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The Cycle of Socialization and Liberation: A Framework for Personal Growth and Collective Change Each of us is a flowing individual, and if you resist it, you will feel overwhelmed. You are like someone trying to grab water in their hands the harder you squeeze it, the faster it slips through your fingers. This concept, as outlined by Alan Watts, highlights the importance of embracing our natural state and finding balance within ourselves. In our daily lives, we are constantly reminded of this flow when we're encouraged to optimize efficiency and productivity. However, Watts is talking about a different kind of resistance, one that makes it challenging for us to engage in this struggle with sustained energy. The key to our process is knowing when to go with the flow and when to take action. This is where the Cycle of Socialization comes into play. It's a liberation rubric that helps us understand how we're socialized to play certain roles, how we're affected by issues of oppression, and how we contribute to maintaining oppressive systems. The Cycle consists of four stages: birth, socialization, liberation, and transformation. The first stage represents the situation into which we were born, where we have no control and are shaped by our environment. The second stage is where we begin to receive messages about who we should be, what roles we should play, and how we should behave. This process starts immediately, from being given a pink or blue blanket as a child to the rules and norms that shape our views and beliefs. As we progress through this cycle, we're faced with institutions that reinforce these ideas and behaviors, making it challenging for us to behave differently. We're rewarded for conforming and punished for questioning or rebelling against oppressive societal norms. The third stage represents the devastating result of this self-perpetuated cycle of oppression. The final arrow points to a point where we're forced to make a decision, even if that decision is to do nothing. Ultimately, it's up to us to take control and activate change within ourselves and our communities. Civic Lab, a nonprofit organization, aims to expand civic imagination about what's possible for Chicago's future by recruiting, equipping, and informing new leaders. By understanding the Cycle of Socialization and Liberation, we can begin to break free from oppressive systems and create positive change on a personal level before scaling up to larger communities. It's time to enjoy the ride and play our roles in creating a more just and equitable society. Inequity and the need for community empowerment have never been more pressing. Civic Lab is at the forefront of this movement, striving to create a more just and equitable society. By fostering a sense of community and encouraging youth involvement, Civic Lab aims to develop a new generation of leaders who can drive meaningful change. The organization recognizes that achieving this goal requires a multifaceted approach. To that end, Civic Lab has established the POWER Institute, which provides training and resources for individuals looking to make a positive impact in their communities. By empowering people with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed, Civic Lab hopes to create a more just and equitable society. One of the key strategies for achieving this goal is to challenge the status quo and promote a more collaborative and supportive approach to community development. This involves working with local organizations and stakeholders to build a more robust and inclusive social ecosystem. By fostering a sense of community and encouraging collaboration, Civic Lab aims to create a more just and equitable society. To achieve this vision, Civic Lab is working on several initiatives, including the development of a physical space that can serve as a hub for community activity. The organization is also working to highlight the negative impacts of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and to promote more equitable and sustainable approaches to community development. One of the key projects in this area is the TIF Illumination Project, which aims to shed light on the negative impacts of TIF and to promote more transparent and accountable approaches to community development. By providing education and training on these issues, Civic Lab hopes to empower individuals and communities to take action and create positive change. Ultimately, the goal of Civic Lab's work is to create a more just and equitable society, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. By promoting community empowerment, encouraging youth involvement, and challenging the status quo, Civic Lab aims to make a lasting and positive impact on the world. People often fear that their opinion does not align with those of contemporary society, leading them to become defensive as they feel held responsible for the actions and beliefs of their forefathers or others in their community, rather than themselves. As educators, we have a significant role to play in shaping our young students' perspectives and fostering their ability to succeed. The impact of racism in education can be devastating, affecting students of color throughout their educational journey and leaving lasting scars on their psyche. By acknowledging this reality and striving for equity, we can empower the most marginalized populations within our communities. As an African American woman, I have faced challenges related to race, power, and equity in my own career and professional goals. There have been moments when I've felt empowered, while others have left me feeling disadvantaged. Navigating adversity has given me strength and a sense of personal power. The concept of Liberation Consciousness, as described by Bobbi Harro's work "The Cycle of Liberation," resonates deeply with me. This concept suggests that humans can live in oppressive systems with awareness and intentionality, rather than simply conforming to societal norms. It also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a critical perspective on the dynamics of oppression without giving up hope or despair. By adopting this mindset, individuals can work towards changing the system of oppression from within. My own understanding of socialization has evolved significantly through my introduction to this concept. I now recognize the cyclical nature of systems, where beliefs lead to policies and practices that reinforce existing power structures. This realization has given me a deeper understanding of how racism is perpetuated and can be addressed. The ERI development model I've developed highlights the interplay between socialization, racial identity, and internalized oppression. By acknowledging these complexities, we can work towards breaking down cycles of oppression and creating a more equitable society. We learn about lives through experiences, teaching us how to count, use commas correctly, and treat others nicely. We also receive special light peach-colored crayons during art class when drawing self-portraits. While observing adults around us, we notice that men often have short hair and sit with their legs apart, whereas women frequently wear long hair and cross their legs while sitting down. Noticing the scarcity of female mentors of color in our lives on one hand is a common phenomenon. The term "bromance" is also widely used. Socialization and Liberation: A Cycle of Empowerment through Education and Collective Action The lessons learned from Harros (2000) theory of socialization can inform future scholarship and practice, leading to a continuous cycle of empowerment. As individuals navigate the cycles of socialization and liberation, they must confront and disrupt oppressive systems to create positive change. ## ARTICLE Dominance are interwoven through socialization. Additionally, Coalescing teaches us how to consciously disrupt these socializations. To educate and motivate the RA staff to make conscious efforts to disrupt their socializations, I presented topics like Identity Matters, Implicit Bias, and Socialization Through Multinational Perspectives for RAs and hall directors. These presentations provided opportunities for staff to engage in discussions about their identities and socialization and learn about the experiences of diverse groups on the staff. This has been very helpful to staff in unpacking their socialization, dominant, and non-dominant identities, as they are now conscious about program planning and how to include people of minoritized identities to engage in conversations and change the stereotypes others have about them. I have also observed their enthusiasm to learn more about diverse groups to break away from their preconceived notions and biases about other identities. Some RAs are now curious about the cultural diversity of their houses. They are open and approach me with questions on how to reach out and build inclusive communities, which we process together and implement in their programs. Implications and Application Harros (2000) theory of Socialization and Liberation proposes that individuals must undergo a process of critical reflection and action to overcome oppression and achieve Liberation (Harro, 2000). Within the housing/residence life context, these theories suggest that hall directors create opportunities for students to reflect critically and be empowered to challenge systemic oppression. These opportunities should be well-facilitated to foster effective liberation through adequate reflection and conscious critical analysis of their socialization, experiences, and unfair systems of oppression. Housing professionals and other practitioners can apply Harros (2000) liberation theory by including critical consciousness activities in their programs and meetings through counternarratives, motivating staff to ask thought-provoking questions, and encouraging students to think critically about social issues and how they relate to their own experiences. This will help staff understand and implement inclusive techniques for transformational change. Hall directors, for example, can establish spaces for students to talk and reflect on issues of power, privilege, and oppression and encourage them to devise approaches for resisting these structures of oppression (Adams et al., 2022). Designing programs and initiatives that reflect critical concepts in each stage would be a great start, similar to how the author leveraged reaching out and coalescing to think about their work within the department and with students and staff. Conclusion While we focus on Harros (2000) theory of Socialization and Liberation, our goal is to highlight the importance of critical reflection and action in challenging systems of oppression. Theory can help us advance critical equity and justice work within student affairs. In current contexts where assaults on diversity, equity, and inclusion on local, state, and national levels are commonplace, now is the time to be ever vigilant about the way theory can inform practice and, in fact, give practitioners and scholars framing to understand the current moment we find ourselves in. Social justice foundations such as Harros theories are but one example. We hope that scholars and practitioners (and scholar-practitioners) can work together in ways similar to how we have to advance the work of equity and justice in student affairs. While there are voluminous pieces of research, scholarship, theories, and framework, consider going back to basics; there is still so much they have to offer. Reflection Questions When considering the basics of social justice education, what other theories and frameworks might practitioners return to when trying to advance social justice and inclusion in their work? What are the implications of embracing the cycle of liberation for promoting inclusion and empowerment within residential hall environments? What are the potential challenges and opportunities associated with incorporating the cycle of socialization and liberation into the curriculum of residence life programs? References Adams, M., Bell, L. A., Goodman, D. J., Shlasko, D., Briggs, R. R., & Pacheco, R. (Eds.). (2022). Teaching for diversity and social justice. Taylor & Francis. Eccles, J.S & Wang, M.T. (2016). What motivates females and males to pursue careers in mathematics and science? International Journal of Behavioral Development, 40, 100106. doi:0.1177/0165025415616201 Harro, B. (2000a). The cycle of liberation. In M. Adams, W. Blumenfield, R. Castaneda, H. Hackman, M. Peters, & X. Zuniga (Eds.), Readings for diversity and social justice. Kumi Samuel, a second-year international student in Iowa State University's master's program in student affairs, is committed to assisting students in succeeding academically and professionally. Previously graduating with a Bachelor of Education from the University of Cape Coast (Ghana) in 2020, Kumi currently works as an assistant hall director in the Department of Residence at Iowa State University as a graduate assistant. He aims to pursue a doctorate program and is particularly interested in studying the experiences of international men of color faculty and staff in higher education. His goal is to contribute to the development of support systems for these individuals, enabling them to thrive in their careers. Terah J. Stewart, PhD, an assistant professor at Iowa State University, focuses his research on marginalized populations, including college students engaged in sex work and fat students on campus. He employs critical disruptive theoretical frameworks to destabilize dominant ways of knowing and being, drawing from Black/undarkened feminist, womanist, and afropessimist perspectives. His scholarly work has been published in various journals, including Action Research, Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, and the Journal of College Student Development. Dr. Stewart is also the co-author of Identity-Based Student Activism: Power and Oppression on College Campuses (2020) and author of Sex Work on Campus (2022), both published by Routledge.

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