students enhances confidence, knowledge, and student commitment of how to effectively become involved with social action and social justice work.

Y. Wang (2013) conducted a qualitative study on 72 college students and examined six service-learning courses including a social justice-infused curriculum and found the courses can promote the development of justice-oriented social responsibility for college students. According to Owen (2016), service-learning practitioners develop facilitation skills for intergroup reflection and dialogue across cultures as part of techniques and strategies designed to enhance the building of empathy for service-learning participants. By providing students with exposure opportunities in and out of the classroom, the development of justice-oriented social responsibility is fostered as service-learning and social justice education are combined to accelerate the development of participatory and justice-oriented responsibility in college students (Y. Wang, 2013). Torres-Harding et al. (2015) suggested teaching civic-mindedness to college and university students usually involves encouraging students to get involved with local communities; teaching contemporary social issues in both local and global societies; and helping college and university students improve multicultural respect, listening skills, self-efficacy, and sensitivity skills as members of society. Owen believed the more students spend time interacting across experiences and cultures, the more the college students develop shared commitments and connections to

carry out actions after a service-learning experience.

Diversity

Clancy and Bauer (2018) suggested discourse is one tool educators and instructors can use to move along and ahead of the goal of infusing diversity instruction into the classroom. Depending on the type of college or university, the leadership development and college student experiences vary by student demographic. Ingram and Wallace (2019) found college student intersectionality correlating with marginalized identities and systems of oppression as part of their experience resulting in added challenges, potential psychological vulnerability, and stress. In a narrative inquiry study on Black male-identified student leaders at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), Hotchkins and Dancy (2015) presented findings on the intersection of race and gender and the relationship to leadership, toxic campus climates, college persistence, and coping strategies in times of racial adversity. Diverse students of color, such as Black male student leaders, contended with racial battle fatigue as the students experienced racial stressors impacting leadership and growth (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015). According to Ingram and Wallace (2019), the problem of dealing with the racism-induced stress was connected to the increase in minority college enrollment at PWIs in the United States.

With the results of the Practical Activism Project, Silva (2018) concluded decolonial pedagogy played a critical role in the learning process of marginalized students and lessons on privilege and power had the potential to teach privileged college students about allyship. For example, Cate and Russ-Eft (2018) found effects of critical consciousness-raising and social engagement activities as beneficial for Latinx college students to help overcome challenges in racist environments if the service-learning program curriculum centered on Latinx student identity. College and university environments are not exempt from the injustices of the world

and society. Throughout the higher education experience, minority students across the United States live at the center of multiple forms of racism, such as structural racism, police violence, structural oppression, racial microaggressions, cultural racism, institutional racism, and individual racism (Ingram & Wallace, 2019).

According to Koyama and Desjardin (2019), researchers discovered several issues impacting Latinx students' transitioning from high school to college, including feelings about coursework and social relationships, their motivation to study, satisfying academic experiences, involvement in student activities, satisfying personal health and environment, and fitting into the collegiate atmosphere. As the tensions and violence at the United States–Mexico border rose, law enforcement detention and job centers for immigrants rapidly expanded, resulting in sustainable funds being diverted away from the border's educational or economic systems and impacting the development of students' linguistic, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as the institutional practices of schooling for Latinx students (Koyama & Desjardin, 2019). Diversity education helped students practice essential rational thinking and self-reflection to engage in vital constructive dialogue with peers connected to cultivating change, and the constructs of communities, culture, identity, individuals, and societies (Cate & Russ-Eft, 2018; Grayman-Simpson et al., 2019). Integration and inclusion of many perspectives and practices from different cultures call for the inclusion of diversity and wealth of values benefiting society (Cate & Russ-Eft, 2018).

Emotional Safety, Socioemotional Health, and Trauma

In the interest of socioemotional health and well-being of students, American college and university campuses were being institutionalized as safe spaces to protect students from undue psychological harm and encourage safe learning environments (Burch et al., 2018). Byron (2017)

noted the shift of college students from being too sensitive and vulnerable, requesting trauma

accommodations, and needing safe spaces on campus to being empowered to assert themselves

in the university, demanding acknowledgment of lived experiences and expressing one's desire

to fully participate in academic settings. Silva (2018) found decolonial pedagogy effective in the

facilitation of transformative learning encompassing a college student's personal growth,

fostering an interest in social action by conceptualizing the college classroom space, and better

aligning a course's curriculum with the student's voice—with students as storytellers, centering

lived experiences about the assigned scholarly texts.

Concerning social justice, Clancy and Bauer (2018) found students both expand zones of

comfort—enabling students to hear, engage with, and learn from other students with unfamiliar

voices and differing perspectives—and practice the tools necessary to be advocates for

deconstructing power hierarchies within the public sphere. For college student activists, the

proper environment for emotional safety was important for student recognition and support,

where students expressed disappointment toward society and the desire to find spaces and

communities of significance (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016). Trauma and discourse are

disruptors of emotional safety. The Center for Social Justice (1989, as cited in Smith et al., 2015)

defined *trauma* as experiences or situations perceived as emotionally painful and distressing,

overwhelming people's ability to cope and leaving them powerless. Clancy and Bauer (2018)

suggested discourse instruction, a goal with college students enrolled in political sciences

courses, is to create an environment for college students to be safe practicing difficult

conversations about social justice, to carry the conversations outside of the classroom.

Powerlessness impacts safety. College and university students with intersecting or

multiple identities specifically need colleges and universities to become more welcoming

environments for minority students (Ingram & Wallace, 2019). According to Smith et al. (2015),

the feeling of powerlessness for certain college students is created by the impact of trauma, toxic

stress, and adversity; in turn, this feeling disrupts the basic operating systems of organizations

such as colleges and universities. In a research study on stress and racism, Ingram and Wallace

(2019) found some college students wished to establish free seminars or student development

clubs for college students who have experienced stress or trauma and to improve ways to cope

and heal stress or trauma, whereas others wished to mandate microaggression workshops at

PWIs. When a person or group experiences a lack of safety and sense of loss, such as with an

active shooting on a college or university campus or the death of a student or community

member, hopelessness, helplessness, hyperarousal, depression, confusion, and aggression are

simultaneously felt by the students and staff (Smith et al., 2015). In the college classroom, Silva

(2018) suggested acknowledging frameworks of knowing and understanding are subject to

changing global affairs and politics be utilized to de-center dominant narratives, practices, and

voices to help college students develop. Different types and levels of safety exist. A college or

university committed to creating a climate of moral safety commits to addressing responsibility,

accountability, communication, regulation equity, and trust (Smith et al., 2015).

     According to Cashmere (2018), when students sense a lack of emotional safety, students

sometimes construct walls, finding methods to increase the distance between students and the

academic content or material. Salvatore and Rubin (2019) suggested, to fully understand the

purpose of certain emotional responses such as fear and anger from college students, defining the

emotions is the first step. Educators, administrators, teachers, and student affairs professionals

work to assist students who put up such walls. The empathic scaffolding of academic course

materials makes content about obscure groups easier for students to process and provides a way

for students to move past remembering facts to analyzing, applying, engaging in, and summarizing conversations on diversity and inclusion (Clancy & Bauer, 2018).

Torres-Harding et al. (2015) explained emotionally difficult work or physically intense work may cause motivated individuals in college to withdraw from volunteering to help marginalized people. For school principals engaging in social justice leadership work, researchers found school communities with resistance leading to increased personal tolls and a continued sense of despair, eventually turning to proactive and coping strategies to continue the social justice work (Theoharis, 2007). To increase emotional safety in classroom settings and academic spaces, students learn to share the contextualized stories to bring a higher level of consciousness and authenticity to fellow students and peers, to focus on healing and overcoming trauma by sharing stories about identity and hope for the future openly about what the students hope to do to change the world (Cashmere, 2018).

Clancy and Bauer (2018) found college students were able to move from the unconscious rushing of biases to consensus building and groupthink to interrogating whether the opportunity was impressive. Having knowledgeable instructors or professors who are versed in the history and psychology of racism with an interest in transformative learning for social justice heightens classroom environments like seminars for students to practice critical self-analysis and reflection (Grayman-Simpson et al., 2019). Instructors need to be prepared to reconsider pedagogical approaches used to teach race and social justice, particularly when college students have little prior exposure to diversity (Clancy & Bauer, 2018).

The Sanctuary Model

Like the healing justice framework described by Ginwright (2015), the sanctuary model is about an organization transforming through intentional reflection to help people make meaning

of experiences and to use the existing university units to meet the needs of students, faculty, and

staff (Smith et al., 2015). Colleges and universities care about the socioemotional health of

students because the well-being of the student is connected to student-centered learning as well

as nonacademic environments. According to Smith et al. (2015), the sanctuary model was

designed to foster an atmosphere of safety and promote positive change for students and other

community members, challenging colleges, and universities to heal themselves while

simultaneously healing people and community members who have experienced trauma. The

sanctuary model is a trauma-informed approach for healing and restoration. The seven

commitments of the sanctuary model are growth and change, social responsibility, democracy,

open communication, social learning, emotional intelligence, and nonviolence (Smith et al.,

2015).

College Student Leadership Development and Social Justice

For most U.S. college and university students, social justice is considered a cocurricular

activity, or an activity outside of an academic course or classroom setting. The literature review

revealed diverse, marginalized, or minority college students had negative experiences with

racism, oppression, and institutional power structures while in college, making the pull to social

justice causes and movements seamless and effortless. Through experiential learning

opportunities such as service-learning or academic courses using theory-to-practice skill

application and group projects, college students can grow as leaders, student activists, and social

justice and social change agents. Such experiential opportunities allow diverse students on

college campuses to share through discussion, reflection, and self-reflection how adversity

impacts student learning, emotional safety and health, mental health, academic achievement,

sense of belonging, student voice, and advocacy. College student leadership development was

combined with social justice leadership to understand the development of learning, leadership, and growth for college students with experience in contributing positively to the process of transforming and influencing changes for marginalized communities or groups of people.

Combining history and the lived experiences of students to compare the institutionalized oppression and forms of racism is one example of teachers, instructors, educators, and professors role modeling social justice leadership in academic settings with college students (Silva, 2018). Through these academic experiences, students learn about aspects of racism and oppression impacting and hindering emotional safety, sense of belonging, and actively contributing to social justice and change movements (Silva, 2018). Student leadership development operating under a social justice lens transforms a college or university campus and community to be more inclusive, equitable, and accepting of diversity while not forcing or subjecting all students to liberalist ideas and political views. Higher education is influenced by increased college student diversity and multicultural and sociopolitical environments. Social justice leadership combined with student leadership development helps colleges and universities to better fulfill mission and vision statements through the empowerment and growth students gain from being exposed to and educated on student activism, cultivating social change, and learning from peers regardless of differences.

Counterargument

A few counterarguments exist about social justice and leadership development. Wagner and Pigza (2016) believed self-reflection has a role in leadership development, but self-reflection alone is insufficient. The tensions on and off campus, the aspects of life outside of being an involved college student leader, and the preexisting struggles and challenges alone shape college student leadership development and color individual experiences. Bishundat et al. (2018)

researched critical hope concerning student leadership development and found college student leaders from marginalized backgrounds and identities were motivated more by being fed up, angry, tired, frustrated, daring, and committed to social change, fueling social justice work and/or student activism in ways critical hope does not. Leadership development is a byproduct of the leadership process and experiences with social justice work for a college student. Martin et al. (2019) researched how working professionals in higher education supported college students with leadership development; faculty and staff role-modeled self-reflection and shared lived experiences and perspectives about how leadership development was contextual or situational.

Collaboration and collaborative leadership were researched by Miller and Vaccaro (2016) and found to be even more challenging in leadership development spaces for college students with marginalized identities and backgrounds because of the increasingly popular call-out and cancel culture, or ostracism from social or professional groups and spaces across age groups of college students. Demands for true action on and off college campuses are also increased without authentic understanding, compassion, or compromise. When it comes to social justice, decision-making power and involvement are key (Torres-Harding et al., 2015). Sometimes social justice is about small-scale acts and improvements such as acknowledgment or visibility, before being about equity, inclusion, and decision-making power. College student leaders are not without competing pressures and societal messages. Albright et al. (2017) researched how incorporating social justice into educational experiences or certain programs includes instructing future agents of critical consciousness and social change to reject negative societal messages through empowerment. Empowerment is used for educating, advising, counseling, and mentoring college student leaders with learning how to analyze, decipher, and dissect these same negative societal messages, instead of sheer rejection, to center the social justice experience as learning

experiences. Celoria (2016) found developing critical consciousness and a deep understanding as essential social justice aspects. Marginalized college student leaders already have an acute and growing awareness of the kinds of systemic inequalities, injustices, and differences from their lived experiences.

Chapter Summary

Understanding how college student leadership was being shaped and developed for marginalized students during a time of social justice popularity in American colleges and universities was the purpose of the exploratory qualitative study. College students have ample opportunities to engage in leadership development and growth activities. Each leadership, student involvement, and social justice experience for a college student is unique and holds meaning and value. Literature on the essence of social justice experiences, opportunities, and perspectives of marginalized college student leaders was researched and reviewed. In many ways, colleges and universities include leadership aspects and aspirations in the institutional mission and vision and positively affect the development of student values (Torres-Harding et al., 2015). Clancy and Bauer (2018) noted a university mission statement can include social justice by centering educational experience for students on leading a life of learning, leadership, and success in a world of diversity. Social justice provides a lens to influence and transform ethical and moral development for young leaders. Having tough conversations is vital for repairing dissonance and divides between college students learning about social justice (Clancy & Bauer, 2018).

To better comprehend the background of social justice leadership, researchers began by focusing on the leadership characteristics and the specific leadership actions taken to achieve social justice goals (F. Wang, 2018). Social justice assists a process built on care, empathy,

recognition, and respect, whereas social justice leadership focuses on the challenges of social justice collectively on an absolute concern for marginalized situations of diverse peoples to strengthen culture and community in schools and cultivate stronger educational environments (Theoharis, 2007). One way to apply transformational and social justice leadership is to help shape students into social justice agents, empowering students to take ownership for the educational and social aspects of life and to develop a sense of ownership over learning (F. Wang, 2018). College student activists develop essential leadership skills through negotiation and advocacy to gain experience in navigating the sociopolitical structures and contexts interacting with college student learning environments (Martin et al., 2019). Researchers found experiential education such as service-learning to promote social justice and social justice aims, learning and development outcomes, and long-term community development for students from underrepresented groups, and has positive connotations among campus administrators, students, donors, and stakeholders alike via tutoring and mentoring programs for youth in underserved schools (Martin et al., 2019; Wagner & Pigza, 2016). College students develop academically, personally, and socially, both inside and outside of the classroom; being a holistic student means learning more about unique and different experiences of college students.

A gap in the literature was revealed on the development of diverse and marginalized college student leaders and students of color focusing on the respective value and meaning placed on student activism/advocacy and a social justice leadership lens to build and increase peace, healing, justice, and restoration on college and university campuses and beyond. Having marginalized college student leaders share experiences and perspectives about social justice on personal leadership development while in college added real-life context to the existing body of research. The theoretical framework was used to inform and guide the methodology and analyze

research findings from the qualitative research study on marginalized college students, leadership

development, and social justice. The following chapter outlines the methodology of the research

study, including the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, research procedures,

data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The ability to realistically evaluate one's environment using an equity and justice lens while working towards a better future is known as *critical hope* (Bishundat et al., 2018). Qualitative research is helpful to explain and understand experiences using a conceptual or theoretical framework to guide the research and inform the plan to collect data. Reiter et al. (2011) described qualitative research as exploratory, fluid, flexible, data driven, and context sensitive. Phenomenology is defined as qualitative research which aims to discover the meaning of lived experiences (Reiter et al., 2011). The following three research questions guided the qualitative study:

Research Question 1: What experiences do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds have with social justice?

Research Question 2: How do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds develop as leaders because of social justice leadership and/or advocacy work?

Research Question 3: How valuable and meaningful is social justice leadership and/or advocacy work to the leadership development of college students with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds?

The following sections outline the methodology, including the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, research procedures, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

Ramani and Mann (2016) explained qualitative researchers seek to understand the unique experience of individuals or groups of people, the meanings assigned to certain experiences, the psychosocial aspects of language used in interpersonal interactions, and the factors influencing

perspectives and interactions. To fulfill the purpose of the qualitative study and answer the three research questions, a phenomenological methodology was selected. Phenomenology is the study of direct experiences taken at face value where behavior is determined by the phenomenon of experience (Qutoshi, 2018). The research questions focused on experiences and what participants found meaningful and valuable based on the phenomenon of social justice leadership and college student leadership development. Phenomenology was a suitable qualitative method for exploring the essence of student experiences (Koch et al., 2012). A phenomenological approach was used to describe individuals' experiences with a particular phenomenon to determine the meaning of the experiences for the individuals in question (Sinden et al., 2013).

College student leaders with marginalized identities and backgrounds were the focus of the phenomenological study. Colleges and universities provide several experiential learning and leadership development opportunities for college students and student leaders, such as service-learning trips, campus protests, multicultural student clubs, study abroad, domestic exchange programs, and original research to fulfill junior paper or senior thesis requirements. According to J. A. Creswell (2013), phenomenological researchers seek to understand what an individual experiences and how an individual experiences a specific phenomenon. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of individuals about a phenomenon is part of the science and philosophy of understanding human beings on a deeper level. Phenomenological studies are used to learn about the essence of the human experience.

College student leaders have different experiences and perceptions about social justice, student involvement, and leadership development. Advantages and benefits of phenomenology include centering the data on the lived experiences of research participants and including in-depth interpretation and description of the meaning collected during the research. According to

Qutoshi (2018), phenomenological research is made more interesting and meaningful through interpreting social structures, policies, and practices from the personal perspectives of the individuals participating in the research. An exploratory research methodology was appropriate for the examination of the latest phenomenon in a real-life context, especially because the boundaries between context and phenomenon were not evident (Mahler et al., 2018).

Role of the Researcher

Sixteen current or former college student leaders with marginalized identities were recruited to serve as participants for the phenomenological study and completed open-ended questionnaires, submitted documents/artifacts, and completed semistructured interviews. Collecting data leading to both structural and textual descriptions of the participants' experiences was essential to providing an accord of the common experiences of the participants (J. A. Creswell, 2013). With nine years of higher education and student affairs work experience, I was employed as a program director and college success counselor remotely advising and counseling a caseload of 200+ college students at a national nonprofit dedicated to diversifying the national leadership pipeline by helping high-achieving low-income college students gain acceptance to and succeed at elite and prestigious colleges and universities in the United States.

Study participants were current college student leaders or former college student leaders who graduated in 2020 recruited from across the country, so previous professional advising/counseling relationships with the students may have existed. Recruitment materials were specific and noted the research study was for educational research and separate from professional obligation to an employer. Although such a professional background could include professional bias, the research study included intentionally analyzing data on how experiences were processed and the essence of what is experienced by all participants (Qutoshi, 2018).

Bracketing enabled the separation of prior experiences of the phenomenon from the qualitative study and to understand and interpret the phenomenon with as little bias as possible. Bracketing is the process of setting aside assumptions and prior experiences about the topic under investigation (Koch et al., 2012). According to Deep et al. (2017), to avoid researcher bias in the analysis stages, bracketing was used to heighten self-awareness of the research mindset. A statement of expected response before the data collection process ensued was written to decrease personal bias (Deep et al., 2017). I authored a Statement of Expected Response (see Appendix A) for the qualitative research in October 2020 before data collection began and shared the statement with the dissertation committee to focus on understanding and explaining the phenomenological findings during data analysis.

Research Procedures

The research procedures section describes the measures used to conduct the phenomenological study. The eight steps to conducting phenomenological research are determination, identification, distinguishing, collecting data, generating themes, developing textual and structural descriptions, reporting the essences of the lived experiences of the participants, and presenting the understandings in written form (J. A. Creswell, 2013). The following subsections detail the population and sample selection. The instrumentation of the qualitative study is also described. Finally, participant recruitment, participation, data collection, and data preparation are presented.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population of the research study included current or former college student leaders with self-identified marginalized identities and backgrounds who had experiences with social justice via advocacy work, leadership activities, and student activism or organizing on or

off campus while in college. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020),

26,321,518 students were enrolled in postsecondary institutions for the 2018–2019 school year;

percentages by race/ethnicity were 49% White, 18% Hispanic/Latino, 13% Black/African

American, 7% American Indian/Alaska Native, 6% Asian, and .3% Native Hawaiian and Other

Pacific Islander. All races and ethnic backgrounds except for White were considered

marginalized based on race, ethnicity, and college student enrollment. Sixteen student leaders

were recruited to participate in the study. According to J. A. Creswell (2013), purposive

sampling in a phenomenological study requires interviewing between five and 25 individuals

who experienced the phenomenon.

The participants were recruited via a flyer circulation campaign on social media

(Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram), through targeted emails to faculty and staff at colleges and

universities who worked in student affairs, student activities/campus life, athletics, Greek life,

leadership development, first-generation and/or low-income student, multicultural center, and

social justice spaces, and by word of mouth. The research recruitment network included 1,403

Facebook friends, 1,639 followers on LinkedIn, over 1,200 followers on Instagram, and over 600

followers on Twitter. Additionally, the research recruitment network included several friends,

associates, and colleagues of the researcher from the higher education and student affairs sector

established over 10 years. The Recruitment Email can be found in Appendix B and the Research

Participant Recruitment Flyer in Appendix C.

To be included in the phenomenological study, participants (a) had to be at least 18 years

old; (b) had to be college students who earned a bachelor's degree in 2020 or college

sophomores, juniors, and seniors matriculated college students tentatively scheduled to graduate

after 2020 with a bachelor's degree; (c) had to have experiences with social justice; (d) had to

self-identify as having a marginalized identity or background; and (e) had to be considered a

current or former college student leader, meaning the student holds a position of power,

influence, management, and authority for the college or a student- or college-affiliated club,

organization, office, or department.

College students who began college in the Fall 2020 quarter/semester were excluded

from the study because incoming first-year college students were not enrolled in college long

enough to obtain leadership roles on campus. Self-identifying as a person or individual with a

marginalized identity or background meant the research participants were classified as

vulnerable populations by the American College of Education's Institutional Review Board

(IRB) and received unique protective measures to ensure human rights were not violated.

Interested student leaders were directed or had access to the researcher's contact

information via the Research Participant Recruitment Flyer (see Appendix C) and Recruitment

Email (see Appendix B). The flyer and email included a link to a short Google Form (see

Appendix D) for vetting whether the prospective participant met the five eligibility requirements

to participate in the study. If an applicant met all eligibility requirements, the voluntary Informed

Consent (see Appendix J) was emailed for the participant to read and review. Participants were

permitted and encouraged to reach out to ask questions and/or raise concerns about participating

in the study. Immediately after receipt of the signed consent form, a link to the SurveyMonkey

data collection site was sent via email to the participant.

Instrumentation

For phenomenological research, data collection and meaning making occur

simultaneously to highlight the specific experiences to identify the phenomenon perceived by the

participants in a particular situation (Qutoshi, 2018). The following data collection instruments

were used: a Revised Open-Ended Questionnaire (see Appendix E), Document or Artifact

Analysis Submission Instructions (see Appendix F), and Revised Semistructured Interview

Questions (see Appendix G).

Semistructured interview questions allowed the participants to engage in a free-flowing

discussion on social justice experiences, marginalized identities and backgrounds, and leadership

development (Kiley, 2017). The five-question open-ended questionnaire was created using

SurveyMonkey for simpler data collection and analysis. All instrumentation was designed to

collect data in alignment with the three research questions of the phenomenological study. All

questions and instructions were designed to collect rich descriptions of the experiences,

perceptions, and essence of the human experiences with social justice leadership and leadership

development as a college student from all research participants.

Subject matter experts (SMEs) were used to review the open-ended questionnaire and

semistructured interview questions for validity and reliability. The SMEs had backgrounds in

student recruitment and admissions, social justice advocacy, public policy and sociology, student

affairs, higher education, leadership development, teaching, curriculum development, and

coaching, and provided insight on the instrumentation. See Appendix H for the Subject Matter

Expert Validation From May 2020. All five SMEs provided written feedback after reviewing the

original three research questions and drafted questions for the open-ended questionnaire and

semistructured interview with suggestions to clarify, strengthen, and revise questions for the

instrumentation. The feedback was then applied to the questionnaire and interview questions and

was helpful in realigning the research questions to strengthen the data collection process.

Document/artifact analysis was the second instrument used. To collect adequate data

using the instruments, both the open-ended questionnaire and semistructured interview questions

were aligned with the research questions, and the documents/artifacts submitted for analysis

provided structural and textual descriptions of experiences and perceptions with social justice.

According to Rimando et al. (2015), some challenges to data collection include finding interview

locations, developing an interview guide, and staying focused on the research topic during

interviews. These challenges were taken into consideration as both the open-ended questionnaire

and semistructured interview were facilitated remotely or online using technology

(SurveyMonkey and Zoom).

Data Collection

According to Kozleski (2017), data analysis, data collection, data review and collecting

additional data is the hallmark of the relationship between data collection, emerging evidence,

and questions. The data for the phenomenological study came from an online SurveyMonkey

open-ended questionnaire; submitted documents/artifacts for data analysis; and semistructured

interviews using Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. The semistructured interviews

and SurveyMonkey open-ended questionnaire were used to document the experiences and

perceptions of the participants. Document/artifact analysis served to cross-reference data from

the interviews and open-ended questionnaire results.

According to Yazan (2015), data collection plans concerning the procedures to be

followed and content of the data were beneficial. Contact information and names of participants

were collected on the questionnaire but later changed to "Participant" with an assigned number

in order of completed questionnaire. The first instrument was the SurveyMonkey questionnaire.

During data analysis, the questionnaire each participant was assigned a generic identifier (e.g.,

Participant 1) to ensure participants' identities were protected. The confidential open-ended

questionnaire results were downloaded from SurveyMonkey to a Microsoft Word document. The

questionnaire responses were saved with the participant's number and uploaded to the secure external hard drive stored in a lockbox.

The second instrument was document/artifact analysis. Yazan (2015) noted facilitating interviews effectively, observing carefully, and documenting data mining are three ways to be effective in qualitative data collection. The documents/artifacts submitted by participants highlighted social justice experiences and influenced participants' development as college student leaders or motivated the participants to get involved in at least one specific social justice cause or issue. Documents included journal entries, poems, articles, blog posts, and speeches. Artifacts included YouTube videos and pictures from social justice activities. Typed research notes of the documents/artifacts along with the participants' descriptions of the documents/artifacts were downloaded, saved with the respective participant number, and uploaded to the secure external hard drive stored in a lockbox.

The third instrument was the semistructured interviews conducted via Zoom. All interviews were recorded, and participants were asked 10 questions with occasional follow-up questions to clarify information shared during the interview. Koch et al. (2012) encouraged interview questions to be broad enough for participants to describe experiences and narrow enough for participants to provide specific data on the research topic. The interviews were audio recorded for the transcription process. All participants had the opportunity to review the respective transcript to verify accuracy. Asking the right questions, knowing the questions to avoid, using probing language and an interview guide, beginning an interview, interactions between interviewer and interviewee, and recording and assessing interview data are helpful elements or aspects to consider when using interviews for data collection (Yazan, 2015). Interviewees were assigned identifiers such as "Participant 1" to protect participant identity but

were referred to by preferred first name during the semistructured interview. Transcripts of the interview recordings were saved with the respective participant number and uploaded to the secure external hard drive stored in the lockbox.

Upon completion of the study, all electronic and physical copies of data will be stored for at least three years. The electronic copies of the data will be deleted from the external hard drive and physical paper copies of the data including notes will be shredded and thrown in the trash/recycling. A copy of the completed dissertation was shared via email with all participants of the study. Participants were encouraged to read the participant data and information sections and to request a follow-up conversation if any questions or comments arose from reading the results of the study.

Data Preparation

Data were prepared by organizing all notes in a similar format, cataloguing the participants, the date of the activity, type of research activity (interview response, document/artifact analysis, open-ended questionnaire response), length of time of the activity, and locations of data source materials. All data were coded after transcription. A SurveyMonkey account was created using the same email address given with the contact information and associated with the research study. A copy of the open-ended questionnaire responses was shared with the participant once the questionnaire was completed. The participant responses were reviewed once and then participants were invited to verify the accuracy of the questionnaire responses, known as member-checking by sending corrections/edits of questionnaire responses on a timeline convenient to the participant but preferably within 24 to 48 hours. Once all eligible participant responses were submitted, the full SurveyMonkey questionnaire responses were downloaded as Microsoft Word documents and saved on the secure external hard drive stored in

a secure lockbox.

The document/artifact data were prepared for analysis by saving all submitted documents/artifacts on the secure external hard drive as "DA_Participant#_filetypetitle" with the same number assigned to the completed open-ended questionnaire and a file type title (e.g., video, blog post, journal article). The research notes of the documents/artifacts were typed on a Google Document and saved as "DA_Participant#_notes" on the secure external hard drive stored in the lockbox. On the external hard drive, a tracking sheet/log was kept of submissions, dates of submissions, and file types (document or artifact).

All semistructured 45- to 60-minute interviews were recorded using a licensed Zoom account. After each interview, the recording was downloaded and saved as "Participant #_interview" on the secure external hard drive. The interview recording was transcribed using Otter.ai, a transcription platform compatible with Zoom and the file was saved as "Participant #_interview_transcription." The interview transcript was emailed to the participant to thoroughly review the transcript and ensure accuracy and to clarify or elaborate on any points deemed unclear from the interview. Organizing the data helped identify themes, patterns, and trends in the data. Having the data in handwritten, audio, transcribed, and original formats helped prepare the data for analysis. According to Yazan (2015), analysis can intensify as the progression of qualitative research study continues and the data is all in.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis has many approaches, including content analysis, constant comparative, componential analysis, domain analysis, key-word-in-context, taxonomic analysis, and word count (Kozleski, 2017). For the phenomenological study, content and thematic analysis were used to identify trends, patterns, and motifs across all instruments to address the research

questions. The inductive thematic analysis approach is used for identifying, analyzing, and

reporting patterns or themes independently from existing theoretical frameworks or categories in

qualitative research (Sinden et al., 2013). The phenomenological approach was selected to

understand the essence of the lived experiences with social justice on the leadership development

of marginalized college student leaders. The qualitative study was informed by social justice

leadership and college student leadership development theories. During the data analysis stage,

the participants' experiences were analyzed to determine alignment with the research study and

patterns of reflection, leadership, change making, and learning, and/or the themes of democracy,

inclusion, transformation, identity, and involvement because of the theoretical framework.

Open-Ended Questionnaire

A Revised Open-Ended Questionnaire (see Appendix E) was used to include as much

information as possible (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). The SurveyMonkey link to the open-ended

questionnaire was emailed to the participants who submitted signed informed consent forms.

After the participants completed the questionnaire, the data were downloaded from

SurveyMonkey and reviewed twice without organizing the data. The data from the open-ended

questionnaires were copied to a Microsoft Word document and a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to

be coded and organized based on the thematic content of experiences and perceptions found.

Coding for categories and themes helps to highlight priorities and center the process of analyzing

qualitative data (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). Thematic coding was used to help map relationships

(Vaughn & Turner, 2016).

Semistructured Interview

According to Vaughn and Turner (2016), semistructured interviews are a purposeful way

to establish an understanding of complicated cases, including assumptions, expectations, and

perspectives, while building rapport between the researcher and participants. Transcripts of the

semistructured interview recordings were a part of the data preparation and organization stage.

Each research transcript and the units of meaning (i.e., sentences and words conveying similar

meanings) were discovered and labeled with codes allowing for the interpretation of large

segments of information (Belotto, 2018). Using Microsoft Word and Excel, initial open and axial

coding were employed to find relationships in the data from the questionnaires, interviews, and

document/artifact analysis notes and comments. A list of codes and themes was formatted in a

codebook for easier access and tracking purposes as the data chunks were analyzed. Using

Microsoft Word, the text was highlighted, track changes were implemented, comments were

added to the margins of the text functions, and a codebook detailed the codes used for each

research interview transcript, documenting specifically how every part of the text was assessed

(Belotto, 2018). A content analysis table was used for all participants' codes and for aggregating

the data for thematic analysis, allowing for the identification, and distinguishing of the trends of

various participant experiences and emerging primary and secondary themes (Belotto, 2018).

Document and Artifact Analysis

For holistic data analysis, developing a data collection matrix was helpful (J. A. Creswell,

2013). Reviewing notes taken from document/artifact analysis was helpful with the coding and

categorization of words in text or from notes to identify broader themes, match patterns, and

build explanations (Koch et al., 2012). Kozleski (2017) explained researchers should

thoughtfully record what happens in research by collecting other kinds of documentary evidence

(e.g., digitally recorded interviews, examples of student work, memos, and records) and writing

notes. Identifying how the learning took place will clarify and report the lived meaningful

experiences of participants, arriving at descriptive interpretations.

Reliability and Validity

For the qualitative phenomenological study, trustworthiness was established using content validity, credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability, and intercoder reliability to ensure the qualitative data from participants were accurately collected, transcribed, coded, analyzed, and reported. To ensure the data collected from all participants were reliable and valid, data analysis was centered on the experiences and perspectives of the marginalized college student leaders regarding social justice and leadership development. The participants' voices, feelings, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, and identities were honored in the final dissertation after all participants reviewed the questionnaire and interview responses to ensure accuracy, confirmability, and reliability. Each stage of the research study included adhering to the same set of instructions and facilitation steps for consistency and validity of the data collection process. The framework was the same, but the outcomes and outputs of the data collected from the participants varied. According to Bolognesi et al. (2017), the values of reliability rely on the assurance of data remaining constant throughout variations in the measuring process, independent of the measuring occurrence, person, or research instrument.

The qualitative data were triangulated via the use of semistructured interviews, document/artifact analysis, and open-ended questionnaires as multiple data sources to better understand the phenomenon of social justice. The open-ended questionnaires allowed the participants to define and share experiences in writing. Document/artifact analysis allowed participants to share objects related to the experiences and perspectives of the phenomenon, such as journal entries, videos, and audio files, to provide additional evidence and context of the essence of something analyzable.

Semistructured interviews allowed participants to respond using specific words, tonality,

and mannerisms as participants engage in a dialogue or exchange about experiences and perspectives. Analyzing each data source to identify and highlight alignment and points of convergence was essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of participants per data point and collectively as research participants, thus increasing the reliability and validity of data collected from participants during all stages of the data collection process.

Bracketing occurred even before participants began the research process as bracketing is an effective way to increase the validity of data collection and analysis in phenomenological research (Qutoshi, 2018). By avoiding preconceived judgments or notions and refraining from editing out the voices, lived experiences, and valid perspectives, thoughts, and beliefs of the participants, the data collected were ensured to be both credible and dependable. A potential bias encountered during the analysis stage was the reality of advising and counseling college students and college student leaders with marginalized identities and backgrounds professionally as an employee of a national college access and leadership development nonprofit.

According to Yazan (2015), researchers must guarantee construct validity through the triangulation of multiple sources of chains of evidence, internal validity, and reviewing written and audio responses for accuracy using established analytic techniques such as external validity through critical generalizations and pattern matching. Pattern matching was used to analyze the open-ended questionnaires, document/artifact submissions, and semistructured interview responses to discover similarities, shared lived experiences, and the emergence of structures of some kind within the data collected from participants. Patterns were discovered in the questionnaire and interview responses, document/artifact submissions, and interview responses. Given the use of the three research instruments and the types and number of participants, patterns were matched across instruments and participants. The data were reliable and valid because the

full responses from the participants and the patterns, themes, and categories found during data

analysis were included. Phenomenology is a method and a human science in which the relation

of meaning and method is explored (J. A. Creswell, 2013). During data analysis, different

sources of data were holistically analyzed by participant and generalizations were made and

applied to external situations outside of the qualitative study, increasing the validity of the data

collected (J. A. Creswell, 2013).

To ensure and increase the reliability and validity of all data collected, the voice, tone,

mood, and insight offered by all participants at each stage of the data collection process were

respected. The document/analysis instructions connected back to the three research questions of

the phenomenological study and helped yield information about the essence of participants'

experiences and perspectives. Multiple sources of data were collected in the form of submitted

documents/artifacts, and participants answered questions and engaged in dialogue about social

justice and leadership development as marginalized college student leaders. Valentine et al.

(2018) found phenomena were best understood by common descriptions of people's experiences.

With permission and consent of the participants, the essence of experiences with social justice

was collected in writing and via audio recording to develop an understanding, ensuring reliability

and validity.

Ethical Procedures

Research involving human participants was completed via ethical and legal parameters,

procedures, and protocols. The research plan followed all ACE IRB guidelines ensuring human

rights were prioritized and protected for all human research subjects. Respect, flexibility,

thorough communication, convenience, and sensitivity for all participants were prioritized

throughout the study. All eligible research study participants had the autonomy to withdraw from

the study at any time without question and without use or inclusion of data for the study after

informed consent was submitted. No college student leader or college graduate was coerced or

threatened to participate in the research study. Given the participants were college student

leaders with self-identified marginalized backgrounds, the priority was to do or cause no harm to

participants and to give participants the utmost respect because of the contributions being made

for the research.

The identities of all participants at each stage of the research were kept private and not

disclosed in the completed and published dissertation. Real, legal names were not used in the

study; only race, ethnic background, gender identity, age, year in college, and location were

shared with the permission of the participants. The participants were referred to by their unique

identifiers. Many types of marginalized identities and backgrounds exist, such as Black/African

American, Latinx or people with Latin American cultural or ethnic identities, Muslim, and

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ). Participants were recruited to represent

a diverse sample of these marginalized populations.

The background and process of the research study was communicated to all interested

people and potential participants using the Informed Consent (Appendix J). No participants were

unduly influenced or coerced before, during, or after the research study. As members of

vulnerable populations, participants' identities were kept private, so no harm came to the

participants as college students or college student leaders because of participating in the research

study. The mental, physical, and spiritual wellness and well-being of all research participants

was important. All research participants had access to the Participant Resource Guide (see

Appendix I) if participants became uncomfortable or triggered at any time during the research

study. Participants received the Informed Consent (see Appendix J) via email after completing

the Dissertation Research Participant Interest Form (see Appendix D) and being deemed eligible

to participate in the research study.

During the participant recruitment and selection process, the data from the Google Form

were prepared by setting up the form to receive email notifications per form submission, and a

connected Google Sheet was established to review and align all information with the participant

eligibility criteria. All informed consent forms were saved on the secure external hard drive as

"Participant #_consentform." A document sheet tracker/log was created to track the date of

outgoing and submitted consent forms and was located on the secure external hard drive stored

in a lockbox.

The identities of all research participants were kept confidential as one of the utmost

priorities of the research study was to not harm participants in any way. Data were stored on a

secure external hard drive kept in a lockbox. Data will be destroyed three years after the

dissertation is published.

Chapter Summary

The previous sections outlined the methodology to conduct the phenomenological study.

The design of the study, design appropriateness, and instrumentation were outlined. For

triangulation purposes, semistructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and

document/artifact analysis were used for data collection. As a research methodology,

phenomenological studies focus on the research interpretations and descriptions of participant

experiences (J. A. Creswell, 2013). The data collection procedures and data analysis process

were directly aligned with the three research questions guiding the phenomenological study to

understand participants' lived experiences with social justice and how social justice is perceived

to influence the leadership development of college student leaders with self-identified

marginalized identities and/or backgrounds. Reliability and validity to ensure trustworthiness in

the qualitative study were discussed as well. Chapter 4 includes a summary of the findings.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results

College students and college and university campuses are not exempt from the political, racist, and violent tensions in the United States. According to Wells (2017), marginalized groups of people affected by unethical and immoral values of people in power or authority include undocumented individuals, minorities, and poor families in the United States. Marginalized college students in positions of leadership or college students who are social justice activists, organizers, and advocates are impacted by the prolific racial and sociopolitical tensions in the United States. Students with marginalized backgrounds and identities serve as student leaders in college and are engaged in social justice leadership and/or advocacy work on or off campus to help improve communities and environments. When lived experiences are sought to be understood, qualitative phenomenology research is the best design to understand how a person experiences a phenomenon (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007).

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and understand the lived experiences, context, and perceived impact of how social justice leadership, advocacy, and work influence the leadership development of marginalized college student leaders. Chapter 4 includes a review of how the research participants were recruited and selected and how the qualitative data were collected. The results and themes from open-ended questionnaires, document/artifact analysis, and semistructured interviews are shared in consideration of the three research questions:

Research Question 1: What experiences do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds have with social justice?

Research Question 2: How do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds develop as leaders because of social justice leadership and/or advocacy work?

Research Question 3: How valuable and meaningful is social justice leadership and/or advocacy work to the leadership development of college students with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds?

Data Collection

J. W. Creswell et al. (2007) explained phenomenological data collection includes collecting information from several people who have shared an experience, primarily using interviews and sometimes documents, observations, and even art. Examples of documents/artifacts shared by research participants include articles, blog posts, flyers, letters, photographs, poems, paintings, and videos. To collect information and experiences for the study, research participants were needed. After completing a Dissertation Research Participant Interest Form (see Appendix D) on Google Forms, participants who met all five research eligibility requirements received a Microsoft Word document of the ACE IRB-approved informed consent form via email between September 29, 2020, and January 9, 2021, and emailed back with full name, signature, and date before any research activities began. According to Ellis et al. (2008), consent forms help present guidelines about publishing stories heard during data collection and research. To maintain research participant confidentiality, a number code from 1 to 16 was assigned to each participant. presents the research participant process, identifying how many of the people who completed the participant interest form were eligible to participate in the research study as outlined in Chapter 3.

Of the 59 people who completed the participant interest form, 58% were eligible to participate in the study. Informed consent forms were emailed to all 34 people, but only 47% were completed and returned. Eight informed consent forms were collected in October 2020, five in November 2020, and three in January 2021. No informed consent forms were collected during

the two days of recruitment at the end of September 2020 or the entire month of December 2020.

On average, research participants took four days to review, complete, and return informed

consent forms.

Table 2

Participant Recruitment

Activity	No.	%
Completion of participant interest form	59 (out of proposed 30)	197
Requirement 1: People 18 years of age or older	59	100
Requirement 2: People who self-identified as marginalized	49	83
Requirement 3: People graduating with a bachelor's degree between 2020 and 2023	49	83
Requirement 4: People who identified as a current/former college student leader	49	83
Requirement 5: People involved in social justice work on or off campus	46	78
People eligible to participate in the research study	34	58
People not eligible to participate in the research study	25	42
Eligible people who opted to participate in the research study and submitted completed informed consent form	16	47
Eligible people who did not respond or chose not to return completed informed consent form	15	44
Eligible people who declined to participate in the research study	2	6
Eligible people who submitted informed consent form and then later declined to participate in the research study	1	3

The research instruments were the open-ended questionnaire, document/artifact analysis, and semistructured interview, and all instruments had 100% completion and response rates. Data were collected from the 16 research participants over a three-month period between October 6, 2020, and January 12, 2021. The open-ended questionnaire on SurveyMonkey, which had five questions connected to the three main research questions, needed to be completed once, and the average time to complete the questionnaire was 54 minutes even though participants were told the questionnaire would take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete, an estimate provided by SurveyMonkey after the open-ended questionnaire was finalized. Documents/artifacts were analyzed and shared via email by participants and had to be analyzed only once. On average, research participants took eight days to share the documents/artifacts. The semistructured interviews were recorded on Zoom, were conducted once, and were supposed to take between 45 and 60 minutes to complete. The shortest interview was 20 minutes and the longest was 1 hour and 16 minutes. Both the open-ended questionnaire responses and semistructured interview transcripts were reviewed and confirmed for accuracy by the respective research participant or member checked. On average, research participants took 10 days to confirm questionnaire responses and seven days to confirm interview transcripts.

The data collection plan was approved by the ACE IRB on September 28, 2020, six months into the COVID-19 global pandemic and imposed quarantine restrictions by the U.S. local and federal governments. The pandemic and quarantine restrictions were considered a significant event because the sample size, participant recruitment, and data collection processes were impacted as the higher education industry was affected. Most of the participant recruitment and data collection took place during the Fall 2020 quarter/semester. The Fall 2020 quarter/semester was the first full regular academic term for colleges and universities

transitioning to online/remote instruction with most, if not all, of the undergraduate student body

living and studying at home instead of on campus. The proposed dates for participant recruitment

and data collection were October to November 2020. A deviation from the data collection plan

was approved to extend the participant recruitment and data collection period past November

2020 to reach the proposed goal of 30 participant interest form submissions (goal reached

October 17, 2020) and a minimum of 15 returned informed consent forms (goal reached January

8, 2021).

Data Analysis

The qualitative data for the phenomenological study collected from open-ended

questionnaires, document/artifact analysis, and semistructured interviews were secured on an

external hard drive stored in a code-encrypted lockbox. Data analysis strategies for a

phenomenology include analysis of statements, meaning, textual descriptions, and the essence of

the phenomenon (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007). Once research participants completed the open-

ended questionnaire on SurveyMonkey, confirmed written responses were downloaded and

saved to the external drive as "Participant #_questionnaire finalized response." Participants sent

documents/artifacts via email with brief descriptions, which were downloaded and saved to the

external drive as "Participant #_DA_title." Once research participants completed the recorded

semistructured interview on Zoom, the recordings were saved as mp4 audio files to the external

drive as "Participant #_interview_audio file only."

Otter.ai, a Zoom transcription service platform, was used to transcribe all semistructured

interviews. Next, the transcripts were prepared before being shared with the participants for

confirmation. First, the transcripts were formatted to focus on the 10 questions (and follow-up

questions) asked and the participant responses. Second, the transcripts were read to identify areas

of confusion (e.g., typo, double/repeated word) to see if Otter.ai made any errors. Finally, all

mp4 audio files were listened to at half the regular talking/recording speed to clarify whether the

areas highlighted were errors. The goal of transcript preparation was to clean up the transcript,

not to edit the participants' words or meaning, leaving participants' experiences and perspectives

intact to preserve the reliability and validity of the data.

Interview transcripts were formatted, organized, and cleaned up between December 23,

2020, and January 12, 2021. Interview transcripts were reviewed and confirmed by research

participants between December 25, 2020, and January 18, 2021. The data collected were

prepared using Google Sheets. The Google Sheet titled "Participant Tracker" included six tabs to

prepare the data for analysis: "Research Activity Tracker," "External Drive Data Tracker,"

"Transcript Tracker," "Document Artifact Tracker," "Consent Form Tracker," and "Time

Completion Tracker." These trackers were used to ensure all documents were received, time

stamped, titled, saved, and uploaded to the external drive secured in a lockbox and to track the

stages of research activity for all 16 research participants, including how long research

participants took to complete research activities and follow-up tasks.

The instructions and questions for all data collection instruments were mapped to align

with the three research questions for the phenomenological study. Phenomenological studies are

meant to have structured approaches to data analysis (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007). The data were

sorted by research participant using Google Doc worksheets, by instrumentation using tabs on

Google Sheets, and by main research question using Google Doc worksheets. The Google Doc

worksheets were created to organize the research notes from all 16 participants for each data

collection instrument and were coded to the research participant's assigned number, such as

"Participant 1." All research notes and data collected from research participants were coded and

categorized based on the purpose of the study and the three research questions. The purpose of

the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and understand the lived experiences,

context, and perceived impact of how social justice leadership, advocacy, and work influence the

leadership development of marginalized college student leaders. The three aspects of the

research purpose—experiences, context, and perceived impact—were aligned with the three

research questions.

A codebook was created to organize the initial, axial, and thematic codes found during

data analysis. Before any coding and categorization could begin, familiarization with data

collected during the phenomenology needed to happen. The bulk of the data preparation and

familiarization of data occurred between December 31, 2020, and January 3, 2021, with

occasional updates through January 18, 2021. Familiarization included reading all the text

collected from the open-ended questionnaires, documents/artifacts analyzed and described, and

semistructured interviews; taking initial notes; and becoming familiar with the data across

instrumentation and by participant. Table 3 presents the demographic information for all 16

research participants using the participant interest form and data collected across all

instrumentation.

Table 3 highlights identifiers connected to the research eligibility requirements presented

in Table 2. The identifiers included self-identifying as being part of a marginalized community

or having a marginalized identity. Most of the research participants identified as women, current

college students and student leaders, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ),

Black or African American, or recent college graduates from the Class of 2020.

Table 3

Research Participant Demographics

Identifier	*n*	%
Woman or female-identifying	13	81
Current college student and student leader	10	63
Black or African American	9	56
Black woman	8	50
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer	8	50
Recent college graduate (Class of 2020)/former college student leader	6	40
First group of students/recent college graduates from the same college	5	31
First-generation and/or low-income student/college graduate	5	31
Latinx	4	25
Disabled	3	19
Biracial	2	13
Gender identity was neither male nor female (Nonbinary)	2	13
Muslim	2	13
Second group of students/recent college graduates from the same college	2	13
Third group of students/recent college graduates from the same college	2	13
Asian American	1	6
Man or male-identifying	1	6
Multiracial	1	6

Construction paper was used to create research participant profiles to tabulate

demographic data and highlight social justice and leadership development experiences. Then the

codebook was drafted, and Google Doc worksheets were created. Table 4 presents a list of

participants' social justice and college student leadership positions/roles/titles.

Table 4

Social Justice and Student Leadership Positions

Social justice leadership position/role/title	Student leadership position/role/title
Actor	Cochair of political action committee
Artivist (art activist)	Cofounder, Caribbean Reading Studies group
Coach	Copresident, first-generation/low-income club
Creative director	First-year mentor
Director of diversity	First-year sponsor/student advisor
Facilitator	Liaison, Gender Women's Studies program
Intern	Mental health advocate
Leadership team member	Mentor, Black student association
Mentor	Peer mentor
Organizer	President of food insecurity club
Panelist	President, Class of 2022
Participant	President, spoken word club
Poet	Resident advisor/assistant
President	Resident mentor
Program assistant	Senator
Public speaker	Staffer, women's union
Teacher	Student program coordinator
Volunteer	Student representative to the board of trustees
	Student trustee to the board of regents
	Vice president of campus events
	Writing partner

Several of the research participants held multiple college student leader positions

simultaneously, and some of the positions/roles/titles may belong under both social justice

leadership and student leadership categories given the overlap of social justice work being done

on or off campus. As part of the familiarization process, sentences, and phrases from collected

data were highlighted using the Google Sheet tabulating information by instrument, and then

notes were taken by participant, research question, and instrumentation question/instruction to

populate the Google Doc worksheets by research question, or initial coding. Next was thematic

and axial coding.

Results

To achieve results in a phenomenology, the researcher needs to work deeply with the

participants' specific statements and experiences (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007). The open-ended

questionnaire responses were coded first, followed by document/artifact analysis and the

semistructured interview transcripts. The highlighted text during data analysis showed linkages

in the data by participant and by research question and centered the analysis on the voices of the

research participants, or axial coding. Categorizing and subcategorizing the data by participant

and research question during axial coding yielded the identification of certain themes. The search

for themes was most effective across the three research questions as the questions were aligned

with the data collection instrument instructions and questions outlined in Chapter 3. The themes

identified were found after careful review of patterns and linkages across the full data set over a

two-week data analysis process, from January 3 to January 17, 2021. The following subsections

present the research findings organized by research question and themes found during data

analysis. The information includes the types of experiences participants had with social justice,

how social justice experiences influenced leadership development, and the depth of meaning and

value participants described because of social justice experiences.

Research Question 1

The first research question aligned with the research purpose because all 16 participants

described and shared an understanding of lived social justice experiences. Reflection on the

essential themes, or what constitutes the nature of unique lived experiences, is crucial for a

phenomenological study (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007). Table 5 presents the first section of the

codebook constructed during data analysis for lived experiences with social justice.

Table 5

Codes for Social Justice Experiences

Type of experience	No. experiences shared and coded
Academic	
Experiences	10
Majors/areas of study	5
Student involvement/leadership	11
Off-campus activities	9
On-campus activities	14
Organizations	10
Positions/roles/titles	21
Personal	9
Negative	12
Social justice	
Actions	13
Activities	20
Aspects	6
Causes	17
Concepts	11
Experiences	47
Identity/role	18
Impact/results	24
Type of work	23

The four codes in Table 5 were categorized as types of lived experiences connected to

social justice: academic, student involvement/leadership, personal, and direct social justice

experiences. Each code has subsequent categories to further organize the data collected across all

instruments. Direct social justice experiences were the most described experiences, with participants discussing social justice activities, impacts or results, type of work experienced, and causes advocated for or worked on either on campus, off campus, or both. The experiences described the least included academic majors/areas of concentration connected to social justice, aspects of social justice, and other personal experiences. Participant 5 mentioned,

> Social justice (as a noun) to me means there is a fair resolution at the end. There is always work and I know there will always be work to do, but there needs to be victories. I feel that we must achieve equity in small ways and big ways along the way to the big big, global, permanent version of social justice.

Research Question 2

The second research question aligned with the research purpose because all 16 research participants framed the experiences and perceptions with social justice in the context of leadership development as a college student leader with a marginalized identity or background. In a phenomenological study, part of analyzing the data includes organizing information by organizing the statements by themes, quotes, or statements, and presenting a structural description of shared experiences, such as the conditions, situations, or context, in how the phenomenon was experienced (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007). To be eligible to participate in the research study, participants had to have been college student leaders. Table 6 presents the codes for how social justice influenced the leadership development of the research participants.

The two codes in Table 6 were categorized as aspects of leadership development—cause and effect—because of experiences and perceptions of social justice work. Each code had subsequent categories to further organize the data collected across all instruments. At least 71 different experiences with social justice were shared as the leading cause for how the research

participants developed as leaders.

Table 6

Codes for Leadership Development Because of Social Justice

Leadership development aspect	No. experiences shared and coded
Cause	
Activities	10
Aspect of social justice	7
Experiences	71
Identity	3
Overcoming challenges	1
Type of social justice work	19
Effect	
Change in behavior	51
Change in perspective	45

The effects were evenly split between changes in behavior because of social justice and changes in perceptions. Overcoming challenges, the identity of participants, and recognizing aspects of social justice were not identified as major causes of leadership development for the participants. Participant 6 wrote, "Social justice is inevitably linked to leadership development. You cannot be a leader if you do not believe in the art of social justice." Most of the research participants were able to clearly describe the relationship between social justice leadership and/or advocacy work and leadership development as a college student leader.

Research Question 3

The third research question was aligned with the research purpose because all 16 participants described the perceived impact of social justice lived experiences and perceptions in the context of leadership development. A major benefit of participation in the research study was

participants having opportunities for introspection and reflection, two lesser patterns represented

across the data set. The two codes were meanings and values. The research participants

collectively identified social justice leadership and/or advocacy work as meaningful (88% of

total codes) and/or valuable (12% of total codes). Given how active and involved all the research

participants were on and off campus as college students and college student leaders, the research

findings were helpful to learn and understand how experiences with social justice leadership

and/or advocacy work yielded both meaning and value. Participant 11 mentioned, "All of these

experiences have taught me the importance of working in groups, but even more deeply, has

taught me the power of youth working and organizing with each other."

Themes

During the familiarization, initial coding, axial coding, and thematic coding processes,

themes emerged from the data across the full data set. According to J. W. Creswell et al. (2007),

putting statements on paper and then collapsing the statements into units of meaning and broader

themes by reviewing transcripts is helpful to examine the data closely and identify situations or

contexts in how the themes appeared. Using the codebook was helpful to organize the codes,

categories, and subcategories for each research question. Some data collection instruments

yielded more insight than others. Table 7 presents the six themes most represented in the data

aligned with the research purpose and three research questions after thematic coding was

complete.

The most represented themes were Black, community, and learning. For all six themes,

the semistructured interview yielded a total of 245 themes, the open-ended questionnaire yielded

65 themes, and document/artifact analysis yielded 18 themes. Most of the phenomenological data

from all 16 research participants were collected from the semistructured interview on Zoom

comprising the same 10 questions approved by the IRB and additional follow-up questions for

clarification purposes based on initial responses provided by the participant. Document/artifact

analysis yielded the smallest number of themes, and some themes, such as advocacy and

mentorship, were not mentioned across the documents/artifacts and accompanying descriptions.

Table 7

Natural Emerging Themes from Phenomenological Research

Thematic code	No. times theme mentioned in open-ended questionnaire	No. times theme mentioned in document/ artifact analysis	No. times theme mentioned in semistructured interview	Total no. times theme mentioned across instrumentation
Advocacy	4	0	10	14
Black	22	9	51	82
Community	24	7	49	80
Learning	6	1	28	35
Mentorship	6	0	13	19
Organizing	3	1	11	15

Most participants were comfortable talking during the recorded Zoom interview, and the

transcript pages numbered over 100, whereas the open-ended questionnaire responses and

descriptions of documents/artifacts were all less than one page as participants were asked to be

brief, concise, and direct with written responses. After the six themes were identified, the data

were reviewed once more to ensure the themes were accurate and appropriate for the research

purpose and research questions. After the list of themes was finalized, all themes were defined in

the context of the phenomenology.

Advocacy

The advocacy theme showed up the least across data collection instruments but made sense as the word *advocacy* is used in the research purpose and research questions. In the context of the research study and after data analysis, *advocacy* was defined as an aspect and type of social justice leadership and/or work influencing experiences of college student leaders with marginalized identities. In terms of advocacy, Participant 8 mentioned, "I saw it as a way to use my skills I learned to give back. I never really saw it as a way to level the scale per se, just to help someone, to bring other people up." The lived experiences and perceptions of advocacy in social justice spaces and work caused the participants to develop as leaders. At least 25% of the research participants mentioned COVID-19 advocacy as a social justice experience or activity through advocating for fellow college students and peers facing food insecurity, home instability, being forced off campus with little planning time, and lack of academic accessibility and socioemotional accommodations and resources when classes transitioned fully online and remote. Participant 15 even served as a mental health advocate on her campus before graduating college. Such advocacy is a type of work involving student leaders on or off campus and often showed up across lived experiences because the participant struggled with mental health personally while in college and wanted to address the challenge for peers on campus.

Black

The Black theme showed up the most across data collection instruments and was mentioned 82 times, mostly in the semistructured interviews, like all the themes. Participant 12 mentioned, "My Blackness is at the center of many things that I do, and I explored leadership opportunities that would allow me to be around and support other Black people, Black Studies,

and Black experiences at my private White institution." The Black theme was defined as a race

and core part of identity. In connection to social justice and leadership development, the

experience of being Black can cause changes in behavior and perspective and was considered

highly meaningful. *Black* was mentioned more than *African American* and was purposely not

used interchangeably by most research participants. The social justice advocacy, leadership, and

organizing work was often done for the benefit of Black people on or off campus, fellow

students, or participants' communities.

As was presented in Table 3, 56% of research participants identified as Black. Of all

participants, 50% were Black women. In addition, two of the Black women identified as biracial

and highlighted experiences of growing up with mixed races and grappling with privilege,

community, and identity experiences in college. Participant 14 actively advocated for the

inclusion of Black women in a predominantly White sorority, even taking meetings with the

sorority chapter president and university's chief diversity officer to make spaces more inclusive

and diverse. Participant 16 shared the experience of advocating for the acknowledgment of Black

women in the work done to track down two of the first Black women who attended the university

after the institution became coeducational 50 years ago, including helping to organize the Black

women alumnae brunch and participating in the project to create a documentary titled *Black Girl*

Magic.

Community

The community theme was the second most represented theme across all data collection

instruments, being mentioned 80 times, mostly in the semistructured interviews. Participant 7

mentioned, "I began college with the mindset that a leader must always engage with the

community's needs in ways the community approves of. This mindset was largely influenced by

the volunteering I did for grassroots organizations." Based on the coding process and experiences

and perceptions shared, *community* was defined as an aspect and type of social justice advocacy

and student leadership involvement work causing changes in perspective and was considered

highly meaningful. Community was a naturally emerging theme because research participants

often shared and reflected on the different communities, whether on campus, at home, or with

fellow social justice advocates and organizers. Community was both a cause for leadership

development because of social justice experiences and an effect because of the changes in

perspectives for the research participants. Most social justice actions shared were connected to

community, as beneficiaries of change, advocacy, and organizing. Other social justice actions

were aspects and elements present in social justice through community building, community-

centered work, community dialogue, community empowerment, community engagement,

community organizing, and community service. Community was further mentioned in the

context of collaboration, learning, and mentorship because social justice experiences include

people learning from one another, advocating, and organizing together, and reflecting as activists

in communities across diverse spaces.

Learning

The learning theme was the third most represented theme, mentioned 35 times across all

data collection instruments. During the research study, participants described unique lived

experiences and perceptions with social justice for the sake of enhancing understanding and

centering the voices of marginalized student leaders. The data collection instruments were

designed to encourage introspection and reflection to encourage learning about social justice and

leadership development. Participant 4 mentioned, "The oppressed cannot un-oppress themselves.

That takes the work, time, and energy of the oppressor." When participants reflected on the

meaning and value of social justice, or the context of leadership development, or the relationship between identity and activism, learning was shared. Through student leadership involvement and social justice on or off campus, some research participants discussed learning about other forms of disadvantage and learning from the experiences of peers.

Mentorship

The mentorship theme was mentioned 19 times across the open-ended questionnaire and semistructured interview only. After the coding process, *mentorship* was defined as a meaningful activity and experience between a mentor and a mentee causing leadership development. Experiences with mentoring were shared by 38% of the research participants, all of whom identified as Black women. Mentoring experiences included working mostly with first-year students, first-generation, low-income, and/or Black college and/or high school students. Mentoring was shared and perceived by participants as a two-way street with participants as mentors learning from mentees or as mentees appreciating the relationship with mentors. Mentorship was connected to the themes of community and learning, further indicating the importance of working or socializing with others in developing as leaders in a social justice context.

Organizing

The organizing theme was the next to least represented theme across the full data set, mentioned 15 times. After the coding process, *organizing* was defined as an aspect, experience, and type of social justice leadership and/or work influencing experiences of college student leaders with marginalized identities. Participant 9 mentioned,

> These activities have been meaningful for me because they not only developed my
>
> leadership experience and exposed me to organizing, event planning, community

collaboration, etc.—but these experiences also connected me to communities which I had

previously never gotten the chance to meaningfully engage with.

Additionally, the organizing theme was connected to community as organizing was not an

isolated or solitary activity or type of work and advocacy.

Reliability and Validity

Phenomenological studies are designed to understand meaning and experiences. As data

are collected during research, relationships and meanings with participants are negotiated,

transitions are smoothed over, and researchers provide ways to be useful to the participants

during the research experience, adding a validity check to the data analysis process (J. W.

Creswell et al., 2007). The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe

and understand the lived experiences, context, and perceived impact of how social justice

leadership, advocacy, and work influence the leadership development of marginalized college

student leaders. During the data collection, data preparation, and data analysis processes,

reliability and validity were prioritized to better understand what research participants were

discussing and sharing. The data were triangulated using the open-ended questionnaire,

document/artifact analysis, and semistructured interviews to learn about the phenomena of social

justice and leadership development of the 16 research participants. All 16 research participants

completed an open-ended questionnaire; shared, analyzed, and described documents/artifacts

related to social justice; and completed the semistructured interview. Triangulation of the data

was essential to increase reliability and content validity.

A bracketing statement or Statement of Expected Response (see Appendix A) was written

before data preparation and data analysis occurred to identify and isolate researcher bias to the

extent possible. The personal views held were separated and highlighted before proceeding with

the exploration, investigation, and interpretation of experiences of participants (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007). Of all research participants, 31% were known prior to data collection started in October 2020. Three of the research participants who were recent college graduates and members of the Class of 2020 were former student-advisees and two are current college students and current student advisees. All current and former students found out about the research study via the social media participant recruitment campaign and not directly from my professional relationship to the participants as director of college success serving as a college success counselor. Bias was still reduced as some of the experiences and perceptions shared by former or current students was new information and three participants had not been student advisees for at least four months before the research study began.

During data analysis, specifically during axial coding, pattern matching was used to generate the list of emerging themes by participant. For the initial coding of the data collected, the research participant's voice, tone, mood, sharing, and insight were prioritized. All participants had the opportunity to review questionnaire responses and interview transcripts to honor the voices, feelings, beliefs, and experiences shared for accuracy. Only 6% of the research participants shared any changes or edits to the open-ended questionnaire responses, while 38% sent back corrected or edited versions of transcripts. Although waiting to receive revised or updated responses from participants proved challenging, the efforts were fruitful because the participants self-review of experiences shared helped to ensure the data collected were accurate, credible, transferable, reliable, and dependable.

Follow-up helped show the research participants the importance of correctly and respectfully using experiences and perceptions shared for the intended purpose of understanding and learning. On average, participants took 10 days for questionnaire responses and seven days

for interview transcripts to be reviewed and confirmed. Data were analyzed by all 16 research participants in the documents/artifacts shared. Both the open-ended questionnaire and document/artifact analysis were completed by the research participants alone and on each participant's schedule. Furthermore, the data collection was proposed to be sequential, and only 88% of the research participants completed the research activities in the proposed order but data was collected for all participants.

Chapter Summary

The previous sections presented the data collection, data analysis, and results for the phenomenological study. Results were organized by the three research questions and the six themes coded across the data collection instruments: advocacy, Black, community, learning, mentorship, and organizing. The 16 research participants shared experiences described as academic, personal, student involvement/leadership, and social justice related. A total of 47 social justice experiences were shared. Experiences with social justice leadership and/or advocacy work as a cause resulted in development of college student leaders with marginalized identities in the form of changes in behavior or changes in perspective. Finally, overwhelmingly, social justice leadership and/or advocacy work on leadership development was highly meaningful, but valuable to a lesser extent based on the number of codes identified during data analysis.

Chapter 5 includes further analysis of the research participants' unique lived experiences and perceptions with social justice and leadership development concerning the three research questions. Interpretations based on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 are discussed. Finally, recommendations for future research and reflections on social justice and leadership development connected to the themes represented are offered.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and understand the lived experiences, context, and perceived impact of how social justice leadership, advocacy, and work influence the leadership development of marginalized college student leaders. During the data analysis process, the following themes were identified across the three data collection instruments: advocacy, Black, community, learning, mentorship, and organizing. Research participants shared different types of social justice experiences, how experiences and perceptions of social justice experiences caused changes in behavior and/or perspective as college student leaders with marginalized identities, and how meanings and values related to social justice influence leadership development. Chapter 5 begins with the findings, interpretations, and conclusions of the phenomenological study. Furthermore, the study's limitations, recommendations, and implications for leadership are presented. Finally, research conclusions on social justice and leadership development of marginalized college student leaders are shared. The findings are presented in the context of the theoretical framework and relation to the research questions:

Research Question 1: What experiences do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds have with social justice?

Research Question 2: How do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds develop as leaders because of social justice leadership and/or advocacy work?

Research Question 3: How valuable and meaningful is social justice leadership and/or advocacy work to the leadership development of college students with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds?

Findings, Interpretations, Conclusions

Ingram and Wallace (2019) explained negative experiences for marginalized students include issues with institutional power structures, oppression, and racism while in college. The research findings indicate marginalized students report negative experiences while in college, such as for Participant 7, a Latinx student at a predominantly White Ivy League institution. Participant 7 shared the experience of a racist Cinco de Mayo party being hosted on campus, with no repercussions for the non-Latinx party hosts. Several participants described experiences advocating for first-generation, low-income students and students of color when the COVID-19 pandemic began in the spring of 2020 and respective college/university administrations overlooked unique student needs. College students exposed to oppression and racism became empowered to get involved in social justice efforts such as activism efforts, advocacy work, and organizing (Ingram & Wallace, 2019). The data collected confirmed the student social justice leaders worked toward transforming a college or university campus and community to be more equitable, inclusive, and accepting of diversity. Participants 4 and 16 described experiences using positions as student representatives on the board of trustees/regents to inform campus policies and procedures regarding access, diversity, and inclusion for students of color.

Some experiences shared by research participants confirmed social justice was both a product and a process. Participant 6 described the labor process involved in advocating and organizing for food-insecure students and noted the efforts resulted in the creation of a local food pantry and emergency hotline for students to use during the COVID-19 quarantine. Research participants were able to describe and explain developing as leaders because of social justice experiences as changes in behavior or as changes in perception. Celoria (2016) explained developing a critical consciousness and deep understanding around topics such as class structures, White privilege, misogyny, and discrimination and prejudice against gay people is

possible for college students exposed to social justice. Celoria's (2016) explanation was reinforced by Participant 5's reflecting on the intention of social justice leadership efforts being received by other Black, creative, queer, or shy students.

F. Wang (2018) described social justice leadership theory as using inclusive practices to change social structures, influence stakeholders, and promote justice and equity in school settings. S. R. Jones and Stewart (2016) described college student development theory is useful in understanding how both privilege and marginality inform an individual's identity and meaning making in the context of specific environments. The theoretical framework of the study connected to the purpose of the research to describe and understand aspects of both social justice and leadership development. These aspects were identity, marginality, equity, identifying meanings, reflection on environment, reflection on privilege, and ways for promoting justice both on and off campus. Chapter 2 presented an overview of peer-reviewed literature. College student leadership development literature included aspects of collaboration, activism, and social change. Social justice literature included the value of dialogue and reflection. In a higher education context, the climate of a college/university campus, diversity, civic engagement, service-learning, socioemotional health, and trauma were discussed in the literature.

The research findings confirmed the importance of identity as 100% of research participants were students of color, 31% identified as low-income students, and 50% identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ). Black was the most represented theme across all data collection instruments and was defined as a meaningful identity as 56% of all research participants were Black. According to the research findings, intersecting identities and marginality led to unique lived experiences and perceptions of social justice, changes in behavior and/or in perception as marginalized college student leaders, and reflection on the meanings and

values of experiences and perceptions with social justice. The emergence of other themes across data collection instruments added to the body of knowledge on social justice and college student leadership development. Advocacy, community, learning, and organizing were themes identified during data analysis and present in college student development and social justice literature. Mentorship was not discussed heavily in the literature but was represented as a theme and pattern in a prevalent way. Racial, political, and violent tensions discussed in the background of the study and found in the literature were present in the research findings as participants shared some negative personal social justice experiences, motivating student leadership involvement, and changing leadership behavior and leadership perspectives.

All 16 research participants had the opportunity to reflect on a definition of *social justice*, the aspect of inclusion, and the experiences with being involved in advocacy or leadership work to promote justice, influencing stakeholders, and changing social structures. The research findings confirmed both aspects of college student development and social justice leadership as being connected. All participants were able to define *social justice* and describe how social justice influenced leadership development. These definitions and descriptions were connected to identity, marginality, intersectionality, and self-reflection. Civic engagement and service-learning as aspects of leadership development were confirmed in the research findings because of the themes of advocacy, community, learning, mentoring, and organizing. These themes were either types of social justice work, aspects of social justice, or causes and effects of leadership development for marginalized college student leaders. Social justice leadership and/or advocacy work influenced the leadership development of marginalized college student leaders. Examples of student or youth activism on and off campus were shared across data collection instruments as reasons for developing as leaders and furthermore as changes in a person's thinking, beliefs,

behavior, and perceptions.

Environments and contexts matter. For marginalized college student leaders who were Black, Latinx, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ), disabled, women, and/or mixed race/biracial, living in America and on college/university campuses influences one's identity development, social justice work, and navigating socioemotional health and trauma. Participant 16 shared,

> In my experience, it almost seems like it's hard to walk through college without feeling like you have to lead so you can have a space where you can just be a student. A lot of times that leads students to pursue activism not because they want to but because they want to survive this space and for others to survive the space as well.

The influence of social justice experiences on college student leadership development was inevitable, unique, meaningful, and valuable for marginalized college student leaders.

Research Question 1

Experiences with social justice were described and defined in the context of identities for the research participants. Participant 13 shared,

> These identities are incredibly important to me and they inform how I interact as a leader and the activities I have chosen to pursue. My identities have influenced how I reach out and build relationships with other people. I do a lot of self-reflection and I have a lot of perseverance that stems from my background. I experience racial bias incidents on my campus as a Black woman first and a college student after.

For marginalized college student leaders, intersecting identities of race, gender identity, and sexual orientation were connected to social justice experiences and leadership development because, due to identity development, specific social justice experiences were perceived a certain

way, and context informed both experiences and perceived impact. Academic experiences with

social justice made sense because the research participants were college students or recent

college graduates, and majoring or minoring in specific academic areas of concentration was

typical in the higher education context. Student involvement/leadership experiences with social

justice made sense because participants identified as current or former college student leaders

with on- or off-campus social justice experiences. Regardless of the type of social justice

experience shared in the context of leadership development with a marginalized identity, social

justice experiences were inferred to be a cause of leadership development.

Research Question 2

For college student leaders with marginalized identities, social justice helped to change

social structures, influence stakeholder groups, and promote justice and equity in educational

settings. Participant 15 reflected on social justice work to promote equity:

It's not only about equity it's about life at this point. We are trying to make sure we don't

get killed. I am involved in grassroots efforts to better the lives of POC [people of color],

like financial redistribution through social media efforts, disseminating information about

housing/food/monetary opportunities for low socioeconomic people in my community. I

revamped campus events to include all unheard and marginalized voices on campus.

All research participants had the opportunity to reflect on beneficiaries of leadership efforts and

the change in personal leadership style. Several changes in behavior and perception were

identified during data analysis because involved student leaders worked on behalf of larger

communities or campaigns, movements, and projects bigger than themselves.

The themes of learning and community emerged because student leaders were learning in

communities inside and outside the classroom and working in communities holding positions of

leadership doing social justice work. Whether participants described efforts as volunteering, mentoring, giving back, service work, organizing, protesting, or activism, the social justice work was not done solely as individuals but as part of larger groups, teams, networks, and systems. The shared social justice experiences were considered experiential learning opportunities for marginalized college student leaders because knowledge and learning were expanded, affecting leadership behaviors and perceptions.

Research Question 3

All research participants were afforded opportunities to reflect on unique lived experiences and perceptions with social justice. Phenomenological studies are designed to understand a person's experiences and the meaning associated with experiencing certain phenomena. The combined phenomena of social justice and leadership development were the objects of focus for participants to describe, define, and reflect on the perceived impact of experiences. The advocacy, mentorship, and organizing work carried out by research participants with intersecting identities as members of several communities on and off campus led to meaningful and valuable experiences with social justice. For involved college students, reflecting on the reason for social justice leadership and advocacy were appreciated and rare because, for several participants, social justice work meant working for people like themselves. The work took emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical tolls, but the risks were worth the rewards. Participant 14 shared, "I care most about leaving a place better than it was when I found it and that has been one of my biggest goals with each task/role I have taken on." The interpretation of value as the result or perceived impact of social justice work was made clear with the research findings.

Phenomenological Conclusions

Among the three data collection instruments, reflection on social justice experiences was a welcome opportunity for research participants to share various anecdotes, meanings, values, perceptions, and insight as college student leaders and as individuals with marginalized identities. The variety of social justice experiences shared, and the voluminous number of meanings or values associated with social justice experiences revealed the level of influence social justice leadership and/or advocacy work had on the leadership development of marginalized college student leaders. Without naming the concept of *healing justice*, research participants described social justice experiences as including efforts to influence through healing and identifying policies or practices harmful to marginalized communities. Ginwright (2015) described healing justice as a framework with the potential to help maximize the effectiveness of student leaders on college and university campuses where racial and cultural tension exists.

Identifying as Black was described as meaningful and was both a cause and effect of development for college student leaders involved in social justice because of the frequency of grappling with Blackness, identity development, microaggressions, racism, and navigating emotional trauma. Advocating, mentoring, and organizing can happen alone, but research participants shared experiences working with people or as member-representatives of communities of activists, advocates, leaders, mentors, and organizers. The aspect of critical hope, described by Bishundat et al. (2018), was demonstrated by research participants who explained social justice's connection to college student leadership by assessing the campus environment through the lens of justice and equity to work toward creating social change and reflecting on compassion and commitment. The theme of learning connected both social justice and leadership development as a byproduct of experiences for marginalized college student leaders, resulting in changed leadership behaviors and perspectives. Experiences with social justice were influential,

meaningful, and valuable for college student leaders with marginalized backgrounds and identities.

Limitations

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe and understand the lived experiences, context, and perceived impact of how social justice leadership, advocacy, and work influence the leadership development of marginalized college student leaders. The findings from the study are generalizable regarding leadership development, marginalized college student leaders, and social justice. All data were collected directly from the 16 research participants and not from secondhand sources. Participant in phenomenological studies provide data to construct textual and structural descriptions of the phenomenon experienced (J. W. Creswell et al., 2007). Participants shared unique personal experiences and perceptions with social justice, making the data collected and analyzed credible. Discussions, reflections, and sharing about the phenomenon of social justice were dependable because all research participants presented written, document/artifact, and audio/verbal experiences relevant to leadership development and had the option to review the contents of experiences shared to check for accuracy. The credibility, reliability, and validity of the data were increased with research participants having accessible social justice experiences to discuss, reflect on, and share from only a few months before joining the research study.

Research participants identified as either current or former college student leaders with marginalized identities and social justice experiences. Through the open-ended questionnaire, meaningful and valuable social justice experiences as college student leaders with marginalized backgrounds and identities were shared in writing. With document/artifact analysis, participants highlighted a social justice experience influencing leadership development or motivating the

participants to get involved in at least one specific social justice cause or issue. With semistructured interviews, participants reflected on experiences and perceptions of leadership development, marginality, and social justice, providing informative context and perceived impact. The context of the experiences and perceptions was the influence of social justice on leadership development.

The research findings and results can be applied in higher education, leadership development, and social justice settings and with diverse populations, college student populations, and college student leader populations. Reflection through writing, sharing documents/artifacts, and dialogue proved helpful and valuable for understanding the unique lived experiences and perceptions with specific phenomena. The study was implemented remotely, so results are limited because no data were collected in person.

Recommendations for Future Research

Though the focus of the research study was college student leaders with marginalized backgrounds and identities and the phenomenon of social justice was explored, some elements of the study can be expanded for future research. Black women comprised 50% of the research participants, while Black men and Asian or Asian American participants made up only 6%, so future research should focus on specific demographics to expand research literature on social justice experience across race and gender identity in college. Future research on social justice and leadership development should focus solely on the efforts of college students or communities of marginalized individuals on or across a college or university campus. Research should focus on highlighting formal mentoring programs, community programming, and the ecosystem of youth activists and social justice advocates on college or university campuses and discuss the layers of learning because of social justice work and experiences.

At least 17 different and unique social justice causes were shared by research participants as reasons for getting involved on or off campus. Future researchers should explore one specific social justice cause, such as COVID-19 advocacy on college and university campuses or issues of campus civility during times of protest due to racial and system injustice on or off campus, to describe and understand social justice experiences. In the research study, the voices of college student leaders with marginalized backgrounds and identities were highlighted. Myers (2020) described college student development as the processes of change, influence, growth, and maturation during the undergraduate/collegiate experience categorized in the following outcomes: academic, civic, social, and professional. Such outcomes overlapped with the types of social justice experiences shared by research participants. Future research should explore social justice experiences in higher education in the context of leadership development for student affairs administrators and staff as individuals in positions to assist, guide, mentor, and support college students grappling with identity, sense of belonging, and giving back to fellow students.

Recommendations for Practice

Additional qualitative research was needed on social justice leadership to highlight the voices of intersecting identities as college students develop because of social justice experiences for student affairs educators to learn how to intentionally design leadership development programs, curricula, and activities for student growth and support. The six themes identified from the phenomenological study were advocacy, Black, community, learning, mentorship, and organizing. Cocurricular or extracurricular activities and opportunities had benefits for the undergraduate student population, such as increasing sense of belonging, learning about academic and student support resources, gaining leadership skills, and giving back to younger students in need of guidance and support. Activities and opportunities, including social justice

aspects of advocacy, community, learning, mentorship, and organizing, were meaningful for all college students, students of color, and particularly Black students. Due to the level of positive meaning and value attributed to social justice experiences, higher education leaders should review policies, programs, and campus events and insert or embed aspects of social justice on community and local levels for students and connect the purpose to the college mission and vision. Social justice leadership and/or advocacy work was described as inevitable for the research participants because of identifying as marginalized. F. Wang (2018) described social justice leadership as a leadership practice oriented toward social change and vision by focusing on commitments and opportunities equitably and fairly for both dominant and lesser social groups. By weaving more social justice aspects and elements into the higher education experience, more students may be involved in leadership efforts promoting equity and justice for the college/university community besides students in the minority or student leadership roles impacting social change.

Implications for Leadership

The research study was focused on the leadership development of college student leaders with marginalized backgrounds or identities. J. W. Creswell et al. (2007) explained phenomenological studies are used to improve understanding of an experience. The theoretical framework of the research study was a combination of social justice leadership and college student development theories to fulfill the research purpose of participants describing unique lived experiences and perceptions, context, and impact with social justice. The potential impact of the research findings on social justice and leadership development has implications for leadership for college/university students and student leaders, college/university faculty and student affairs/support staff, and social justice workers. Understanding how marginalized college

student leaders and recent college graduates experienced advocacy, Blackness, or reflecting on identity and intersectionality, community, learning, mentorship, and organizing because of social justice experiences can lead to changes in leadership behavior and perspectives as a leader in meaningful and valuable ways.

Both students and faculty are responsible for learning in higher education. Students, faculty, administrators, and social justice leaders/workers are all responsible for advocacy, mentorship, community, and organizing in some form or another. Social justice is not only a leadership model but also an experiential learning opportunity with the power to change the behaviors and perceptions of all involved to promote justice and equity, change social structures, and influence stakeholders. Not all people have to identify with being a leader to get involved with making a difference for marginalized communities or people with less power.

F. Wang (2018) explained social justice leadership theory is applicable when members of marginalized groups proactively work together to achieve social change. Incorporating social justice into educational, mentoring, and service-learning opportunities can be a meaningful method to positively change behaviors and perceptions. Getting involved with social justice on or off campus enhances a person's learning, appreciation of others, mentoring abilities, sense of belonging in a community, and advocacy and organizing skills. Establishing a mentoring program or mentorship relationship within college student clubs and activities would be helpful for new and developing youth activists, advocates, and organizers. Colleges and universities can incorporate social justice and leadership development opportunities into existing or newly created centers, offices, and spaces for students of color to engage in community empowerment, bonding, dialogue, and programming to understand diverse experiences and perceptions of marginalized people. The themes represented in the study can be used in a social justice

curriculum for educating allies and activists alike to benefit from such a meaningful experiential learning opportunity.

Conclusion

Undergraduate students enrolled at colleges and universities are not immune to political, racial, and violent tensions across America. For college student leaders with marginalized backgrounds and identities, social justice leadership and/or advocacy work is a natural and inevitable evolution of identity development and campus involvement. For the research participants, unique lived experiences and perceptions with social justice were academic, personal, and student leadership related, and caused changes in leadership behavior and/or leadership perspectives described as highly meaningful and valuable. The social justice work on or off campus involves reflecting on identity, marginality, and privilege to change social structures for the better, promote justice and equity, and influence stakeholders. Aspects and types of social justice work, such as advocacy, Black, community, learning, mentorship, and organizing, were the most represented themes in the research findings after data analysis was completed. The phenomenological study fulfilled the purpose of describing and understanding the context, experiences, and perceived impact of social justice for college student leaders with marginalized backgrounds and identities.

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Appendix A

Statement of Expected Response

I work as a program director and college success counselor supporting high achieving low-income college students, many of whom are also first-generation college students, students of color, and identify as coming from marginalized backgrounds and underserved communities.

Research Question 1: What experiences do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds have with social justice?

I expect the data to show how given the ways news is spread regarding social justice issues and causes, many college student leaders with marginalized identities or backgrounds will have experienced seeing something traumatic or troubling on the news or via social media and the aftermath of viral incidents impacting what happens at their college/university campus. Experiences with education, higher education, academic bureaucracy, and volunteer/service work in communities.

Research Question 2: How do college student leaders with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds perceive personal leadership development as leaders because of social justice leadership and/or advocacy work?

I expect the data to show the demographic of college students or college student leaders may not have had many opportunities to reflect on the connection between personal leadership development and social justice leadership or advocacy work.

Research Question 3: How valuable and meaningful is social justice leadership and/or advocacy work to the leadership development of college students with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds?

 I expect the data to show leadership work as valuable and meaningful but maybe not at the beginning or prior to the work or even while the work is occurring. The value and meaning may be associated later or down the line during opportunities for reflection or assessment.

Appendix B

Recruitment Email

October 1, 2020

Dear Jane Doe,

      I am writing to let you know about a research opportunity to share with your college student community to participate in a dissertation research study this summer on how experiences and perceptions of social justice work influence the leadership development of college students from marginalized identities and backgrounds. I am a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education. I selected you and/or your organization since you support college students from marginalized backgrounds or with marginalized identities and/or are dedicated to leadership and/or social justice work in some capacity.

      The purpose of the research study is to understand and present how the experiences and perceptions of social justice work influence the leadership development of college student leaders with marginalized identities or backgrounds. As I have mentioned, you have been identified as an individual or representative of an organization who supports college students from marginalized backgrounds or with marginalized identities and/or are dedicated to leadership and/or social justice work in some capacity. Agreement to be contacted for more information does not obligate your college students to participate in this research study. Your college students' participation in the study is voluntary. If your college students do not wish to participate, they may withdraw at any time.

      I may publish the results of this study; however, I will not use the names of the college students or share any information they or you provide. The information of the college students will remain confidential. If you would like additional information about the study, please call ██████████

Thank you again for considering sharing this dissertation research opportunity with your college student community.

Sincerely,

Jordan McFarlane-Beau
████████████████████████

Appendix C

Research Participant Recruitment Flyer

Appendix D

Dissertation Research Participant Interest Form

Google Form Link: https://forms.gle/7QiYSfXzWP8TrYG9A

Instructions: Please complete the short form in its entirety in order to be considered for research participation in the dissertation research study, "Phenomenology of Social Justice on Leadership Development of Marginalized College Students."

1. Email Address
2. First Name
3. Phone Number
   Yes or No Questions:
4. Are you 18 years or older?
5. Do you self-identify as being a member of a marginalized group or community or as someone with a marginalized identity/identities?
   Description: Examples: lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), senior citizens, racial/cultural minorities, immigrants, military combat veterans, persons of below average intelligence, hearing, visually, and physically challenged persons, persons with a serious and persistent mental Illness, persons with cognitive impairments, gamblers and Substance abusers, autism spectrum persons, gifted and talented persons, persons with disfigurements, persons living in poverty, homeless, or felons
6. Are you a college student graduating with a bachelor's degree between 2020 and 2023?
7. Do you consider yourself a current or former college student leader?
   Description: Are you in a position of leadership, influence, authority, management, power as a matriculate undergraduate college student for a student organization/club or college/university department/office/division? Examples: orientation leader, admissions ambassador, team captain, resident assistant, peer mentor, research assistant, tutor, teaching assistant, etc.
8. Are you or were you involved in social justice work on or off campus?
   Description: Social justice work could include student organizing, student activism, leading protests, sit-ins, actively striving to make a difference on or off campus during college, volunteering for campaigns connected to specific causes or issues like ending mass incarceration, immigration reform, voting rights, gun violence, etc.

   Confirmation Message: Thank you for completing the dissertation research participant interest form. The researcher will reach out to you shortly if you meet the eligibility requirements for this dissertation research study. If you do qualify, you will receive an email with the informed consent form from the researcher for you to review, complete, sign, and return to the researcher to officially begin your research participation.

Appendix E

Revised Open-Ended Questionnaire

1. Which aspects of your identity/identities and background are perceived as important to you? Has your identity/identities and background influenced your learning, growth, and development as a leader thus far?
2. Have you engaged in meaningful extracurricular activities and/or leadership experiences while in college? If yes, what makes the activities or experiences meaningful?
3. Researchers Torres-Harding et al. (2015). Described social justice as the process of working toward equity in society and engaging societal members, especially individuals from subordinate social groups, as co-participants in decision-making processes around societal issues. If anything, what is missing from this definition? Are you involved in social justice work and if so, how?
4. Have you developed as a college student leader through your involvement with or perception of social justice? If yes, share an experience describing your development.
5. Do you believe there is a relationship between social justice and leadership development? What is the essence of your leadership involvement as a college student?

Appendix F

Document or Artifact Analysis Submission Instructions

Instructions: For the second stage of the research study, participants should submit a document or artifact via email to ███████████████████ after completing the open-ended questionnaire. The document or artifact should highlight a social justice experience which influenced your development as a college student leader or motivated the participant to get involved in at least one specific social justice cause or issue. Documents can be journal entries, poems, articles, blog posts, speeches, etc. Artifacts can be screenshots of tweets, posts on social media, videos from YouTube, or pictures from social justice activities.

1. Include your first name in the email
2. Give the document/artifact a title
3. Attach/upload the document, image, video clip, or media file to the email
4. Briefly explain the connection to social justice and if it is any way connected to your development and/or social justice involvement.

Appendix G

Revised Semistructured Interview Questions

1. How would you define social justice?
2. What are some noteworthy social justice experiences that have occurred during your time in college? What makes them noteworthy?
3. Has social justice influenced your development as a college student leader?
4. Do you believe that your identity/identities (i.e., race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc.) influenced or impacted how you perceive social justice work and why?
5. Can you share an experience of when a social justice issue or cause resonated with you enough to become involved as a leader?
6. What experiences or activities motivate you to engage in social justice work?
7. What do your experiences with social justice work mean to you?
8. Without including the real or actual names of individuals, who are some of the people who benefit from your contributions as a college student leader and why?
9. Can you share an experience of when you recognized a change in your leadership style or development because of social justice causes or issues?
10. Based on social justice experiences and perceptions, what do you hope to accomplish in your leadership work on or off campus?

Appendix H

Subject Matter Expert Validation From May 2020

General Comments:

SME #2: I'm not clear on the separation of the semi-formal interview and the open-ended questionnaire. Overall the semi-formal interview questions are much stronger. Will all respondents get both parts? Will only a subset have the interview? I would really think through the value of each method and what you want to know from everyone, and what questions you'd like to be able to follow-up on and go deeper with respondents about and put those in the interview. If people are going to be filling out the questionnaire on their own, you need to provide them with working definitions for your key concepts (social justice and leadership) so that they can more thoroughly answer your questions (or you can have a better sense of to what they are responding)
I might also think about the order of the questions in the interview. I could see starting with a general discussion on leadership, whether or not they see themselves as a leader (why or why not) if they see themselves as campus leaders, etc. I would have them talk through their leadership positions and how they decide what types of activities to pursue. Then I would move into social justice. Starting with what is social justice, if they do social justice work on campus, what motivates them to do that work, how their identities matter for the work they do, how doing the social justice leadership work has grown them as a leader, etc.
I would also consider inviting respondents to compare and contrast the meaning/value for "social justice leadership" vs. other types of leadership. For example, a student might be president of the Accountants club, be treasurer of the glee club, and organize a black lives matter protest. Each is leadership, each could be very meaningful to them and to their leadership development. But I think what you're getting at is are they growing in specific ways based on social justice leadership in particular. So asking questions about their motivation, meaning, desired outcomes etc. for all of their leadership positions will help you get the data you need to answer your research questions.

SME #5: It's tough for me to respond to each question individually, but I have some general reactions. I notice that you are starting many of your questions with an introduction like "As a college student leader" -- why is that? Personally I think it might detract from the question - and overdetermined the responses, but maybe there is a specific reason you want to prime them with that response.

The other thing is just generally to tie the questionnaire more tightly to the research questions. I would think that there are existing survey questions that are used to learn about leaders -- student leaders -- leadership. I would ask your participants those, and then also ask them your own questions about social justice. I would be so interested if students with social justice experience showed specific trends in how they responded to questions about leadership. Right? I feel like that's what your research questions are getting at.

I think you can ask some questions that are pretty direct -- how do you think that engaging with

social justice work has impacted your idea of leadership. Your development as a leader, etc.

But then I think you might need to ask more questions that kind of separate leadership and social justice -- you'd be able to learn more about various trends and threads of social justice work and how it impacts leadership development if you ask about them separately. I put some of these below but

How often do they engage with social justice issues (likert)? How often do they do engage with social justice work (likert)? Where / in what contexts have they engaged with with social justice issues / work prior to college? Where / in what contexts have they engaged with it in college?

And then I would really see if there are leadership survey questions from existing instruments and surveys out there already!

Finally -- I'm not sure of the difference between the written questionnaire and the interview. I think the interviews could happen first and then inform the questionnaire -- or vice versa. I think writing them at the same time -- and then I see very similar questions on both of them -- confuses me. I don't understand the rationale for using these two methods when they come across as so similar to me.

Keep in mind, I am not a social scientist -- so take all of this with a grain of salt.

Open-Ended Questionnaire SME Feedback

OEQ Question One: How has your identity/identities and background meaningfully influenced your learning, growth, and development in college thus far?

- **SME #1**: Is using the word meaningful leading? I think you might get the same information if you remove it.
- **SME #2**:
  - This question is very broad and can be taken in many directions in that they are talking about many components of their identity at once and are also thinking through many elements of their college experience.
  - If you are concerned with a specific aspect or aspects of social identities, I would ask this question separately for each one. (e.g. how has your first gen college student identity impacted X; how has your race/ethnicity...) OR, you could first ask the interviewees which aspects of their identity and background have been important to them while they are in college, then ask how that identity has mattered for their development in college thus far.
- **SME #3**: How has your identity/identities and background influenced your learning, growth, and development during college experience thus far?
- **SME #4**: When I ask questions such as these I prefer to start with asking the question first without going into "how has it…" because that is implying that it already has. So instead it would say, Has your identitiy... And then, if so, in what ways, if not, why do you believe that is?

- **SME #5**:
  - o I feel like you had frameworks that you were working with and I feel like I wish I could detect them in your questions. I also feel like you have questions above and I wish I could better detect how they map onto these questions.
  - o You want to understand what experiences students have with social justice -- I think how they define it is good. How often do they engage with social justice issues (likert)? How often do they do engage with social justice work (likert)? Where / in what contexts have they engaged with with social justice issues / work prior to college? Where / in what contexts have they engaged with it in college? -- these are ways of understanding how students connect with the idea of social justice and how meaningful it is to them.

OEQ Question Two: As a college student leader, what are the most meaningful extracurricular activities on or off campus you have experienced on or off campus and why?

- **SME #1**:
  - o Are you only interviewing students who consider themselves to be leaders? The way this question is framed makes it seem like it's a prerequisite for them to be a student leader.
  - o What activities have you been involved with since starting college? Which activities have been the most meaningful? Why?
- **SME #2**: Good question
- **SME #3**:
  - o Take out "college" for college student leader. Take out one of the "on or off campus" as it is redundant.
  - o As a leader, what are the most meaningful extracurricular activities both on or off campus you have experienced and why?
- **SME #4**: Same here? Have you engaged in meaningful...? If so, what has made them so? What aspects of the activities are most significant in shaping your opinion?
- **SME #5**: So then I'm curious about existing questions that people use to assess leadership -- student leadership -- it seems like looking for the correlation between existing measures of student leadership and social justice experience would be helpful...

OEQ Question Three: As a college student leader, what are your meaningful experiences with social justice leadership, social justice advocacy work, and/or student activism?

- **SME #1**:
- **SME #2**:
  - o I think you would need to define social justice or come to a common definition with your respondents.
  - o If you have a theory of what social justice is, then I would give them the definition ("Some people have defined social justice as X..) and then ask them if they have any experience doing that kind of work. You could also first ask them to respond to that definition you've provided and see if they agree with it, think it's missing anything, etc.
  - o OR if you are interested in their perceptions of social justice work, you could ask

them something like "what do you think of when I say the term "social justice" or "how would you define social justice work?" and then based on their definitions ask them about their involvement in the work

- **SME #3**: As a student leader with a focus on social justice, would you say that your experiences within leadership, advocacy work, and/or student activism has been meaningful.. Why or why not?
- **SME #4**: Same
- **SME #5**: I'm certainly curious about this question, but I feel like it comes later -- what could you learn from this? It's like you might learn about whether there are trends in how student they characterize their social justice work.

OEQ Question Four: Given your involvement in student activities and campus life on your college campus, in what ways do you or did you seek to develop as a college student leader?

- **SME #1**:
  - Some of the language seems redundant, and I think the actual question gets lost
  - How (or just start with have) have you developed as a student leader through your involvement on/off campus?
- **SME #2**:
- **SME #3**: In what ways have you sought to develop yourself as a leader on-campus with regards to your involvement in extracurricular activities on outside of the classroom setting.
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**:

OEQ Question Five: As a college student, is there a relationship between social justice and leadership development and why?

- **SME #1**: As a college student, have you experienced a relationship between social justice and leadership development? If so, how?
- **SME #2**:
  - I'm not sure how their college student-ness matters for this question and if you need to prime them to respond "as a college student". It might also be a difficult question for them to answer if this isn't something they're regularly thinking about. This question is something you as the analyst are trying to pull out as far as your research, but I'm not sure if you need to ask it to your respondents directly. You could still get to these ideas from the other data you are collecting.
  - Potential rewrite: Do you see a relationship between social justice and leadership development? Can you tell me about that relationship?
  - I think it's ok to still ask this question...but it does seem more like a research question than an interview question
- **SME #3**: As a leader, would you say that there is a relationship between social justice work and leadership development
- **SME #4**: Do you believe that there is a relationship...
- **SME #5**: Why as a college student? Do you need to remind them who they are answering as?

Semistructured Interview Questions SME Feedback

Interview Question One: As a college student leader, how would you define social justice?

- **SME #1**:
- **SME #2**: Glad this is here, it's important.
- **SME #3**: As a leader, how would you define social justice?
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**:
    - Do you think you need the first part? -- I guess maybe you want to prime them to think about how they define in in the context of their own work and leadership -- not just in general, but I don't know. But maybe the next question gets at that?
    - How would you define social justice?

Interview Question Two: As a college student leader, how would you describe your relationship to social justice leadership and/or social justice work?

- **SME #1**:
- **SME #2**: Not sure you need the "As a college student leader" preface on any of these questions
- **SME #3:**
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5:**
    - I'm not sure what answers to this might look like?
    - How would you describe your relationship to social justice work?

Interview Question Three: Based on your experiences in and outside of college, if at all, how has social justice influenced or impacted your development as a college student leader?

- **SME #1**:
- **SME #2**: In addition to the definition of social justice, I think you need some common understanding of what each other mean when you say leadership development/leader. Are you referring to just formal leadership positions in student orgs? Activism? Political leadership? Role modeling behaviors? I think it would be important to establish clarity around what you mean when you say "college student leader" (this is more global feedback in addition to being about this specific question)
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**:
    - It seems like you don't need the first part -- since you are interested in college and outside. How has social justice impacted your development as a leader?
    - How has social justice influenced your development as a college student leader?

Interview Question Four: How has your identity/identities (i.e. race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc.) influenced or impacted how you perceive social justice leadership and/or social justice work and why?

- **SME #1**:
- **SME #2**:
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**: Do you believe that...
- **SME #5**: Do you need this?

Interview Question Five: Can you share an example of when a social justice issue resonated with you or influenced you to act as a leader and why?

- **SME #1**:
- **SME #2**: I like this one
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**: But what about other things that might motivate them to act as a leader? Are you just looking for whether they can or not?

Interview Question Six: As a college student leader, what are the motivational factors influencing you to engage in social justice activities or work on or off campus?

- **SME #1**: I think this is the main question. What motivates you to engage in social justice work? I think this is similar to some of the other questions but more direct. This gets at how their identity has shaped what they choose to get involved in.
- **SME #2**:
  - o Good
  - o Potential rewrite: What motivates you to engage in social justice activities or work on or off campus? What compels you to do this work?
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**: What motivates them? I'm not sure that this is relevant to your question?
-

Interview Question Seven: As a college student leader what value or meaning have you experienced through social justice leadership and/or social justice work on or off campus?

- **SME #1**: What have you learned from your experience as a social justice leader? I think this may be a bit too vague, but I think there is something confusing about the original question.
- **SME #2**: Potential rewrite: What does the social justice work you've engaged in mean to you?
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**:

Interview Question Eight: Without including the real or actual names of individuals, who are some of the people who benefit from your contributions as a college student leader and why?

- **SME #1**:
- **SME #2**:
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**:

Interview Question Nine: Can you share an example of when you or others recognized your leadership developed or evolved as a college student leader thus far?

- **SME #1**: There's a grammatical issue here, but can't totally figure out what you're trying to ask.
- **SME #2**: Good
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**:

Interview Question Ten: What are some goals you hope to accomplish as a direct result of your leadership work as a college student and are the goals social justice-related?

- **SME #1**: Why do you engage in activities on/off campus? What do you hope to accomplish or how do you hope to effect change?
- **SME #2**:
- **SME #3**:
- **SME #4**:
- **SME #5**:

Appendix I

Participant Resource Guide

Purpose: Please utilize this participant resource guide in the event, you are triggered, unusually sensitive, anxious, upset, uncomfortable, or become emotional as a result of your participation in this research study. Your mental, physical, spiritual health and wellness and wellbeing are a priority for the researcher. As a reminder, participation in this research study is completely voluntary and you may end your participation at any point with no questions asked. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to the researcher.

Resources:

"Mental Health in College: Campus Resources for Students" https://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/mental-health-in-college-campus-resources-for-students
"Self-Help Tools" https://mhanational.org/self-help-tools
"31 Ways to Work on Your Wellness" https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/Poster%20-%2031%20Ways%20to%20Work%20on%20Your%20Wellness.pdf
"31 Tips To Boost Your Mental Health" https://mhanational.org/31-tips-boost-your-mental-health
"Mobile Crisis Unit Services in the United States" https://www.beam.community/mobilecrisis
"Tool kits & Resources" https://www.beam.community/tool-kits-education
"Therapy is Light" Instagram page https://www.instagram.com/therapyislight/
"Mental Health" https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/
"RESOURCE CENTER" https://gaycenter.org/resources/
"College Student Mental Health" https://www.pinterest.com/Nike799/college-student-mental-health/
"Native And Indigenous Communities And Mental Health"
https://www.mhanational.org/issues/native-and-indigenous-communities-and-mental-health
"Music, Mindfulness & Mental Health"
https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/music-mindfulness-mental-health/id1331758735

Tips from Researcher:
- Close your eyes and count to ten
- Drink some water
- Do some light breathing exercises
  - https://www.healthline.com/health/breathing-exercise#equal-breathing
- If you are in therapy, speak with your therapist/counselor
- Get some fresh air
- Get up, walk around, and stretch
- Practice some meditation or mindfulness techniques
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pLUleLdwY4
- Practice yoga
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI-BbATfLXo
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7AYKMP6rOE
- Do something artistic like coloring, painting, sketching, or drawing

- ○ https://www.crayola.com/free-coloring-pages/adult-coloring-pages/
- Play with a pet
- Listen to relaxing music on your playlist
- Watch a funny movie or TV show to shift your mood
- Talk to a best friend or family member who you know can cheer you up
- Exercise
- Eat a healthy meal or snack
- Listen to your favorite podcast
- Read some inspirational/motivational quotes
  - ○ https://www.brainyquote.com/topics/spotify-quotes
- Utilize your free college/university student counseling or wellness services

Appendix J

Informed Consent

Prospective Research Participant: Read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Project Information

Project Title: Phenomenology of Social Justice on Leadership Development of Marginalized College Students

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Organization: American College of Education
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Introduction
I am Jordan McFarlane-Beau, and I am a doctoral candidate student at American College of Education. I am doing research under the guidance and supervision of my Chair, Dr. Scott Bailey. I will give you some information about the research project and invite you to be part of this research. Before you decide for yourself, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them then.

Purpose of the Research
You are being asked to participate in a research study which will assist with understanding the experiences and essence of the human experience for perceived influence of social justice on the leadership development of college student leaders with marginalized identities and backgrounds. This qualitative study will examine how the experiences with social justice are perceived to influence leadership development by highlighting the voices of college students who self-identify as having marginalized identities and backgrounds in positions of leadership while in college. Through the investigation of researcher will learn more about the unique lived social justice experiences of college student leaders.

Research Design and Procedures
The study will use a phenomenology methodology and qualitative research design. The study will comprise of at least 15 student participants, purposely selected, who will complete an open-ended questionnaire on SurveyMonkey presenting participants the opportunity to share experiences in writing in their own words. After the questionnaire, participants will be asked to

email the researcher a document or artifact highlighting a social justice experience which influenced their development of college students or motivated them to get involved in a social justice cause or issue. Finally, participants will be scheduled to complete a recorded hour long semistructured interview via Zoom to have the opportunity to share their experiences verbally.

Participant selection
You are being invited to take part in this research because you are age 18 or older, are a current matriculated college student graduating with a bachelor's degree between 2020 and 2023, self-identify as a member of a marginalized group or community, are a college student leader on your college/university campus, and have experiences with social justice work on or off campus which meets the criteria for this study. Your true and real identity will be kept confidential. Your legal name will never be disclosed in the study.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you give consent, it is still your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate, there will be no punitive repercussions and your will not have to participate in the research study. If you provide your consent for you to participate in this study, you may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures
We are inviting you to participate in this research study. If you agree, you will be asked to complete an online open-ended questionnaire to share your unique experiences in writing, to email a document or artifact sharing an example of a social justice cause or issue that resonated with you influencing your own social justice work/involvement and development as a college student leader, and finally to participate in a recorded semistructured interview to share your unique experiences with the researcher verbally. The type of questions asked will range from a demographical perspective to direct inquiries about your unique perceptions and experiences and the topic of social justice, identity and background, college student leadership development. Participants will receive copies of their responses from both the questionnaire and the interview after the recording has been transcribed.

Duration
The online open-ended questionnaire portion of the research study will require approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The recorded semistructured interview will last up to 60 minutes/1 hour and will be on Zoom. The data collection period will be between early October 2020 and November 1, 2020.

Benefits
The potential benefits of this study will aid the research with understanding the experiences and perceptions about social justice on the leadership development of college student leaders with marginalized identities and backgrounds.

Confidentiality
I will not share information about you or anything you say to anyone outside of the researcher. During the defense of the doctoral dissertation, data collected will be presented to the two-

member dissertation committee. The data collected will be kept on a secure external hard drive kept in a secure lock box only accessible to the researcher. Any information about you will be coded and will not have a direct correlation, which directly identifies you as the participant. Only I will know what your number is, and I will secure your information.

Sharing the Results
At the end of the research study, the results will be available for each participant. It is anticipated to publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
Participation is voluntary. If at any time, you wish to end your participation in the research study, you may do so without repercussions or questions from the researcher.

Questions About the Study
If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me at ███████████████████████ or ███████████. This research plan has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of American College of Education. This is a committee whose role is to make sure research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to ask questions of this group, email ████████████.

Certificate of Consent
I have read the information about this study, or it has been read to me. I acknowledge why I have been asked to be a participant in the research study. I have been provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I certify I am at least 18 years of age. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print or Type Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Print or type name of lead researcher: _____

Signature of lead researcher: _____

I have accurately read or witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm the individual

has freely given consent.

Print or type name of lead researcher: _____

Signature of lead researcher: _____

Date: _____

Signature of faculty member: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.