A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO COMMUNITY-ENGAGED PRACTITIONER-SCHOLAR
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN A
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSOCIATION'S GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation was a basic, exploratory qualitative study which examined professional identity development of community-engaged practitioner-scholars through participation in a community engagement professional associations' graduate student fellowship – the Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows program. Data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews with 15 PAGE Fellows alumni who self-identified as community-engaged scholar-practitioners and participated in the fellowship between 2008-2017.

Data analysis focused on thematic analysis of interview transcriptions, using an inductive rather than a deductive approach to make meaning from the data, and two rounds of data coding. The first round used an open coding and categorization process, and the second round used a holistic coding process of theming the data focused on identifying big ideas across interviews. From this two-step process six major themes emerged across interviews, which were then divided into two sections. The first section, the people, focused on themes of participant backgrounds and ways of work. The second section, the setting, focused on themes of tension within the academy, new conceptualizations, new relationships, and new practices.

The PAGE alumni who took part in this study were diverse in terms of identities, characteristics, and life experiences. Similarly, the way they named and went about their current work as community-engaged practitioner-scholars also varied. However, their values and motivations were similar and accompanied them on their journeys through graduate education, including the PAGE program, and into their future professional roles.

The PAGE program provided a necessary space for participants to move toward greater alignment of their head, heart, and hands through new conceptualizations, relationships, and

practices. This space of revelation, affirmation, and transformation was critical to not only their ongoing professional identity development as community-engaged practitioner-scholars, but also their ability to persist through graduation in the face of challenging higher education environments.

While socialization is a commonly used lens to understand graduate student professional identity development, communities of practice and counterspaces are other critical lenses which provide even greater understanding of community-engaged graduate students' experiences and identity development. In particular, counterspaces both acknowledge harm and promote healing as part of professional identity development. When rhetoric does not match reality for higher education institutions' commitment to community engagement, community-engaged practitioner-scholars may find counterspaces to the academy are necessary and allow them to reset and reframe, collectively organize, and push back against normative socialization processes of the academy.

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CHAPTER 1: A STARTING PLACE

While many people and experiences influenced my professional career path, the journey toward my dissertation topic started with my involvement with the Graduate Student Network (GradSN) of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) during year one of my doctoral program in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University. The GradSN is an affiliate network of IARSLCE, and its mission is to cultivate a community of emerging scholars in the field of service-learning and community engagement (International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement, n.d.). Through my growing involvement with the GradSN, including my election as Chair in 2017, I began working with a group of fellow graduate students and early career scholars on a collaborative research study focused on the past, current, and incoming GradSN Chairs. Within this research collaborative all past, current, and incoming GradSN Chairs were represented, including myself as the 2017-2018 Chair. Through our research project we sought to better understand our collective motivations for, experiences with, and resulting outcomes of serving in the role of GradSN Chair, specifically with regard to our professional development as practitioner-scholars in the field of community engagement.

Of the findings uncovered by our study, several specific commonalities across our individual stories stood out to me. First, generally we perceived a lack of support for our emerging identities and practices as community-engaged scholar-practitioners, both broadly at our institutions and/or within our specific graduate programs, which led us to seek other means of support. Second, we felt that involvement in IARSLCE and the GradSN provided us with two main benefits: 1) professional development opportunities in the field of community engagement, such as presenting at and organizing the IARSLCE conference or serving as an IARSLCE Board

Member, and 2) strong relationships and a network of peers and mentors, which supported our developing identities as practitioner-scholars with an interest in community engagement (Kniffin, et al., 2021).

These findings led me to wonder about the experiences of graduate students highly involved in other professional associations with a focus on community engagement. How were those graduate students connecting to professional development opportunities and professionals in the field of community engagement? How were these opportunities and connections supporting their emerging identities around community engagement? These questions inspired my current line of inquiry into graduate student education as it relates to community engagement, including my dissertation topic focused on the development of a community-engaged practitioner-scholar identity through participation in professional associations as a graduate student.

To better understand and support individuals who hold identities as community-engaged practitioner-scholars and for whom this identity informs choices that may affect their career advancement, we must better understand how socialization toward community engagement takes place both inside and outside academic institutions. Participation in professional associations may be particularly important to understand in the long-term, as graduate students may continue to participate in these professional associations even after their formal graduate studies end. My research study contributes to extending the conversation about graduate student education to include professional associations, specifically those with a focus on community engagement. The purpose of my study is to explore how a professional identity as a community-engaged practitioner-scholar is fostered through participation in professional communities, such as professional associations, while in graduate school. The primary research question guiding my

study is: How does participation in a graduate fellows program offered by a community engagement professional association contribute to the professional identity development of a community-engaged practitioner-scholar?

Definition of Terms

To further set the context for my study, I define how I am using a few key terms relevant to my topic.

Community Engagement – The Carnegie Elective Community Engagement Classification is a widely used means of recognizing community engagement in the context of higher education institutions. According to the Carnegie Elective Classifications (n.d.b.), community engagement "describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." Further, the "purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good." This is the definition of community engagement I am using in my study, which represents a "big umbrella" approach to defining community engagement as related to higher education. Avoiding being overly narrow in this definition is important, as the type of community-engaged work a student may do before, during, or after graduate school may vary widely.

Community-engaged Practitioner-scholar – Community-engaged practitioner-scholars are those who do the work of community engagement as defined above. I use the phrase "practitioner-scholar" in my study to recognize that often the work of community engagement is both

scholarly and applied work. Those who conduct the work are often both using and producing scholarship, as well as utilizing and testing scholarship in their practice. The phrase "practitioner-scholars" does not denote that someone holds a particular role, such as a faculty member at a higher education institution. A practitioner-scholar may also be someone working outside of higher education (e.g., in a non-profit organization, a government agency, or a for-profit business). Again, I feel it is important for my study to take a "big umbrella" approach to understanding who is doing the work of community engagement, especially as the roles community-engaged practitioner-scholars hold after graduate school may also vary.

Professional Identity – Definitions of professional identity development primarily come from career development scholarship, and they tend to largely focus on how individuals view themselves in relation to their profession (Slay & Smith, 2011). According to Slay and Smith there are three key influences on how individuals view themselves in relation to their profession: socialization processes, career transitions, and internal redefinitions of priorities. My research study focuses on the socialization processes graduate students experience while in professional associations and how those experiences may lead to a professional identity as a community-engaged practitioner-scholar.

Socialization – Socialization refers to the process by which individuals gain the knowledge, abilities, norms, and values of a given profession, and it can be applied to examine graduate education (Weidman, et al., 2001). Socialization can therefore describe the process by which community-engaged practitioner-scholars develop their professional identity while in graduate school. The focus of my study is on how students are socialized toward a community-engaged practitioner-scholar identity through participation in professional communities, such as professional associations, while in graduate school.

Professional Community – Within the Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) graduate student socialization model, there are several spheres in which graduate students experience socialization: within their formal academic programs, within personal communities, and within professional communities. Professional communities can include professional associations, disciplinary associations, and connections to professionals in the field. My research study is concentrated on professional associations focused on community engagement.

Significance of the Research

Because it is important to me that my work is both scholarly and practical, it is important to acknowledge that from a practical standpoint the role of professional communities in developing emerging professionals, such as graduate students, is of interest to a large group of stakeholders – graduate students, faculty and staff, future employers, and professional associations. Graduate students have specific goals regarding what they want to achieve during their time in graduate school and how this will contribute to future professional goals, and they need support and resources to help them achieve these goals. Faculty and staff who advise graduate students and early-career scholars need to be able to direct graduate students to appropriate support and resources for achieving their goals and to support them as they transition to the next stage of their careers. Similarly, employers often look to professional associations in the field for guidelines and opportunities for professional development, including for emerging professionals. Professional associations, especially those reliant on membership dues or fees from trainings, conferences, and other events, want to remain relevant to professionals in the field by offering content that is relevant to their members.

From a scholarly standpoint, it is important to me to ground my study in past and ongoing scholarly conversations and inquiries. However, at the time of my study, little research had been

done on professional identity development of community-engaged practitioner-scholars while in graduate school or the experiences of graduate students within community engagement professional associations. A study focused on understanding student experiences with professional associations during graduate school and the outcomes resulting from those experiences contributes to several bodies of literature, including but not limited to: graduate student socialization toward community engagement, the role of professional associations in socialization toward community engagement, and professional identity development for emerging community-engaged practitioner-scholars. By expanding the body of literature in these areas, I hope my study contributes scholarly ideas, as well as practical ideas, in support of those who study and work in community engagement.

Research Study Outline

In Chapter 1, I introduced core aspects of my study, such as: broad purpose, key definitions used, guiding research questions, and practical and scholarly significance. In Chapter 2, I briefly describe my literature review search process and then outline various bodies of literature relevant to my study. I introduce the field of community engagement and then present the importance of preparing graduate students for community-engaged work. I outline existing community engagement professional development opportunities for graduate students outside of their graduate programs. and then address the concept of graduate student socialization and how that may influence community-engaged practitioner-scholar identity development, including through professional associations. Finally, I describe a graduate student socialization model in detail and its relevance to this study. In Chapter 3, I explain how I designed and conducted my research study. I examine the influence of my epistemological assumptions, as well as the importance of reflexivity, and conclude by outlining the research process from data collection to

data analysis, including delimitations and limitations. In Chapters 4 and 5, I present my findings, divided into two sections I named "the people" and "the setting." In Chapter 6, I discuss the six themes that emerged across those two sections and then lastly, share implications for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 2: JOINING A CONVERSATION

In conducting my review of existing literature related to my research question, I primarily used databases available through the Michigan State University Library, such as ERIC, as well as Google Scholar open searches with no date limitations, since there is little literature on my specific dissertation topic – professional identity development of community-engaged practitioner-scholars through participation in a professional community while in graduate school. My search included a combination of the terms: graduate student/graduate education; community/civic/public engagement; and professional network/community/association.

The Importance of Preparing Graduate Students for Community-Engaged Work

The legacy of community engagement in the United States is a "radical and justice-seeking legacy" informed by "institutions (churches, agricultural extension programs, historically black colleges and universities, labor colleges) and movements (farmer labor, civil rights, civic engagement)" which have sought to "build our collective capacity (on and off campus) to address these dangerous times" (Dolgon, et al., 2017, p. 528). In more recent United States history and especially over the last decade, I would argue that we continue to face dangerous times and challenges to a just and democratic society. Yet, despite increased popular dissatisfaction with governments around the world, ordinary citizens still believe that their actions can influence the government, address pressing social issues such as health care, poverty, and education, and bring about a more just, equitable, and sustainable society (Wike, et al., 2016). This is reflected in U.S. higher education institutions' recognition that the work of the academy has a public purpose and that community engagement is an extension of that purpose. The Carnegie Foundation began awarding college campuses an elective Community Engagement Classification in 2006. As of the two latest application cycles, 2015 and 2020, a total of 359

higher education institutions currently hold the Community Engagement Classification (Carnegie Elective Classifications, n.d.a.). Inclusion of community engagement in mission statements, presidential statements, and strategic planning, as well as the creation of offices and positions devoted specifically to community engagement, are all signs that community engagement is becoming increasingly institutionalized across a wide variety of higher education institution types (Welch, 2016). There are also ongoing efforts to define competencies for community engagement professionals whose practice and scholarly activity focus on community engagement (Dostilio, 2017). Additionally, professional associations like Campus Compact have created credentials that align with these competencies (Campus Compact, n.d.).

Despite this progress on embedding community engagement within the fabric of higher education institutions, the best way to orient and train graduate students to be community-engaged practitioner-scholars is still somewhat new territory for the community engagement field. Many of the "pioneers" of community engagement only became involved in this type of work after graduate school or even after receiving tenure (Post, et al., 2016). Others who did seek to pursue this type of work during their graduate studies found they faced a variety of challenges (Gilven, et al., 2012). This is concerning, as increasing numbers of students entering graduate school have had some sort of experience with community engagement as undergraduate students and seek additional experiences with community engagement as part of their graduate studies and work as early-career professionals (Kniffin, et al., 2016). Further, Hartley and Saltmarsh (2016) argue that there is currently a divide among those who consider themselves community engagement scholars, specifically in how they approach their work. For example, scholars with an activist orientation often claim a subversive relationship to higher education, but scholars with a civic engagement orientation often claim a reformist relationship to higher education.

Additionally, Kohl-Arenas and Magalit Rodriguez (2018) argue that while it is clear that "community-engaged scholars are facilitating dialogue to address rising political divisions on campuses and in communities across the country," the "lines of distinction between 'public,' 'activist,' and 'community-engaged' scholarship are drawn in divisive ways" (n.p.). Additional research is needed to understand these emerging community-engaged practitioner-scholars, as well as why and how they do community-engaged work.

Kohl-Arenas and Magalit Rodriguez also make the argument that the idea of *full participation* (as outlined in Sturm, et al., 2011) can begin to bridge divides in how individuals understand their work while also better orienting community engagement within higher education. Full participation is defined as "an affirmative value focused on creating institutions that enable people, whatever their identity, background, or institutional position, to thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others" (Sturm, et al., 2011, p. 3). Key to this definition is the focus on creating spaces where diverse groups of people can find individual success while also connecting their work to the success of others. Kohl-Arenas and Magalit Rodriguez contend this way of thinking can bridge community engagement orientation divides "by linking questions of student success, diversity, inclusion, and equity with the necessity to support publicly-engaged scholarship" (2018, n.p.).

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life (IA) is an example of a space where these divides are crossed and there is room for a broader spectrum of orientations to the work of community engagement. According to IA's mission statement, this consortium,

> brings together scholars, artists, designers, humanists, and organizers to imagine, study, and enact a more just and liberatory 'America' and world. Working across institutional, disciplinary, and community divides, IA strengthens and promotes public scholarship, cultural organizing, and campus change that inspires collective imagination, knowledge-making, and civic action on pressing public issues. By dreaming and building together in public, IA creates the conditions to shift culture and transform inequitable institutional

and societal structures (Imagining America, n.d.a, n.p.).

Examining graduate student learning and professional development taking place in professional associations like IA may contribute to a more inclusive picture of the type of training needed to foster the professional development of a wide range of emerging community-engaged practitioner-scholars.

Graduate Student Professional Development for Community-Engaged Work

Over a decade ago, O'Meara and Jaeger (2006, p. 4) observed that "limited national attention has been given to preparing and socializing graduate students and thereby new faculty to their public service role." However, within the last ten years, community-engaged graduate education has made progress in areas such as: increased interdisciplinary scholarship opportunities, a growing number of community-based dissertations, and the development of a network of organizations that provide professional development specific to community engagement (Morin, et al., 2016). Several community engagement-oriented professional associations provide professional development opportunities specifically for graduate students. Imagining America (IA) hosts the Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows Program, a year-long fellowship for graduate students that begins with a PAGE summit at the IA annual conference. The Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) hosts the Emerging Engagement Scholars Workshop (EESW), a day-long workshop for graduate students and early career faculty held the day before the ESC annual conference. ESC also hosts the Outreach and Engagement Practitioners Network (OEPN) Workshop, a day-long workshop for practitioners, including graduate students, held the day before the annual conference. Finally, the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) hosts the Graduate Student Network (GradSN), which offers informal opportunities for graduate

students to connect throughout the year, as well as a more formal mentoring program that typically begins during the IARSLCE annual conference.

The potential for these professional associations to provide professional development for graduate students interested in community engagement is especially significant given the results of a recent study by Niehaus and O'Meara (2015). In this study, Niehaus and O'Meara found that participation in professional networks plays an important role in faculty members' lives through the development of social capital and agency in career advancement. They found that participation in off-campus networks (e.g., professional associations) plays an important but potentially delayed role in career advancement. This highlights the importance of involvement in off-campus networks, like professional associations, early in graduate school. It is during this time that graduate students consider the next stage in their careers and strengthen their professional identities with respect to those career goals. However, discussions of the role of participation in professional associations in career advancement have not yet focused on how graduate student experiences may also lead to career advancement, including the development of a professional identity that may influence future choices related to career advancement.

Regardless of orientation to community-engaged scholarship, to better prepare practitioner-scholars to include community engagement in their professional roles we must examine not only how students are prepared as part of their graduate studies, but also how they are prepared through professional communities outside of their graduate institutions. We should look to professional communities, such as professional associations, that seek to engage with a wide spectrum of practitioner-scholars with varying commitments to the work of community engagement. These types of professional communities may be particularly important to understanding how graduate students whose institutions and graduate programs are not

supportive of their emerging community-engaged identities are nonetheless supported and prepared for this work.

Graduate Student Socialization toward a Community-Engaged Practitioner-Scholar Identity

There are a variety of ways to examine professional identity development. Through the concept of socialization, we can begin to understand graduate student professional identity development through participation in a myriad of spaces, including both higher education institutions and professional associations. The higher education community engagement literature indicates that socialization of graduate students toward community-engaged work is an essential component to continued institutionalization of community engagement (O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006; Sandmann, et al., 2008; Stanton, 2008). While there have been recent studies on the advising experiences (Jaeger, et al., 2011) and dissertations (Jaeger, et al., 2014) of community-engaged graduate students, more research is needed to better understand the full range of factors that may play a role in influencing graduate students to pursue community-engaged work after graduation.

If we look at experiences that happen as part of a formal academic program or institutional opportunity, there has been research on the influence of community-engaged coursework in disciplines such as nutritional sciences (Dinour, et al., 2018). Connected to this, other studies have focused on the influence of outreach education opportunities as a substitute for teaching assistantships in the fields of science and engineering (Laursen, et al., 2012). Additionally, there has been some research on emerging graduate certificate programs in community engagement open to students from all disciplines (Doberneck, et al., 2017; Matthews, et al., 2015), as well as institutional interdisciplinary graduate student learning communities

focused on community engagement (Mathis, et al., 2016). However, outside of my own collaborative research (Kniffin, et al., 2021), there have not been any studies on the influence of professional associations as part of graduate student socialization toward community engagement. This study contributes to understanding if and how professional communities, such as professional associations, may factor into graduate student socialization toward community engagement.

Beyond research on graduate students, some progress has been made articulating the means of support and competencies needed for practitioner professional development in community engagement. Harden and Loving (2015) argue that "community of practice theory offers a model for connecting, organizing, and sustaining outreach and engagement staff practitioners and their emerging professional identity," (p. 7). While not named as such, socialization is a key part of the connecting and sustaining aspects of this model. Further, recent research by Dostilio (2017) and a team of research fellows points to a set of essential competencies for community engagement professionals, which they hope help inform a set of "professional development pathways created in response to this project [that] honor multiple forms of integration and balance didactic education with professional socialization, mentorship, experiential learning, and critical self-reflection" (p. 52). Again, socialization emerges as a key part of the pathways imagined in this competency model. My study contributes to illuminating if and how professional associations' socialization opportunities support graduate students' emerging community engagement practices.

Additionally, there is a growing body of literature on faculty development for community engagement in higher education. Progress has been made on articulating motivations for faculty community engagement (Demb & Wade, 2012; Wade & Demb, 2009), the actual practice of

faculty community engagement (Doberneck, et al., 2010), and competencies for faculty community engagement (Blanchard, et al., 2009). For those graduate students who specifically go on to become new faculty members, my study contributes to the growing literature around community-engaged faculty and the "aggregate impact of professional, communal and institutional factors on faculty choices about participation in outreach and engagement" (Demb & Wade, 2012, p. 360), including professional associations as a communal factor influencing if and how new faculty do community-engaged work.

The Graduate Student Socialization Model: A Conceptual Framework

According to the model of graduate student socialization developed by Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001), socialization represents "the processes through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialized knowledge and skills (p. iii)." It also posits this "entry" includes adoption of a professional identity. With this framing of socialization and professional identity development, the model can be applied to understand socialization happening across many different disciplines, as well as interdisciplinary fields like community engagement. It can also be used to understand how the socialization process happens across different dimensions of the graduate student experience, including formal graduate programs, as well as professional and personal communities.

The Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) model (See Figure 1) describes three core elements of socialization: knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement. These core elements are present during formal graduate studies, but they may also be present during participation in professional or personal communities. In knowledge acquisition, students' understanding of their discipline becomes more specific and complex. In investment, they devote

time, energy, and mental capacity to their discipline and studies. In involvement, they internalize their disciplinary role and personal meaning of participation in that discipline.

Figure 1

Graduate Student Socialization Model (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 49)
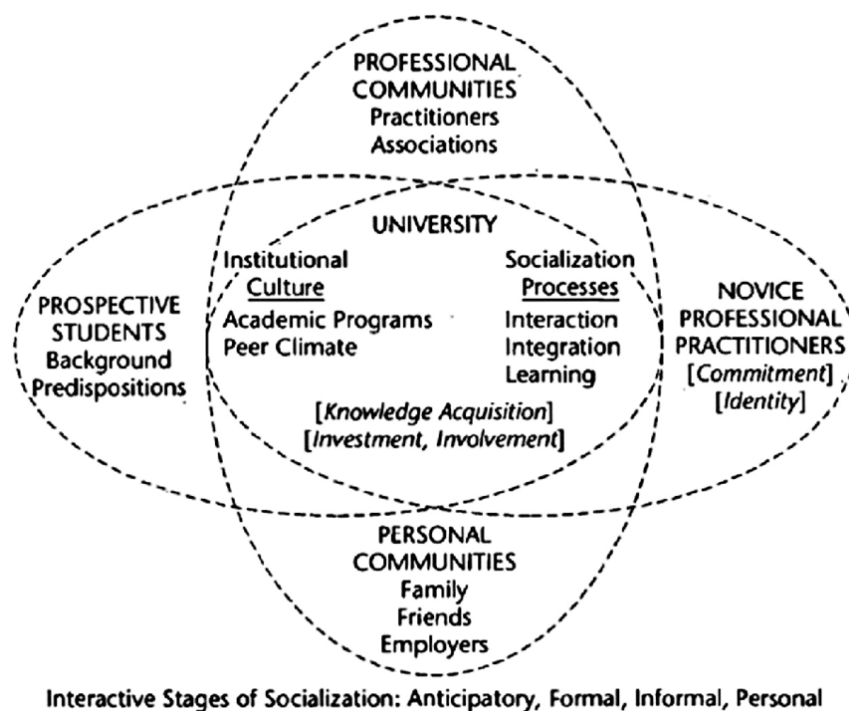
Although the authors describe these elements through a disciplinary lens, I argue that the same ideas of acquisition, investment, and involvement can apply to interdisciplinary fields like community engagement. For example, emerging community-engaged practitioner-scholars must also gain an increasingly more complex understanding of what community engagement encompasses. Additionally, they must devote time, energy, and mental capacity to the community engagement field, perhaps in addition to and intertwining with a disciplinary field, as

part of their graduate program. Finally, they must also eventually internalize community engagement as part of their professional identity, as well as what being a community-engaged practitioner-scholar may mean for their professional career.

The Weidman et al. (2001) elements also occur across four interactive stages (i.e., anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal), but they are most prevalent in the formal and informal stages. Primarily, it seems the authors' application of these stages is to the experiences students have in formal graduate programs, but I would argue that these stages can also apply to the informal learning happening in professional and personal communities. For professional communities, this could mean in professional associations for specific disciplines or interdisciplinary professional associations with a focus on community engagement. For example, in the anticipatory stage, students listen and learn new roles, procedures, and agendas. In the formal stage, they observe other students and practice what they observe in others. In the informal stage, students interact with others, including both students and non-students, and they begin to move from a student role to a professional role. In the personal stage, they have internalized their professional role and adopted values congruent with that role. Similarly to how learning new disciplinary roles, procedures, and agendas happens in formal graduate programs, this same learning may happen for graduate students who choose to take part in informal professional development opportunities within professional associations. During these professional development opportunities students observe and practice new skills and abilities, as well as interact with both students and non-students in ways that continue to support their emerging professional identity. Eventually, they reach a certain point in their professional development journey where they have adopted certain behaviors, as well as the values congruent with their new professional identity.

Critiques of the Graduate Student Socialization Model

Although the Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) model is widely used to understand graduate student socialization and is flexible enough to encompass my research topic, there have been multiple critiques of the model, including that it does not adequately account for aspects of graduate student identity such as race, gender, and class (Ellis, 2001; Nguyen, 2016; Sallee, 2011). In response to these critiques, Twale, Weidman, and Bethea (2016) developed a modified version of the model that accounts for African-American racial identity of graduate students. It expands the model in two main ways: (a) by focusing on individual student development to include the influence of aspects of identity, such as race, and (b) by examining the influence of the aspect of racial identity within graduate programs' sociocultural climates and contexts.

Further, there are critiques that the initial model does not take into account graduate student belief and value systems, such as religious affiliation (Espinoza, 2018). Using the literature on Evangelical Christian students' experiences in secular higher education as a basis, Espinoza developed a modified version of the original socialization model, which he calls reconciliatory socialization. This revised model accounts for the importance of religious beliefs and values that graduate students hold coming into graduate school and how those beliefs and values are likely to merge with emerging professional identities, rather than be subsumed by them.

Usefulness of the Graduate Student Socialization Model to the Study

I use the initial Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) model as a useful conceptual framework and starting point for my study. However, as this research is an exploratory study and inductive (not deductive), it is not explicitly tied to this model in my data collection or analysis. I also acknowledge several critiques of the model as important potential limitations to its

usefulness in studying my topic, particularly around subjects of social identity (e.g., race) and values and beliefs. Further, I am interested in exploring an under-researched area of the model – graduate socialization that happens through professional communities, specifically professional associations as a type of professional community. Graduate socialization happens both inside formal academic programs, as well as through informal learning environments such as those provided by professional associations. These informal learning environments can include professional development and capacity building programs, including those directed toward graduate students. I am particularly interested in exploring professional development programs that exist within professional associations. Similarly to how the model explores what happens across time during a graduate student's participation in a formal graduate program, I am also interested in exploring in what happens across time during a graduate student's participation in an informal learning environment (i.e., a fellowship program) within a professional community (i.e., a professional association). Additionally, rather than taking a disciplinary focus, I am interested in professional associations that focus on interdisciplinary fields like community engagement and the practitioner-scholars working in such fields. Finally, in line with critiques of the socialization model, I plan to pay attention to if and how graduate student personal and social identities, as well as values and beliefs, may be intertwined with professional identity.

CHAPTER 3: MY INQUIRY EXPLAINED

The purpose of my study was to explore how a professional identity as a community-engaged practitioner-scholar is fostered through participation in professional communities, such as professional associations, while in graduate school. I examined this via a specific program, the Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows program. The primary research question guiding my study was: How does participation in a graduate fellows program offered by a community engagement professional association contribute to the professional identity development of a community-engaged practitioner-scholar?

Epistemology

After learning about how various research paradigms (e.g., positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, postmodernism, critical theory, etc.) influence the research questions, the conceptual and/or theoretical framework, and the methodology for any given research study, I am in agreement with scholars such as Abbott (2004) that paradigms function more as "heuristics" or useful conceptual and practical resources to solve a particular research problem. This is in line with the idea of "bricolage" (Levi-Strauss, 1968) in which a "bricoleur" uses the most appropriate tools and materials on hand to complete a project. Applied to research, the idea of bricolage means that rather than rigidly adhering to the norms of a particular paradigm, the researcher maintains flexibility and uses the most appropriate philosophical approaches to the research. One example of this would be subscribing to the philosophic approach of critical realism (Maxwell, 2011), which combines the ontology of realism with the epistemology of constructivism. Realism acknowledges that there is a "real world" out there, and when combined with constructivism, acknowledges that individuals construct meaning from this world through their own experiences. These understandings inform my choice to conduct a qualitative research

study "based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an on-going fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 23)." These understandings also point to the importance of assessing trustworthiness of the research process and data analysis, since they will be inherently value laden. Based on personal worldviews, experiences, and upbringing, it was likely there would be at least some bias in my research and it would be important to minimize that bias as much as possible.

Background and Role of Researcher

Reflexivity is a critical component of any research study that seeks to reduce bias. Going into my research study, I reflected on my own personal worldviews, experience, and upbringing, as well as aspects of my identity. I owe much of who I am to my mother, who as a single mom, was the "head" of our house growing up. Through her, I saw that a woman can embrace multiple aspects of her identity as a person and as a professional and be successful. I saw that despite incredible personal challenges, one can persevere. She instilled her own confidence in me as she encouraged me to pursue my dreams and passions. While I may sometimes feel like an imposter, not smart enough, not well-practiced enough, etc., eventually I reflect back on my mother and think to myself, if she could do what she did, then I can do this. Life will always contain new challenges, and I can learn and grow with each new one. That growth mindset has propelled me on to graduate school and to a successful professional career, as well as shaped my perspective on my personal, educational, and professional journey.

Additionally, I feel it is important to acknowledge my prior professional roles. I am a past Director for Campus Compact for Wisconsin; a past Board Member for the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) and

Chair for the IARSLCE Graduate Student Network (GradSN), a past participant in the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) Emerging Engagement Scholars Workshop (EESW), and a researcher on several collaborative teams with other scholars involved in both IARSLCE and in other community engagement professional associations. Over the last seven years, since the beginning of my graduate studies, I have been deeply involved in the field of community engagement and with several professional associations in this field. In particular, my past involvement with IARSLCE and Campus Compact, as well as with professionals in those associations, influenced my professional development as a practitioner-scholar who is interested in community-engaged work. Finally, during the latter part of my graduate studies, I began working at Imagining America (IA) and continue working there to this day, which continues to give me greater insight into this particular professional association and the IA PAGE Fellows program. These experiences shaped my knowledge of the field of community engagement, influenced my research interests, and left me with a certain perspective on the value and importance of community engagement in higher education.

Finally, I know that beyond this, there are certain personal and social identities I hold, those privileged parts of me, that contribute to my ability to attend graduate school, to connect with other professionals, to be successful in my career, and to generally walk through the world differently than others who do not have these same privileged identities. These include being White, middle-class, mostly able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgender, a US citizen, a native English speaker, and raised Christian in a society where those identities tend to be privileged identities. Additionally, I hold some less privileged identities, in particular as a woman and someone with chronic disease who struggles with their mental health, which influence how I walk through the world. Whether privileged or less privileged, these identities have all influenced my educational

and professional journey as both a graduate student and full-time employee working as a community-engaged practitioner-scholar.

As I interacted with other community-engaged practitioner-scholars over the course of my study, it was important to be aware that not everyone has had the same experiences, upbringing, worldview, and privileges that I have. It was also important to be aware that they are likely to hold different personal and professional identities, including less privileged identities, than I hold. This awareness helped me acknowledge some of my own biases, as well as recognize when others held their own biases. It was vital to carry this with me throughout the data collection and data analysis process, as well as when writing the findings, discussion, and implications areas of this study.

Methods

My research design was a basic qualitative study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All qualitative research essentially focuses on understanding how "individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (p. 24), and in a basic qualitative study, researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. These types of studies are common in applied fields such as education and can include a wide range of data collection tools, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. My study primarily relied on interviews for data collection. When conducting data analysis, the researcher focuses on finding the recurring patterns in the data collected, and interpretation of these data represents the "researcher's understanding of the participants' understanding of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 25). Therefore, I too was a tool in the data collection process, as well as data analysis process, and my reflexivity was integral to how the interviews were conducted and interpreted.

Research Site, Population, and Sample

My study site was the Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows program (See Appendix D for a more detailed description). IA is a professional membership association for higher education institutions focused on public engagement, especially through the methods of the arts, design, and humanities. PAGE is the IA graduate student network and "enhances the praxis and pedagogy of public scholarship; fosters a national, interdisciplinary community of peers and veteran scholars; and creates opportunities for collaborative knowledge production" (Imagining America, n.d.b.). The IA PAGE Fellows program is a year-long cohort model focused on professional capacity-building for participants and offers "a year's worth of mentorship, professional development training, and community support, as well as a travel stipend to attend a Fellows Summit during the National Conference" (Imagining America, n.d.b.). The program is available to students at all stages of their graduate programs and whose institutions are IA member institutions. Students must apply to be PAGE Fellows and must be graduate students during the entire academic year of the fellowship. However, they do not have to be planning a career within higher education, nor do they need to be enrolled in arts, humanities, or design graduate programs.

The IA PAGE Fellows program is unlike the other shorter-term and/or informal community engagement focused professional development programs for graduate students discussed in Chapter 2 (i.e., IARSLCE GradSN or ESC EESW). The PAGE program offers funding support and requires an application, competitive review process, and formal commitment to a year-long cohort program; therefore, it is likely that program participants have a strong interest in and commitment to community engagement and their development as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. This is important to note because I anticipated that

prior commitment to and interest in community engagement as a graduate student would be important to continued interest and commitment as an early-career practitioner-scholar.

Additionally, the current model for the PAGE program, which was initiated in 2008-2009, is a collaborative leadership and peer network model led by a rotating cohort of co-Directors who are PAGE alumni and who are responsible for designing the support and mentoring structures for each successive cohort of PAGE Fellows. Again, the strong interest in and commitment to community engagement, including through mentoring and supporting other graduate students with an interest in this work, is something that I anticipated would be important to continued interest in and commitment to community engagement as an early-career practitioner-scholar.

My study population was all alumni of the PAGE program, which according to documentation I received from IA staff at the beginning of my study included 188 alumni between 2003-2019. Purposive sampling from this population drew together a smaller sample of alumni who met the following criteria: (a) currently self-define as a community-engaged scholar-practitioner; (b) participated in the PAGE program from 2008 onward, which is when the model moved to a collaborative peer network model led by co-Directors; and (c) participated in the program no later than the 2016-2017, as the reflective nature of the study requires the ability to articulate experiences beyond current or very recent participation in the program. This purposive sample totaled 111 alumni.

Participant Recruitment and Interviews

I have a professional relationship with a former PAGE Fellow who also previously served as a co-Director. As we informally discussed my dissertation, based on her past experiences with the PAGE program, she recommended that I reach out to the current co-

Directors as "gatekeepers" to the program in order to access alumni of the program. She also agreed to introduce me to the current co-Directors, some of whom she served with in her past role as a co-Director. Once the study was approved by the Michigan State University (MSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB), in order to begin recruitment I first reached out to the current co-Directors to inform them about my intended study, including providing the invitation letter (See Appendix A), consent form (See Appendix B), and interview protocol (See Appendix C). Then I asked if they were willing to send an invitation email on my behalf to their alumni email list. In their response, they directed me to an IA staff member who had access to the alumni email list and gave me their blessing to send an invitation email myself.

After obtaining the alumni email list from IA staff and based on recommendations from the same colleague who introduced me to current co-Directors, I identified four alumni to potentially participate in pilot interviews. Two alumni responded to email invitations and agreed to participate, so I conducted two pilot interviews. After conducting the pilot interviews and reviewing my interview protocol, I did not choose to make any significant edits to the protocol. I then emailed all 111 alumni from the purposive sample an invitation to participate in my study. My goal was to interview at least 10% of the alumni from my purposive sample. I received 15 responses, and I chose to interview the first 13 alumni respondents. Based on potential over-representation of certain cohort years, the last two alumni respondents were told I would reach out again if additional interviews were needed. I sent the initial 13 respondents a link to a Doodle poll (i.e., online scheduling application) to select an interview time that worked best for them. Once they selected a time, I emailed to confirm the time and provide a consent form and connection information for a Zoom video call. All interviews were conducted via Zoom (i.e., video conferencing software) because participants were based in locations across the U.S. As I

did not make significant changes to my interview protocol and received IRB approval prior to conducting pilot interviews, I ultimately chose to include the two pilot interviews in my data analysis, for a total of 15 alumni interviews, representing 13.5% of the larger purposive sample.

Prior to starting each interview, I briefly reviewed the consent form and obtained verbal consent before starting to record each Zoom video call. This process helped ensure participants' understanding of relevant information regarding the study and their ability to opt out of the research study and from any interview questions at any time. Interviews over Zoom lasted on average 55 minutes. Recordings were saved on a password-protected computer and backed up in secure cloud storage. To protect participant confidentiality, saved recordings were labeled by number only, in the order in which they took place. Recordings were uploaded to and transcribed by Rev, a company that provides secure, encrypted online speech-to-text services. Completed transcripts in Rev were then downloaded and edited as Word documents to correct any transcription errors. Additionally, I lightly edited interviews for readability (i.e., removing ums, ands, etc.), and to mask identifying information as needed. Transcriptions were saved on a password-protected computer and backed up in secure cloud storage. To further protect participant confidentiality, saved transcriptions were also labeled by number only in the same order as interviews. Finally, participants were provided a $20 Visa gift card via email upon completion of their interviews.

Semi-structured interviews with PAGE program alumni were my primary data source to learn more about the professional identity development of community-engaged practitioner-scholars through participation in the PAGE program. Semi-structured interviews allowed for more flexibility and freedom in the interview process, including for follow-up questions and additional issues to be brought up through probes and points of clarification. My interview

protocol (See Appendix C) included sections on participant introductory information, professional work and identity, IA PAGE Fellowship experiences, final comments, and researcher post-interview notes

Coding, Theming, and Memos

Data analysis focused on content analysis of the interview transcriptions from all 15 interviewed alumni. Coding, categorization, and theming of the data was done through a Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) called ATLAS.ti. All data from the coding process were stored securely on a password-protected computer and backed up in secure cloud storage.

I conducted a first coding cycle using an initial coding (i.e., open coding) and categorization process (Saldaña, 2015, pp. 115-119) during which I remained open to any discreet codes and categories that emerged from the data. Immersion in the data during the first coding cycle, specifically the perspectives shared by my participants, informed my decisions for a second coding cycle. Multiple participants questioned or were unable to discreetly separate out their professional identity and work from other aspects of their identity and lives. Therefore, I chose a holistic approach to coding as more appropriate for the second coding cycle, one less focused on breaking apart interviews into discreet codes. As a result, my first coding cycle was followed by a second coding cycle using a process of theming the data (Saldaña, 2015, pp. 198-204) during which I focused on identifying "big ideas" across interviews that brought discreet codes into a more meaningful whole and which led to broader overarching themes. From this two-step analysis process I distilled six major themes that emerged across the 15 interviews, which are outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

To provide additional insight into data analysis, I have included a more detailed example

of my process. During the initial coding and categorization process, "social/personal identities" emerged as one main category. Several sub-categories with discreet codes within those sub-categories emerged as part of this main category. The sub-category "identities important to interviewees" included the following codes: age, beliefs (i.e., religion and culture), first generation college student status, gender, marital/family/parental status, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, upbringing (i.e., place and family), and transformational experiences (i.e., education, world events, and privilege/marginalization). The sub-category "intersection of identities" included codes that were questions for further consideration and memoing: 1) How do different social/personal identities intersect with each other and with professional identity? and 2) Can/should you separate professional from personal identities? After reflecting and memoing on the two questions in this sub-category, I chose to use a more holistic vs. discreet approach in my second round of coding: theming the data. During the process of theming the data, these questions and discreet codes merged into two sentences focused on the "big ideas" of what the data under "social/personal identities" meant in the context of my research question. The first sentence stated, "Personal and social identities, as well as life experiences, are connected to (and in some cases cannot be separated from) the professional identity and work of these PAGE alumni." The second sentence stated, "Personal and social identities, as well as life experiences, inform motivations for why and how PAGE alumni view themselves and their work as community-engaged (and in some cases for how PAGE alumni live their lives outside of a paid job). These sentences were woven into one of the final six overarching themes, "Backgrounds," which is presented in Chapter 4.

Finally, as I conducted data analysis, I also wrote memos to assist with documenting the data analysis process. These memos were key to tracking the choices I made during my study as

part of an audit trail (Saldaña, 2015). Memo types from my study included: (a) reflective memos for all 15 interviews documenting initial thoughts prior to coding; (b) analytic memos documenting decisions I made throughout the coding process; (c) reflexivity memos documenting points during the research process where I was conscious of my own bias; and (d) structural memos documenting my thoughts on how to write about my findings in my dissertation.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Anfara et al. (2002) argue that making the research process more public, including specific decisions made during the research process, is essential for high quality qualitative research, and I aimed to do this in describing my research process in the sections above. It is also important to consider trustworthiness, also known as quality and rigor, of the data and the research process in any research study. Four main areas of concern when it comes to trustworthiness in qualitative research include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Anfara, et al., 2002). Credibility can be assessed through practices such as prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, or time sampling. Transferability can be assessed through practices such as providing thick description or conducting purposive sampling. Dependability can be assessed through practices such as creating an audit trail, using a code-recode strategy, triangulation, or peer review. Finally, confirmability can be assessed through practices such as triangulation and reflexivity.

In seeking to address trustworthiness in my study, I employed multiple strategies throughout the research design and process. I conducted a purposive sampling process. I wrote memos throughout the data analysis process to create an audit trail and also practice reflexivity. I reviewed findings with a peer reviewer to debrief findings along the way. In writing about my

findings, I sought to provide thick description of the data through participant quotes. Finally, as I neared the end of my writing, I shared preliminary findings and the six major themes with study participants for their review and feedback.

Ethical considerations are a part of all research studies, including basic qualitative studies. In my study, it was important to recognize that graduate students are a potentially vulnerable population. As such, I sought prior review and approval from the Michigan State University (MSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure my study complied with all federal, state, and institutional policies and procedures. I did not begin my study, including pilot interviews, until I received approval from the MSU IRB.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations are the characteristics that limit the scope of the study or those things that the researcher identifies as bounding the study. Limitations are the possible weaknesses of the study or those things out of control of the researcher. One delimitation of my research study is that it focused on one professional association (i.e., IA) and a unique capacity-building program for graduate students within that professional association (i.e., IA PAGE Fellows program). There are other professional associations focused on community engagement that offer professional development for graduate students, such as IARSLCE and ESC, but those programs are outside the scope of my study. Another delimitation is that the PAGE program has primarily, although not exclusively, supported on graduate students whose work and/or graduate programs are in the arts, humanities, and design fields, so my sample does not represent the full diversity of graduate programs available. Additionally, as the PAGE program is limited to graduate students who are part of IA member institutions, which are all U.S.-based institutions, my sample is limited to those students studying in U.S.-based graduate education programs.

In terms of limitations, the data I gathered from interviews were representative of memories of past experiences and personal reflections on identity development over time. Memories are not infallible, and personal reflections represent just one point of view on a topic. These memories and reflections were further filtered through my own interpretations. Another researcher reading the same data could potentially come to other conclusions. Finally, as this study focused on particularizing, results are not generalizable to all graduate students or all professional associations. Graduate students with different backgrounds and ways of work or from different graduate programs, disciplines, and professional associations may describe their experiences differently than my participants.

CHAPTER 4: THE PEOPLE

I wonder if there are probably privileges in being able to separate your personal and your professional. Who gets to do that? And who wants to do that? What's the value? What's the risk? What are some unintended consequences of separating them or not? What kind of emotional energy and labor goes into separating them or not? What structures at play in our institutions force us to separate them or not? How do spaces feel when you separate them or not?

The framing for this chapter was inspired by a quote from one study participant – Jane. Toward the end of my interview with Jane, she became deeply reflective and offered up a series of questions which influenced me to consider how I was presenting information about study participants. Jane wondered about the separation of aspects of identity, specifically separating the personal from the professional, and whether this is a privilege experienced only by White individuals. While my study did not seek to examine the questions Jane posed or connections between personal and social identities and professional identity, these connections clearly emerged from the data. As a result, in the following two sections I provide rich descriptions of study participants that more fully illustrate their multiple identities and backgrounds, as well as their professional work and roles.

Backgrounds

In this section, I focus on the backgrounds of study participants – alumni of the Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellowship program. First, I offer a short demographic summary of participant backgrounds. Then, I describe in more depth some of the more complex, intersecting aspects of their backgrounds, which necessitate going beyond demographic summaries.

PAGE Demographics

I gathered demographic data from the PAGE program alumni dataset shared with me by IA staff, as well as interviews I conducted with participants. The data summaries below offer a

glimpse into participants' backgrounds as related to their participation in the PAGE program. Background demographics include the year they participated in the PAGE program, their graduate degree type, program, and discipline at the time they participated in the PAGE program, and the type of professional roles they held at the time they were interviewed.

I interviewed 15 participants from seven different cohort years between 2008-2017, almost a ten-year span (See Table 1). Within the seven cohort years represented, anywhere between one to four participants were represented in a single year. A large number of participants were part of the 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 cohorts, with four participants represented in each of those years, making up a little over half the sample. There was no participants representation from the 2009-2010 or 2010-2011 cohorts in my study.

Table 1

Year of Participation in the PAGE Fellowship

Cohort Year	Number of Participants
2008-2009	1
2011-2012	4
2012-2013	2
2013-2014	4
2014-2015	1
2015-2016	2
2016-2017	1

At the time of their participation in the PAGE program the majority of participants were

doctoral students (11 of 15), representing just over two thirds of my sample. The remaining participants were master's students (four of 15), almost one third of my sample. They came from a variety of disciplinary graduate programs in the arts, education, humanities, and social sciences, as well as interdisciplinary graduate programs like American studies, ethnic studies, and liberal arts.

At the time they were interviewed, all participants were either working directly as educators or in a role supporting education in some way (or both). Professional titles used included artist, curator, director/manager, fellow, founder, professor/instructor, and scholar. A little over half of the participants worked in or adjacent to higher education institutions at the time of the interviews in units such as academic centers or departments, libraries, and museums. The remaining participants were located outside of higher education institutions in associations, entrepreneurial pursuits, and software startups.

Beyond PAGE Demographics

My research study and interview questions focused on participant perceptions and what they identified as important about their backgrounds in order for me to better understand their professional identities and work. As a result, I included short anecdotes from participant interviews that more fully describe the varied and often intersecting aspects of their identities and characteristics that included: first generation college student status, gender identity, nationality/culture, race/ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and parental or relationship status. These identities and characteristics were embedded within participant life experiences, spanning from childhood to adulthood. Participant values and motivations also emerged with more clarity through these anecdotes, as their values and motivations were informed by these identities, characteristics, and life experiences. I grouped the anecdotes into five sub-sections

based on what I perceived to be primary overarching life experience topics across the 15 interviews: place; family; education; world events; and privilege and marginalization.

Place. Place included the physical locations participants found themselves in, especially from a young age. Anecdotes look at the way being from and in these places deeply impacted how participants thought about their identities, especially racial and gender identities, and the ways that these identities informed their values, professional motivations and choices. For example, Martin was conscious of his identity as a White cisgender man growing up in the South and in a place with deep African American history and culture. As he moved around the U.S. as an adult, Martin realized that where people grow up and the history of those places is wide-ranging. He noted that varied places shape people's perceptions of the world and the ways in which people experience privilege or not, and this influences one's professional journey. Martin shared,

> I think growing up in the South, maybe I wasn't conscious of it at first, but eventually being just very aware of race, very aware of poverty. …There was part of me that felt some distance from that, from that sort of cultural place. I've also learned to really appreciate that Southern identity and all the things that I learned from that, growing up as a racial minority in all of my elementary, middle, and high school years and being in really diverse schools. In [the Midwestern state I currently live in], I realize that that's not the case for lots of people. They don't grow up in a community that's got deep, deep history of African American culture and of all sorts of interesting and troubling history around race. That's part of the identity I think I've come to understand more and more, and some of that is by having lived other places where people make certain assumptions about the South that have helped me see more nuance in who I am and what that region is all about. …My own Whiteness and thinking about what are the particular things about my own family's racial identity and the culture that I grew up in that are particular, and the kinds of privilege that I grew up with, I think that's something that I've become more and more aware of over time…how my being a White cisgender man, what that means in terms of the particular opportunities I have, in terms of the teaching I can do and the professional work I can do, but also the things that are problematic or limiting and the ways that I need to be sure to build relationships with other people and organizations.

Lori described growing up in a particular city and being able to connect her own culture to the cultural resources of that city as important to influencing her educational experiences,

which further influenced her professional and personal choices. She shared,

> I'd say the aspect of my personal identity that has most influenced me professionally is that I'm from just outside [a large city in the Midwest], and as a result of being from here developed myself mostly as a museum professional in this area and have this big deep network in museums here. I chose to return here to do work on my dissertation and raise my family here and wrote my book here. It has been at the center of my practice.

She also explained the influence of accessing that big network of museums early on in her life,

saying,

> I've always loved museums since I was a little girl growing up in this area. I went to museums frequently with my family and grew up wondering if there could be a place in this work for me. When I was in high school, I worked on a project where I did some research at [a large natural history museum in the city near me] in their research library with their tiny, little ancient librarian who knew everything about everything. I fell in love. …I learned a lot more about how passionate these museum workers were. In doing so, I started thinking about museums being a vehicle for making the world a better place.

Further reflecting on her professional work in the city later in life that began to connect to her

more personally, she shared,

> I found myself working at [an art museum with a focus on a specific cultural and national identity which I hold] after college, and the opportunity to actually do curatorial work for social justice and have my first curatorial job. When I saw that the work that I had been hoping was possible to do *was* actually possible to do, then I determined to go back to graduate school and see if I could make a study of this particular area, this curatorial work for social justice, and I did that. As soon as I began to complete my doctoral work, I knew that I wanted to write this book. Then I went on to write the book.

> Frankie spoke to connections between the community they found themselves in, how

they perceived their own racial identity, how others in that community perceived their racial

identity, and the challenges of connecting with communities depending on whether one is

considered an insider or outsider. They shared,

> Especially coming from [the West Coast], now being [on the East Coast] has been something that was a transition, as someone that identifies with a Chicanx identity that is very prevalent in the West Coast to then being in this area where I am identified as Hispanic/Spanish, which was something that I was not familiar with. Then thinking about that, what does that mean about networking? I mean networking not in the very capital type of way, but more around community and connecting with people in this community

cultural wealth that Tara Yosso talks about. It became a little bit more complicated, so when I came to [the city where my graduate institution is located], it was really about me thinking about how do I create and also look around to find other people that are also trying to create those spaces? As my work has transitioned, has been around focusing on [this city] and I'm not from [this city], what does that mean for me to do work about and involving a community that I'm not from? …I like to believe I was already thinking through those things, but I think it became more important and more of a necessity when I came to [the city where my graduate institution is located]. I think it's because I had to unpack and come into conflict of not being a part of this community. I think that's why it became even more important for me to be hyperly aware of what I was doing and what that meant [in my professional work].

Maya spoke to her experiences as a Black woman growing up on the West Coast in a multi-racial community. This setting informed her as an activist and a scholar interested in building solidarity through community-driven and community-oriented work. She explained,

I do research that is informed by the communities in which I navigate, and largely based upon the identities which are reflective of who I am, so Black communities. I do Black feminists' and transnational feminists' work, queer of color work. …Then as someone who grew up in the heart of [a city on the West Coast] largely at this intersection of Black and Asian American communities, I'm absolutely interested in Afro-Asian relations and how solidarity is constructed.

She then addressed in more depth why solidarity and community are critical to her work, saying,

Solidarity is how you thwart systems of oppression; it is through collective struggle. That's why I've sat with this project. …I'm really vested in understanding how do we truly build solidarity? This year we're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of ethnic studies, a discipline that grew out of solidarity. …At the root of it, these were groups in the 60s that came together to address issues related to white supremacy and de-colonialization. How do we return back to that, as well as evolve solidarity and solidarity building for this 21st century and beyond?

She further expanded on the connection between her community and research interests and shared,

I've come out of the ethnic studies tradition, which is an interdisciplinary field that grew out of student movements, protests, and has been a field that is community-driven and community-aligned and movement-aligned. My research interests definitely meet some of those areas that I mentioned, in that my research is community driven.

Family. Family included the people with whom participants found themselves most

intimately involved throughout their lives. This involvement emerged in supportive and

challenging ways. Anecdotes look at the way family impacted how identities developed and

informed values and professional motivations and choices. Jane connected strongly to her family

as examples of bringing people together and practicing community building, which are critical to

authentically do the work required to create social change. She stated,

> I like to say that I am from bread because my family owns an Italian bread company.
> Food, bread, breaking bread, and bringing people together has been a big part of my
> family's heritage with the bread company and really a big part of my interest in being a
> part of communities and being a community builder. …I think for me the foundation
> really is to create environments where people can show up more fully as themselves and
> that that has to be foundational to be able to then do the really, really difficult
> intersectional work of challenging and disrupting systems, ways of being, institutional
> norms, et cetera.

Martin grew up in a family of educators and religious leaders who influenced his views

on connection to community. Among these individuals there were strong examples of the

tradition of community service and a view that education should be connected to community

needs and the common good. He stated,

> I come from a family of people, generations of people, who are educators in different
> ways. My grandfather was a professor, and my grandmother was a kindergarten teacher.
> A lot of people in that family tradition were also connected to church. They were
> religious leaders in different capacities, and many of the places they taught, the people
> who were in higher ed[ucation], were either seminaries or church-related colleges. I think
> in some ways because of that there was a tradition of thinking about education as being
> for the common good, being engaged with community needs. …Even as a high school
> student, I think I grew up in a family where volunteerism was the norm and my parents
> were both really involved in different nonprofits and things, both secular, as well as
> things they got involved in through church. I was very involved in community service
> type stuff in high school.

Experiences with cultural difference were normalized for Etta through how her parents

chose to raise her and how she chose to raise her son. This normalization of difference

influenced her thinking about diversity in the context of her community-engaged work. She

reflected,

Growing up my parents went to college, and they had me when they were in college. …We lived on campus. We lived in family housing. With family housing it had very much an international bent to it. I also lived in family housing as a grad[uate] student with my son, which also had an international bent to it, meaning a lot of people who lived there were not from the U.S. …There was difference that was around me all the time that was normalized, and so maybe I imagine that had something to do with how I'm thinking about diversity and equity, and maybe experiencing that in real time but also at a very young elementary kind of age.

Billie spoke to the influence of family expectations on her career choices. She eventually experienced a shift in thinking about potential career paths from the family expectations she was raised with to what she truly valued and wanted in a career. She shared,

My family is very white collar. I come from a family of doctors and engineers. The fact that I was not a doctor or an engineer is very disappointing to my family. …I went to college, and that's where you go to become an expert on things. That was not my experience with the people I interacted with – the instructors, the students. They're all just people, and that was a really eye opening discovery. …This idea of the university being this source of knowledge, it's so relative. All that we're doing is throwing stuff against the wall to see what sticks. This idea that there are multiple truths, that my truth may be different than your truth, that a fact and a feeling are different…That really changed my trajectory. I decided I wanted to go into more of like science education and advocacy. I liked the idea of being more connected to the community and making a difference in a tangible, direct way versus I'm sitting in a lab, and I may cure cancer, but I'm inherently separated from the communities I'm trying to work with. Hence the [graduate degree program I chose].

Anne also voiced some of the limitations she experienced from family expectations growing up and as an adult who is a single parent. Both types of limitations influenced her professional trajectory. She explained,

I grew up in a very rural community, very religious family. There were only so many jobs a woman should do. I went [to college] to be an English teacher. I also got married very young, had children very young, and I ended up leaving school [for a while]. …I was going to be certified as an English teacher, and my goal was to support theater arts in schools. However, I felt like I learned more from my theater degree than I did my English degree. I went into professional theater for 16 years.

She reflected that while her artistic practice has been enjoyable, it has also been a struggle in some ways, clarifying,

It really is the way the United States in general looks at artists. Our work is not valued. It's not something people want to pay us for. It's very hard to be poor or have a family and be a working artist, which also shapes your identity. If you don't have that supportive community that's going to help you be an artist, especially for me as a single parent…I definitely can't be as prolific in the art I create because I have to work. I have to pay bills. I have to raise children.

Education. Education included the different educational environments participants found themselves in and the educational choices they made as they grew older, especially when transitioning from high school through college. The anecdotes look at how education settings impacted the way identities developed and informed values and professional motivations and choices. For example, Frankie found high school a difficult experience, yet in adulthood, they also found that experience motivating to pursue certain professional opportunities. They remembered their high school experience sharing,

I was also pushed into continuation high school. I can recall how hard, how harmful and how...I would say also traumatizing some of those spaces were. Remembering just sitting down and doing worksheets and just doing your own thing, it just didn't feel engaging. …And then these assumptions that came as a result of being a part of that space.

Then, as an adult and during their graduate program, Frankie pursued an opportunity to work with a similar high school because of its importance to them, despite being unpaid work. They explained,

As someone that was pushed into continuation high school. As someone that has done this work. I think there is a value in continuing to do this work…with partnering up with the high school teacher, in particular, in a continuation high school. …Even though that was going to be additional labor, that was not going to be compensated, I felt like this work was important and we needed to do it. It didn't matter that we didn't have funding for it. This was work that was important and it needed to be done.

Martin shared how experiences as an undergraduate student influenced his thinking, his choices in graduate school, and his connections to professional networks. Speaking about his experience in a national undergraduate scholarship program focused on community service, Martin said,

I think for most people who participate in that program, even if that sometimes was volunteerism that was separate from academic coursework, often that grew more and more integrated or people found ways to connect those things, and that was certainly true for me. …I took an oral history class as an undergraduate and think in many ways that was one of the things that got me interested. The research I was doing in the class was around the history of a school that had been the African American school in town and had closed with school desegregation, but it was reopening as kind of a community center and this hub for the African American community. I did this project with a group of other students, interviewed a bunch of people who had gone there who were now in their 70s and 80s, and we did a public history exhibition for that community center. Projects like that helped me see the way that academic learning could be connected very directly to local community. There were other projects like that as an undergraduate. …I just continued to do that when I started teaching as a graduate student, and I was always interested in ways that I could incorporate community-based learning in what I was teaching.

Further, Martin mentioned how his undergraduate experiences connected to his professional

development, sharing,

The program helped me to connect to these other professional associations and networks. …I think that was really formative in terms of seeing that this is something that's happening: schools are hiring people to be civic engagement professionals, faculty are seeing service learning as a thing, people are studying it and seeing that it has all these benefits for learning as well as for communities and institutions. …I was a leader at my campus. Not everybody went to these national conferences and things, but I certainly got excited by that and found ways to participate in those. Then I think that snowballed.

Derick also spoke to how instrumental experiences as an undergraduate student were in

his journey into professional practice and using that practice to inform his transition to academia

and teaching. He explained,

My introduction to art was primarily through public art and activist art, and so my point of orientation was always around what kinds of questions come up when you put things into public space. Thankfully I was, as an undergraduate student, able to find faculty who were really supportive of that work and gave me a greater historical consciousness for precedence to that work that I was interested in. …[After graduating with an undergraduate degree], for the better part of a decade I just did independent projects, many of which had a publishing component to them and were concerned with the history of social movements and artistic movements in [a large city in the Midwest], which is where I lived for the longest period of time in my life. Over time, I started to see that there was an increasing institutional and scholarly codification of the discourse around community-based arts and socially-engaged art that I felt that I had a responsibility to engage and make an intervention in because a lot of the time it didn't include the kinds of

work that I was advocating for and documenting through my publishing practice. In a way I entered the field of education as an advocate for alternative histories and counter histories, and then eventually spent enough time in the field where it felt like actually it made sense for me to do that as my primary work as opposed to doing it from the outside. Around that time is when I went back to graduate school because I started getting interested in teaching.

Etta described experiences examining race and ethnicity during her master's and doctoral studies that informed her transition from artist to educator with a goal of helping other educators work with their students in culturally relevant ways. She stated,

I originally wanted to be a digital animator, and as I was going to get my [master's degree] in digital animation, I realized a few things. One, I didn't like the tediousness of the actual animating itself. …The second thing is we got an opportunity to be taught by DreamWorks my first year when I got there. …They screened *Shark's Tale*, …[and in that film] all of these fish are ultimately racialized, so even though they're fish and sharks and amphibians or whatever, you can tell the culture that's been assigned to them by way of their mannerisms or the words that they use. …I was interested in figuring out how does someone determine, how does someone make these choices, when they're creating a storyline? I became really interested in asking who decides these things.

After realizing she was more interested in "the actual product itself and what to do with it" than the technical skills needed to create it, Etta enrolled in and completed a different master's degree in ethnic studies and then applied to an art education doctoral program. During her doctoral studies working on various projects, she eventually realized her interest in (a) "how to use art to teach" (b) "using art as a way to help" (c) how to "help teachers connect to their community resources to make their education more relevant" and (d) "helping teachers [do self-reflection on potential biases] before they even start trying to do culturally relevant work."

Sandra spoke to how work experiences gained during her doctoral studies exposed her to new ideas, specifically how digital scholarship coming out of libraries can be for the public rather than just for academics. She shared,

I started working my first year of my PhD program on an open access journal that was posted out of the [library at my university]. I was initially interested in that work because it was fairly close to my subject area, …but I also became really interested in the

technical side of that and how we were hosting it, how to actually create a journal, both the editorial and the technical side. That just really got me interested in other types of digital projects that I saw going on around the university and particularly coming out of the library. Especially the way that I saw those projects having not always, but often a different audience from just your traditional kind of academic publishing. It's not always the case, but something that's published online will be more for public consumption. It does lend itself often to having a little bit of a different focus. That was a big element in my career development was starting to work on that journal and then getting the opportunity to move into other projects that were going on at [my university] at the time. …I would say that the piece that has remained constant is still being really excited to do work that can be and often is more publicly engaging. That part has remained pretty much the same. That part I find way more fulfilling for me than the many other things. That sort of piece of the initial motivation hasn't gone away.

World Events. World events were part of broader societal forces that shaped participants' lives, especially when traumatic experiences resulted for those affected. Anecdotes look at how world events impacted the way identities developed and informed values and professional motivations. Ada shared about the Oklahoma City bombing, an example of domestic terrorism she experienced as an undergraduate student, and how this event influenced the commemoration aspects of her activist work all the way through her graduate studies. She reflected,

> I thought of myself as an activist probably as early as I thought of myself as an academic. The first grants that I wrote for when I was an undergrad[uate student] getting funding to spend my summers doing activist work, primarily in [the state where I grew up], part of that was running a youth workshop on non-violence and social justice work. It was very much what we would now call diversity, equity, and inclusion work. Although, that language either didn't exist or I wasn't familiar with it at that time. One of those summers was right after the Oklahoma City bombing. I had worked with a not-for-profit education lobby organization that was in the Journal Records Building, which is one of the buildings that was mostly, not totally, but mostly destroyed in the bombing. That might also partially explain why there's an aspect of commemoration and memorial that is also in my work.

Maya's identity development as an activist was shaped by ongoing violence against Black individuals and communities in the U.S. Specifically, she named the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement as her "baptism" into more engaged activism as a graduate

student, which informed both her future activism and research. She stated,

> I think part of the evolution in my community-engaged scholarship is intimately twined to my evolution, the evolution of me as an activist and being more engaged within sort of struggle. I think I had just become a PAGE fellow. It was right before the Black Lives Matter movement really exploded. It was 2014, the year that I graduated from [my master's degree institution]. That summer several of my peers [from my master's degree institution] and I, we drove to Ferguson, and we were there for some of the Michael Brown protests. It's really this moment that I have in many ways this baptism into activism in this Black Lives Matter era that absolutely informs what my level of engagement looks like going forward. It inadvertently shapes what my research looks like. I think it's an evolution on a couple fronts, but that evolution of mine, my community-engaged scholarship, it is informed by my evolution as an activist.

Tom spoke of the experience of abandonment and displacement as a child war refugee

which influenced his approach to being in community with others, both personally and

professionally. Sharing about his life experience, Tom said,

> The abandonment, while I never saw it as trauma or something that would cause trauma, in my adult years very recently I have come to understand what I suffer personally is post-traumatic stress disorder and had no idea. Our bodies remember so much more than our brains do. Particularly when we are infants, what we're cognating we don't actually remember. It's there, and then it's gone. Memory permanence. So that affects my teaching life, my research life, my engagement with community life.

He further explained how his abandonment influenced his approach to life and working with

community members, reflecting,

> I'm a runner. I love running. I picked it up when I was a doctoral student. …Running became my solace in so many ways. It was my therapy even though I had a therapist. I connect running in some ways to how I sort of run from my past. I run from relationships. It's really tough for me to trust people. I prefer to run rather than stay. Running as an activity is metaphorical in some ways for how I behave as a human being, not that I'm not trustworthy myself or not that I'm not committed to things. I'm definitely committed to [my university's] students and my research, my fabulous colleagues who I love a lot. But, at the same time, if somebody said, "You got to go," then I'm out of here. No strings. Learning about publicly active graduate education and then, furthermore, being a publicly active scholar, educator, and citizen, [that] is something I have to be really aware of, is my tendency to run. Something I learned that was really vital as a doctoral student, …you know how the Belmont Report says do no harm? I learned research and run is unacceptable.

> **Privilege and Marginalization.** Participants experienced both privilege and

marginalization based on the unique constellation of identities they held. Anecdotes look at the

way both privileged and marginalized identities informed values and professional motivations.

Jane spoke to the privilege she holds as a White woman and how over time she shifted her

mindset from a charity approach to an organizing approach when working with community. This

shift was informed by reflections on identity, power, and privilege, including how to take these

reflections into account in relationship building, developing shared self-interest, and

collaboratively working toward change. Jane shared,

> I identify in really salient ways as a White, cisgender woman and those identities and
> intersections of those identities really come into play in my work as a community
> engagement professional. The ways in which I relate. Some of the blind spots that I have.
> It's woven through all of my stories as a professional and something I try to be really,
> really reflective of and reflexive of.

She then explained how these identities were part of her journey, from being an undergraduate

student to now teaching undergraduate students, as her mindset toward community engagement

changed over time. She reflected,

> Probably in college I had very much a savior perspective, a White savior perspective and
> a very deficit-oriented view on working with people from 'disadvantage' or 'at risk'
> backgrounds and identities, which was often the dynamic in the community service
> settings that I was operating in. I had answers. I had expertise. I had time. I had resources.
> Conversely people in this kind of false binary did not. …It certainly was tied to my
> privileged identities, and I carry that with me everywhere I go. …Part of my change over
> time was going from that very charity-oriented mindset to then thinking about what's the
> level of relationship building here? How can we humanize experiences in community?
> …It was much more about how to identify shared self-interests and then use that as a
> platform to collaboratively work towards change in our communities. As opposed to
> doing for, it was doing with. …Part of that process for me was a lot of unlearning what I
> had been taught about very benevolent approaches to community engagement and seeing
> identity and organizing as much more central in my approach.

For Mae, her privilege as a light-skinned Black woman coming from an affluent family

influenced not only how she existed in her day-to-day life, but also how she existed in

professional spaces. Part of her professional journey was coming to terms with and leveraging

her privileged identities and resulting power in support of activist and engaged work. Mae stated,

> I identify as a Black woman, but I am a biracial woman. My parents are still together, still married. My mom is Black. My father is White. I was born in southern California, raised in [a large city in the Great Plains], to a very affluent family. My mom was a corporate businesswoman. My dad was a stay-at-home dad. Which also I think has obviously shaped, not only my upbringing, but also a lot of my sense of self as a Black woman.

She expanded on her sense of self and experiences she had attending predominantly White schools, from elementary school all the way to graduate school, which influenced her professional identity. She shared,

> It was [in graduate school] that I discovered that my particular upbringing, and my being situated in predominantly White spaces as an affluent Black woman with a lot of light skin privilege, actually helped me navigate as a professor and an educator in those spaces. …I felt I was uniquely situated to navigate those spaces. Because I saw my every friend, every colleague, every individual. …It was almost like I had this cultural currency which I always thought was this burden of isolation. But actually, I really related to my white students, and I really related to privilege because I recognized that this is my experience.

She then reflected on more recent professional roles and the differences she sometimes noticed between her experiences and those of her colleagues. She explained,

> I still am really well-resourced. I think that's distinct from a lot of my colleagues' stories, …the ones working in social justice movements and organizing or working in publicly-engaged activist circles. It's taken me a while to navigate and negotiate being the one with money. Which movements need money, publicly engaged projects need money, artists need money. It took me a while to feel confident and comfortable in that role for a long time.

> Sylvia spoke to some of her particularly important identities as being queer, feminist, anticapitalist, Jewish, and a settler. She acknowledged that she experiences privilege in certain ways, despite having some less privileged identities. Rather than feeling guilt, she sees holding these privileged identities as tied to responsibility and motivation to be an advocate for justice and healing in the world. She shared,

> I'm very privileged. A lot of class privilege and race privilege and cis privilege and able-bodiedness. …Some of the actions that I take are very much from a sense of responsibility. I try not to be motivated by guilt. That doesn't feel useful. I do think

responsibility is a core motivator aligned with justice. …I'm deeply motivated by a sense of justice in the world, a belief in healing in the world, for growth (personal growth and community growth), and accountability. I also get really motivated by joy and celebration. What I come back to is the times that I have felt the most free and joyful are often spaces where Black and Brown joy is centered too, or more so. Then as a result, I also get to feel more free. Celebration is one of those things that stokes the fires for when we have to be in the fight for a better world. …I try to be a very outspoken yet compassionate advocate and disrupter for racial justice through an intersectional lens. I'm a constant learner and always trying to expand my lens about new ways that oppression, hand-in-hand with liberation, are shaping the lives of those around me.

Amelia grew up working-class and was a first-generation college student. Tied to these marginalized identities, she struggled with being part of academia throughout graduate school, participating in the PAGE Fellows program, and becoming a tenure track professor. She now mentors students with backgrounds like hers. Regarding her graduate studies, Amelia stated, "I didn't really know what I was doing, and there were no real reference points for me of people in my family that had applied to PhD programs." She talked about applying for the PAGE Fellowship, explaining, "As a working-class person, you don't know what a fellowship is really or what it means, or there's an element of prestige to it, and then the networking piece." Then regarding searching for jobs, she reflected, "I was just like, 'I don't know. Tenure track just seems like a racket. And I don't think I can really create a lot of change that way.'" However, once she was in a tenure track position, she realized that creating change was possible. She shared,

> I don't know if this is unique to working-class culture, but I always understood if I was going to get a college degree, it was really about improving the lives of others…I do have a special place in my heart for folks who took the same journey as me. …One of the things that I try really hard to do is that I always make everything explicit with my doctoral students, just every part of the process. In higher ed[ucation], we talk about the hidden curriculum a lot. There is what is explicitly said, like policy and procedures, and then the hidden curriculum is that underlying culture that for folks who are first-gen[eration college students] or identify as working-class, that's really hard to understand. …I try to make everything so explicit, so students really understand and they're not left on their own to figure stuff out. …Then they have to also really reflect on their identities and how they're going to remain authentic as they're acquiring new social capital that will

allow them a seat at the table that maybe they didn't have before.

Anne struggled with feeling marginalized in her professional practice, describing personal experiences with misogyny and sexism in her career as a theater artist, as well as discrimination by theater companies against certain audiences based on race and socioeconomic status. As a result, she was inspired to try to do things differently and shift her career focus toward community-based arts education. She explained,

> All of this prompted me to go back to school so that I could run my own space. …I ended up doing [a program at a postsecondary education institution for returning adult learners] where I worked on my theater space as my project. Through that, I really learned a lot about how the arts contribute to gentrification. I started looking into how can I still get the space open and help the artists in the community but still make sure that the community is okay. Through that I came full circle back to my love of education. I went to work for [the postsecondary education institution for returning adult learners] as an advisor, worked there for three years and was just realizing how I felt like I got more accomplished as an educator than an artist in my community. That's kind of where I am now is I still use my artistic practice even in my teaching, but I guess I focus more on the education than the arts piece.

Further, Ada shared that as a "White person with Native ancestry" she struggled seeing how Native people were represented in plays during theatre graduate studies. She eventually started her own theater company and changed her dissertation topic due to what she saw as a lack of (positive) representation of Native communities and a lack of engagement around social justice. She stated,

> Community art and community building through art and through public events, was already a big part of my practice before I went back to the academy. …When I was working in theater, one of the reasons that I started a theater company was to choose the works that we were doing. I was really frustrated spending my time on plays that didn't have conversations about thoughtful public communities and social justice. I was very tired of plays that were a bunch of middle-class White people sitting around a table talking about being bored, basically. I thought, "I don't want to do any more of those plays." Our mission for the company that we started was to mine the poetic tradition to explore social questions. Sometimes those social questions were evidenced in an activist way, and sometimes they were much more subtle, like more Aristotelian conceptions of how to be a good person and how to live a good life in relationship with other people. Then becoming engrossed in the theater community, I was really aware of the power of

representation and wanting to find all kinds of media that represented a variety of people in nuanced but not harmful ways.

Ways of Work

This section focuses on the ways participants described their current professional roles and work. First, I explain how the language participants used varied and how narratives about their work shifted. Then I describe how for many, their approach to work integrated and acknowledged the hybrid nature of their professional roles. Finally, I summarize how their work took place at multiple intersections, in pursuit of change and justice, and beyond the scope of a paid position.

Variations in Language

Participants' ways of naming engaged work were not fixed but flexible and were fundamentally about relationships with and orientations to various publics. Participants pointed out that words matter, and that those engaged in this kind of work should try to make distinctions between types of engaged work and how this work is done versus studied. For example, Ada shared that she "tried on" various terms to describe herself and her work and is now settled on not a single phrase or term, but rather more complex descriptions that acknowledge the many publics (or communities) of which she is a member and with which she engages. She explained,

> I do still think of myself, certainly, as a publicly-engaged scholar, and I definitely have been through the trying-on of different variations of that. Some people say civic engagement, which I think is a really interesting term because it speaks to civil religion and civic culture, which is something I'm very interested in. …But I've come more to thinking about relationship building and talking about "publics" (plural) and trying not to talk about "public" as separate from myself or separate from my work. Thinking about publics (plural) helps me think about the way that I am a member of some publics and not others, but I may engage in the other publics of which I am not a member. So that joining point, or that joint, that confluence, is important and complicated.

Mae acknowledged a variety of words could describe her work and might mean different things to different people. What mattered to Mae was not necessarily the words used but rather

how they acknowledged her orientation to the public. She stated,

> I identify across multiple areas of my interdisciplinary work, mostly as a scholar curator.
> I never really pull those apart in any way that's super meaningful. So scholar curator.
> Black feminist theorist in my scholarship. Also, a publicly-engaged or publicly-oriented
> practitioner. Which just means that for me, I know it means a lot of different things for
> other people. But for me, no matter where I am in my role…I still felt my orientation is to
> a larger public.

Conversely, Maya spoke of the nuanced ways the words she used to describe herself and

her work connoted different things. While the different types of work she does are connected and

similar, they are also fundamentally different, and she believes the words people choose to put in

front of "engagement" (e.g., civic, public, or community) should not always be used

interchangeably. Maya shared,

> A lot of my work…is me actually being in the streets, organizing with activists. So that's
> one piece of the community engagement for me, is to actually be able to engage with
> activists, nonprofits, grassroots organizations who are doing racial justice work. …I'll
> also say that I have a different sort of layer of experience as well and sort of functioning
> as a public scholar in a more of a consultant position [working with schools]. …I think
> community-engaged work is also used interchangeably with public scholarship in some
> ways. I think that distinction at some point does need to be made. I do like to talk about it
> as two different things.

Billie also made a distinction in terms of the words used to describe her current work,

which she viewed as closer to the scholarship of engagement and focused on studying rather than

doing community engagement. She explained,

> I feel like my role is facilitator, connector, convener, enabler. I am not, aside from my
> honors thesis in my undergraduate days, I am not a community-based researcher. I am not
> an engaged scholar. I think in that sense, I've always felt like I didn't go up through the
> ranks, like I haven't experienced it in the same way a lot of other professionals have. I
> would say I'm a…and again, I don't know if I could call myself this, it feels a little
> foreign, but this idea of a scholar of engagement. I'm truly interested in studying the field
> of community engagement and engaged scholarship as it relates to institutional change,
> community change.

Shifting Narratives

Over time, the narratives participants told others about themselves and their work shifted

and changed, in particular depending on the audience to whom they were speaking. Additionally, sometimes the narratives others projected onto participants were different than the ones they held for themselves. Jane, who ran a leadership studies program, spoke of the way that certain contexts brought out different aspects of her identity. She said she may describe herself one way when working with faculty in leadership studies, especially when positioning for power in spaces across campus with "White men who talk over me." However, when speaking with other community engagement scholars, she shared,

> I've heard colleagues talk about the dash, like in the hybrid nature of what we do. Or the "andness", A-N-D-N-E-S-S. And, and, and. That kind of professional identity, I feel like I talk about that with colleagues who are also community engagement professionals or when I'm in those spaces. With PAGE, for example, that was something that I really brought out to the forefront when I was with that group of people. It kind of depends who I'm with. …I guess what I'm acknowledging is that the context brings out different aspects of my professional identity. …Maybe a part of my constellation of my professional identity is that it shifts, and I have learned to be a good storyteller and shift that narrative depending on who I'm with and the purpose of our relationship, too. Not in a scheming way, in a way that I think reflects the hybridity of it and the learned behavior of being kind of a chameleon and adapting to your different constituent groups.

Anne, who worked part-time and was back in graduate school for a second Master's degree, described how her professional roles shifted over time in relation to her life and career development, including how she engages with other people as an artist. This meant transitioning from talking about herself as a theater artist to a teaching artist, which ties to a shift from being an artist activist to an everyday activist. She explained,

> It's interesting to me the way I find comfort in my everyday activism, but at the same time it isolates you from being able to do any work. I almost feel like my identity has become I'm the feminist, but I'm an individual rather than an artist activist working on what I would like to work on, if that makes sense. When you're connecting to an artist community, it's much easier for you to think of yourself as an artist. Even though I will always identify with being a theater artist, it definitely shapes how I talk to people about the work I do. Because if I have a discussion about what I do it's, "Oh, who do you work with?" Well, "No one." I don't feel like I have that connected community anymore, which has definitely shaped the way I discuss what I do. I used to call myself a theater artist, and now I call myself a teaching artist or an arts-based educator because I've had to bring

in that education because people don't necessarily expect an educator to be working with a big group of people, whereas a theater artist they expect you to be into a knit community.

Billie earned two master's degrees and worked in research in the corporate sector. She shared that while she works outside of higher education, she still works in relation to higher education. This sometimes creates tension between what she understands her values and role to be and how others perceive her values and role. Billie reflected,

> This story I tell myself is, people are looking at me and saying, "You don't have a PhD. You can't be a researcher." Which is why I think it feels a little safer to say I'm a facilitator of research. I'm a convener of researchers. I feel like even in that identity, which I embrace as a really good thing and something that I can really help enable others to do really cool stuff, it's devaluing me and distancing me. …I'm given the time and the space at work to do this as a priority. It's not on top of my teaching, on top of my administrative role as a director of a center. It is the thing I am asked to spend my time on every day. I have direct access to the data. It literally cannot happen without me. And yet, when we publish, will I just be seen as the vendor, the sponsor, who does it? So I really struggle with that identity. …I identity as a scholar-practitioner, but it's outside of higher ed[ucation]. That's a very interesting place to be – and a difficult place to try to navigate relationships, understand who I am and how I stay true to the values that I truly believe in, in a corporate environment, and what can I do within my context to really advance the field where I can.

Integrated and Hybrid Roles

In addition to the varied language or narratives used to describe their work, participants often referred to their roles as integrated or hybrid in nature. They described how an integrated or hybridized approach across roles was important to their own professional success and inspiring future professionals in their fields. One example of this was Tom, who held a more traditional faculty role. He emphasized the importance of integrating his teaching with his research and integrating community engagement within both areas. This integration helped him identify his professional goals more clearly and has been important to ongoing success as a faculty member. Regarding his teaching, Tom shared,

> I've embedded service into my secondary general music methods course rather than add

on. It's an impossibility to add a credit, anyway, here. It totally has to be embedded. Either we all do it or none of us do it, because it's important. …I think I described a little bit of how the teacher in me connects to engagement and how I see that as an integral part of pedagogy. You dispense it through teaching and learning activities. We can attempt to topple the tower just enough so that we blur the boundary between the campus and the community.

About his research, Tom stated,

The research I choose is absolutely about connecting to people, particularly off campus, and connecting my students in that, as part of the research formula. I'm hoping that the research informs the teaching and the teaching informs the research. I think that's starting to happen after five years. I've been here for five years. This is my sixth year, where I finally feel like I have a research trajectory. My professional identity is starting to gel a little bit. Because I've been able to identify my researcher life, because that's what a lot of my contract is, I'm getting a lot more support because I can identify what it is that I'm interested in more clearly.

Derick described having a split role and identity as both a practitioner and an academic.

However, he also spoke to how critical it is that each of these roles is related to the other as he

engages with students who represent the future of his field. He reflected,

I feel like it's a bit split in a way. I have a pretty defined identity as a public practitioner that works in the arts as a writer and a curator and sort of to a lesser degree as an artist. That's pretty established. I've been doing the work since the early 2000s. Then I kind of had this more recent layer, which is really most defined around my current job, though it preceded it a little bit, which is more connected to running an academic program. These are very much related because I teach the kind of things that I do in the world. I would say that they're also pretty importantly related in that…while there's a long history of community-based art and socially-engaged art, it doesn't necessarily have the same disciplinary identity or depth as just more generic fine arts education or art education has. It ends up being pretty important that I have a practice that is as equally emphasized as my academic work, because it's actually a part of constituting this field that I'm actually teaching and designing curriculum around.

Martin, who was a center director, not only defined his own role as hybrid or blurred, but

also stressed the importance of sharing with others that these types of hybrid roles exist both

inside and outside higher education. He stated,

When I first started at the beginning of this conversation and described myself as being in this hybrid role…I think part of what I love about my work is getting to help blur those lines, not just for myself, but for other people. …Part of what I love is being able to see

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all of those people as educators, to help students see what they can learn from a variety of people. There are experts all around and many or most of them don't have PhDs, or they're not called professor, or they don't have an office in the same building. I appreciate being able to help blur those lines. I think that goes back to my own experience of working with a whole variety of people who were on my campus from undergrad[uate studies] all the way through [graduate studies], as well as community leaders and everyday people in the different places I've lived and learned. I think I've always been interested in blurring those lines. …Now I'm in a different role to be able to do that or to be able to lead workshops to help other people do that in other institutions.

At the Intersections

Whatever the language used, narratives portrayed, or roles held, the engaged work participants described was often done at the intersections – the intersections of the university and the community; the intersections of practice, teaching, and research; the intersections of disciplines and methodologies; or even the intersections of personal and professional interests. Sandra explained that in her role working with digital scholarship at a library, her work was fundamentally about reducing boundaries and geared toward both academia and the public. She shared,

> I lead a group of about five librarians (but our staff is growing) who are interested in supporting faculty, and students, and staff, and sometimes other members of the larger community, with their digital research and digital teaching tools as well. Sometimes that looks like working with those communities on managing their data and their research. Sometimes it looks like faculty members who want to have their students make an exhibit, a digital exhibit instead of a final paper, and working with them on how to design that assignment. Sometimes it's more like working with researchers to find open venues for publications. We do a lot with open access and things like that. The [community-engaged] work that we do is in that, all digitally inflected, but with slightly different areas of emphasis.

Frankie also worked at the intersections of the university and community. They saw their work with schools as activism and were conscious of the power dynamics that occur when someone representing a university goes into a community or school. They actively focused on decentering the university in these community-university relationships. Frankie reflected,

> I think more of my work is around activism, around community-based work. …It's all

centered around first, the teacher entering these spaces and saying how do we work together. Every single workshop, every single class agenda that we create is all about the students naming what they need, what they want. All of that is centered around addressing those needs rather than us entering with the curriculum in place already and then just putting it forward. I think that at times when we do this work, the university receives all this credit. When we center the university, we forget about the community and how the community has always been knowledge producers and have already been doing this work. The university doesn't need to be centered because no matter what, this work, by association, the university will already be recognized.

Mae was interested in working not only at the intersections of art institutions and the academy, but also across practice, education, research, methodologies, and disciplines. She stated,

The reason why I chose academic art institutions is because I very much see my work still at the intersections of art institutions and the academy. …I want to be both curating exhibitions and writing academic books. I want to be teaching classes and also caring for collections. …Both in undergrad[uate] and graduate school, there were no methodologies that were off limits to me. I was never told, "That's not really a thing that we do here." …When I think of interdisciplinary theorizing or thinking or writing, it was in my work through the beginning.

Martin worked at the intersection of his professional interest in how people connect to and care for the place they live and his personal interest in combatting a sense of displacement from moving around as part of an academic career. He shared,

I've moved around as a lot of academics have to. A lot of my research interest has always been about sense of place and how people connect to and care for the place they live and how that's part of their spirituality, but also their commitment to sustainability and the environment. Some of it for me has always been self-interest. Here I am in [a state in the Midwest]. I'm not a Midwesterner. How can I find ways in my teaching and research and my professional life to learn about the place I live, make connections, get involved? I would say that's a lot of it wherever I've lived is just exploring the new place, the culture, the ecology, the politics, all that. …I think I wasn't as tuned into that experience of being displaced or moving around a lot and how much that would be part of academic life. At times, that's been really challenging for me and for my family. One way to deal with that is to try to do more community-based engaged kinds of learning myself and projects that feel like I'm making meaningful connections in these new places where I've been.

In Pursuit of Change and Justice

Participants often portrayed their engaged work as the pursuit of broader goals such as

social change and justice. They described this in several ways, including supporting and

advocating for disenfranchised students, bringing forth through research the voices of

marginalized communities, curating museums and exhibitions in support of underrepresented

individuals or issues, or even influencing entire industries to become more equitable in their

practices. Amelia saw her main work as a faculty member supporting the growth of students like

herself who have been excluded from decision-making spaces. She explained,

> [I work to] lead efforts to institutionalize commitments to civic engagement, so that the students attending regional publics, which by and large have been disenfranchised from the political process – lots of students of color, first generation students, immigrants, undocumented students, queer students, many of them who had been kicked out of their family's homes and were accessing higher education without a lot of social capital because they had been shunned by their family – so this is all about helping them to develop their political efficacy so they could create change in society. …I didn't really fully understand as a student that being a professor and working closely with students you can really help them grow and evolve. Then they go out into the world, and they do this really cool stuff.

As a scholar activist, Maya expressed her belief that research is not of as high value when

it is purely about the creation of new theory or abstract ideas. Rather, research becomes more

valuable when it can also be employed and understood by the public to bring forth new

narratives and drive change, especially for marginalized communities. She stated,

> I knew that as a professor, as a researcher, I wanted to be able to use my time in the professoriate to be able to bring forth these narratives of folks who have been marginalized, not only throughout history, but within their own subsets of communities. …I think to borrow from Margo Okazawa-Rey and Julia Opara Chinyere, I identify as a scholar activist, in that I do research not just for the sake of research, not to just create theory and abstract ideas. I think having an intellectual setting is important, but for me research is only valuable when it's something that can be employed and understood by the people. And that helps drive change. Therefore, I identify as a scholar activist.

Lori saw her role working with museums as not only being a curator, but also a curator

whose work is fundamentally about moving society toward greater justice across many equity

issues. She explained,

I describe my professional identity as being, broadly speaking, an independent museum professional, and in particular, being an independent scholar and curator, and almost jokingly say, but I think it's a really good term for it – curatoriologist. I study curatorial work, and I do curatorial work. In particular, I look at ways in which we can use the space inside of the gallery to work for social justice. That is to say to work for the equitable distribution of risks and rewards in society. That could be a variety of different topics. That could be in areas about us wherein wrongs have taken place and those wrongs could be areas of any imbalances, be it income inequality, food desert, healthcare, education, right down to the inequitable distribution of people's voices in the public realm. That's a topic I talk a lot in terms of culturally specific museums. I have tried to carve out a place where my professional identity is tied to this notion of curatorial work for social justice in all of its many forms.

Mae's recent work with art museums focused on investing in artists and amplifying the voices of underrepresented artists in museum collections more broadly, which she saw as a social justice endeavor informed by Black feminist theory. She stated,

I'm always thinking about, "Who does this serve?" So that's kind of how I understand the work that I do. …Right now I feel really dedicated to artists. I feel really particularly invested in artists. The sustainability of artists' practice. The wellbeing of artists. The wholistic treatment and advocacy of artists' work. Especially artists of color. Creating access for artists. I see that as the work that I'm most passionate about right now. Rather than maybe some more obvious things, like public programs, or that sort of thing.

Reflecting on her current role and opportunities Mae shared,

[I] not only buy art, exhibit art, protect, preserve, all of that. I really see that as a social justice endeavor. Not in the sense that I'm looking at lists of, "We need Black artists. We need gender queer artists. We need Latinx artists." Yes, and more so, as a Black feminist theorist, I'm not only thinking about how in my scholarship that work was infused, or that thought, that praxis was infused. But now I'm really thinking intentionally, acquisitions and collection building as black feminist praxis. What does it mean to create more equitable collections within institutions? What does it mean to mobilize resources, time, and energy behind the work of Black women? In a way that is congruent, or at least acknowledging the ways in which time, resources, and energies have been mobilized around White men for so long. I think that's one way that I see, right off the bat. I was hired knowing that this was how I was going to use my space, to amplify the voices of underrepresented artists in this particular collection, but hopefully museum collections broadly. To be a part of that global movement of more transparent, demystified collection building.

Sylvia worked in philanthropy and as such was able to make a difference not only at her own organization but also by moving the work of the philanthropic sector more broadly toward

equity infused practice. She explained,

> I work at a niche little subset of the sector that tries to make the philanthropic sector more effective, collaborative, and equitable. …Thinking about where I have autonomy in the agency to make small changes in my own portfolio of work that I'm not waiting on other people's approval for has really translated to hiring Native artists, flexing the resources that I have in ways that are directly trying to put money in indigenous artists and writers. …[Further], the people that come to our events are the ones that have control over where money moves, and that's a big responsibility. Not that they're going to change what they're doing directly as a result of one of our programs or any of our programs, but it is part of a collective moment, I think, in the sector where many organizations are reflecting on where their wealth comes from and how they can responsibly deploy that wealth, how they get creative about deploying it in different ways. Many people don't want to do that because of racism and capitalism, but the people that do are trying to think more boldly about how to do so. It feels exciting to get to work with them.

Beyond a Paid Position

The engaged work of participants sometimes took place outside of their paid positions. This emerged through creating art and community spaces in their own homes, creating digital spaces for professional communities to gather, and being an active part of the social fabric of community, family, and friends. Mae described how she recently focused on creating spaces within her own home in service to artists and community members. She related,

> I recently got a house. Quite a large house. I want to turn the entire third floor into an artist residency. The house, I want it to function kind of as a home gallery that I want to open eventually to the community in various ways. …I'm starting to find ways to bring community groups, but also my neighbors, into my home as a way to engage work made by artists of color. …I'm thinking about ways to create a space in my home that feels very familial. But that also feels in service to future generations of artists and in service to community members that don't feel like they have access to or would never even see themselves stepping inside a museum. Ways for them to engage with art. But then also the artist residency, I'm like, "How can I get my friends to come to [the town where I live] to live with me for a period of time?"

Another example was Sandra's additional work outside her job creating and providing digital open education resources for humanities scholars. Sandra shared,

> I work on a number of other projects that are sort of related to my area of interest. I am currently the managing editor for a project…that's an open educational resource that is trying to provide tutorials and documentation for humanities scholars who might be

wanting to incorporate some types of digital research. It's primarily research-based. So that could be anything from, "How do I make a digital exhibit?" to, "I want to use this particular statistical method to work with this data." I've just come on as the managing editor for that, which is very much in my wheelhouse of wanting to make resources that are openly available and often kind of digitally inflected.

Sylvia took a holistic approach to thinking about work, and she described multiple aspects of her life, beyond her paid job, as part of her work. She stated,

I think about work many different ways. When I'm not doing this job, I also manage a business with my partner doing wedding coordination, day-of wedding coordination and support for mostly queer couples, but not exclusively. That's really fun. It uses the event part of my brain, but in a joyful way. It doesn't feel stressful. …I also organize with [a local solidarity organization], so that feels like an important part of my kind of holistic work. I am on the board of my co-op building. I do a lot of emotional work among my community and friends. I think I have the paid, professional aspect of my work, but I think about work really holistically.

Summary

Participants' unique personal and social identities, characteristics, and life experiences were intricately intertwined from childhood to adulthood. While each participant claimed distinct identities, characteristics, and life experiences, they nonetheless developed and shared similar values and motivations as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Regardless of degree type, graduate program, or discipline, these backgrounds, values, and motivations were woven into participants' graduate school experiences and future professional roles and careers. As community-engaged practitioner-scholars, these participants used different words and ways of describing their work, yet also found common ground in how their work unapologetically spanned multiple boundaries as it imagined and drove forward a more equitable and just world. In the next chapter, I explore the connection between these backgrounds and ways of work and participants' experiences with the IA PAGE Fellows program.

CHAPTER 5: THE SETTING

My first civic memory that really motivated me to want to be in community engagement practices stemmed from my mom. They were putting up a strip mall with a Wal-Mart near our house, our suburb. My mom put my brother and myself in a wagon. She wheeled us over to the construction site, had us play in the construction materials, and invited reporters to take photos of it. Organized this protest of this strip mall, which ultimately came in, but at a young age I saw her resistance and her really creative tactics. ...One of my [other] motivations I would say is really my dad. When I said I'm from bread, my dad was the baker for this bread company. Well, first he swept the floors as a child, then he was a mechanic, then he built machines, and then after my grandfather passed away we found a box of recipes in his basement and they were these artesian bread recipes. My dad, who had no formal baking experience, started to play around at night with these and really learned and developed this whole artesian bread line that's throughout [a large Midwest city] right now. There's something about my dad, where my mom always brought the head, and my dad brought the hands. I can also see in him so much heart. I really strive in my teaching and in my personal life to try to align the head, heart, and hands.

The framing of this chapter was once again inspired by Jane, one of my study participants. Jane noted a strong connection between her past familial relationships and experiences, the values and perspectives she holds, and the professional choices she makes. Specifically, Jane felt strongly about the connection between her "head, heart, and hands" in both her personal and professional life. Jane's use of the metaphor of aligning the head, heart, and hands to describe how her family shaped her development as a community-engaged practitioner-scholar is in accordance with the way other study participants described their development as community-engaged practitioner-scholars, especially given that many participants referred to the Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows program as a family. Through their time with the fellowship, participants experienced new realizations and conceptualizations (i.e., revelations of the mind – or head), new feelings and relationships (i.e., affirmations of the heart), and new choices and practices in their work (i.e., transformations of the hands).

To fully understand the power of participants' experiences with the PAGE program, it is important to contrast them with the tension many participants experienced within the academy while they were graduate students and, for some, as they entered professional careers in academia. For the majority of study participants, the data point to this tension as representative of a fundamental misalignment between the values and expectations of the academy in relation to community-engaged practitioner-scholars' attempts to align "head, heart, and hands." The following sections first explore this tension and then movement toward alignment.

Tension within the Academy

The majority of participants spoke to direct, personal experiences regarding the ways academia (i.e., academic programs, departments, and institutions) and academic job searching and career planning for graduate students are *not* supportive of and also sometimes in direct conflict with the values of those whose work is community-engaged. Whether during their search for a graduate program, their time as a graduate student, or during the job search process and future career planning, higher education institutions often did not provide the support participants needed as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Yet, these participants found a way to make it through to graduation, often specifically contrasting their higher education experiences with their PAGE and IA experiences and naming PAGE and IA as spaces where they found the support they needed as evolving community-engaged practitioner-scholars.

Academic Programs, Departments, and Institutions

The challenges participants faced spanned across their graduate education experiences. Participants expressed concerns that higher education institutions were not the best learning setting for individuals seeking support for community-engagement work. As graduate students, they felt surprised by the unsupportive nature of their programs, a sense of imposter syndrome,

and isolated and disconnected from their peers and department because of their community

engagement interests. At the same time, participants also noted a distinct difference between

what they experienced in higher education institutions versus in the PAGE program.

For example, part of Derick's experience as an arts practitioner prior to his graduate

studies included working outside higher education to foster learning and community engagement

opportunities. During this time, he observed individuals joining his independent projects

specifically because they could not find support they were looking for within higher education.

Derick reflected,

> I started to realize that many of the projects I was doing had almost an interesting tension
> with formal learning contexts like schools, which was that the people who were involved
> in the projects were either involved in them because they specifically wanted a learning
> community outside of higher ed[ucation] or because they were a part of higher
> ed[ucation] and they weren't getting the kind of contextual relevance or criticality or
> community engagement that they might have sought out in that academic context. So
> they ended up finding it in the context of independent community-based curatorial or
> editorial projects.

Anne, who already had a Master's degree but was considering further education,

expressed concern about finding a PhD program that would support her, her interests in

community practice, and her desire to write to a non-academic audience in her dissertation. She

said,

> I want to go for my PhD, but I kind of have this love/hate relationship with academia in
> general. I really love working with nontraditional students. I really love working with
> first year students. It's hard for me to consider writing a dissertation my mom wouldn't be
> able to understand. If I am writing a dissertation on community practice, I want that
> dissertation to be understood by the community I'm working with. I've talked to different
> programs, and I don't know that I'm going to be supported appropriately. I just haven't
> found the right program yet.

Mae's supportive experience during undergraduate studies was very different from her

transition into graduate studies. Specifically, she noted her undergraduate education provided a

nurturing space for growth and transformation that was shaped by activists, while her graduate

education was a competitive and non-collegial space shaped by academia. She shared,

> It was literally this not knowing, getting to my first seminar and being immediately disciplined into this structure of academia or this system within academia that was the opposite of my undergrad[uate] experience, which was familial. It was nurturing. It was activist-oriented and -led and in a way that felt meaningful. It was a time of radical growth and transformation. Then my graduate program was just competitive. Not collegial. Cutthroat. Hazing.

Struggling with imposter syndrome in graduate school and feeling that their community-engaged work was devalued, Frankie contrasted this with the affirming support they found within the PAGE program. They stated,

> The whole imposter syndrome was very real. I think being a part of these spaces [like the PAGE program] and then the [community-engaged] work that I'm doing has really made me believe maybe I do belong [in graduate school] and maybe this is why. I think that's an aspect that has changed – that I can feel like the work that I'm doing is important and as a result, maybe nobody made a mistake, and I actually should of been accepted [to graduate school].

Ada felt isolated within her graduate program and her personal isolation mirrored the ways she felt her department was isolated from social issues. She also spoke to how she eventually connected to supportive spaces outside her department, including IA and PAGE. She shared,

> [I was] missing working in arts and theater departments, which are much more collaborative, and missing feeling connected to a community. I felt very isolated. I was reading and thinking important and useful things, but I was not involved in communities that felt energizing. I was shocked by the lack of engagement with concerns of the world that some of my fellow graduate students were showing. There were just a few people I was meeting who were doing things like having their gen[eral] ed[ucation] "Introduction to Literature" classes going out to walk around public spaces, look at how literary quotations were in the built environment, and talk about how that related to the neighborhood. Or having people interview folks at the museum, or create public events, or even engage with the public in any way, or think about local histories. The people who were doing that, I kept saying to them, "Hey, you seem cool and different than everybody else here. How do I get hooked in to where you're hooked in?" They all said two things, which were that there is a humanities and public engagement institute at [my graduate institution], so they said get involved with that. …And they said go to [the] Imagining America [conference].

Sylvia also experienced disconnect between time spent with people in her department compared to time spent with people in the PAGE program, especially in terms of metrics used to judge success as a graduate student. She reflected,

> At my own home institute, I remember feeling this huge clash because I would come back from PAGE or talk about PAGE and feel so open minded, or I'd come back from [the] Imagining America [conference] just full of ideas. The type of folks that I was in a department with, even though they were also big, beautiful thinkers, were still so fixated on, "Well, are you going to publish? What kind of job are you going to apply for? Why are you here?" The metrics that they were using for success just felt so different from the people in PAGE.

Job Search and Career Planning

As participants reached the point of transitioning out of their graduate studies and into professional roles, especially in academia, some experienced feelings of imposter syndrome which might be experienced by any graduate student, and most experienced particular challenges to their community-engaged interests and work. Participants were concerned about balancing expectations for traditional tenure-track faculty roles with the community-engaged work they were interested in, lacking support from within academia to pursue career options outside of tenure-track faculty roles, and having to actively search for and create settings and approaches to faculty work inclusive of community engagement.

Some participants mentioned struggling with imposter syndrome, including the transition out of graduate school. Mae stated, "It's really hard to answer a question of my professional identity, because I just feel like I'm getting one finally. After all these years, I really think for the first time I have a professional identity." Sylvia also reflected, "I think it took me a really long time to shed the graduate student identity." Tied to this is the tension between how one might view oneself as a professional and how others might view you. Sandra reflected, "[working in the library] my professional identity is made up of both having this academic background but

also being in a role that academics don't necessarily recognize as an intellectual role" and "there can be a real tension especially when you view yourself as having an intellectual contribution to the research process and faculty may not see you that way."

Further, a few participants struggled with what is considered professional behavior and dress, particularly what is rooted in the norms of Whiteness. Mae stated, "Our professional identity gets to mask a lot of our personal, or at least trumps a lot of our personal identity." Providing further insight, Sylvia said in her initial years after graduating from college, "I always felt like I was playing when I wore a nicer outfit at work" and "I also didn't understand office protocol or how to be in an office…Why am I supposed to be here for set hours every day when I know that's not my most productive time? I was very perplexed by it all." Frankie delved into the difficulties in positioning and seeing oneself as professional based on how professionalism is often rooted in Whiteness, saying,

> I think it's hard as a non-performing queer person of color in this university to sometimes see myself as a professional…as a result of all these intersecting identities. Like, just what I'm wearing – bandana and a t-shirt. That's how I go in and teach. This is how I go to conferences. Because at times, I think the usage of professionalism, it is rooted in Whiteness. I think sometimes I like to disrupt some of that.

A majority of participants found that regardless of feelings of imposter syndrome, they experienced particular challenges due to their interest in community-engaged work. Sandra spoke of the challenge and risk she faced trying to do all the things typically expected of graduate students to get hired into a traditional tenure-track faculty role while also struggling to fit in the community-engaged work she wanted to do. She worried her community-engaged work might not help her get hired, and shared,

> I also saw a lot of grad[uate] students around me who were having a lot of trouble and really didn't have a good sense of what they would do if they didn't get a tenure track [faculty] job. And a lot of them weren't getting jobs, and I know that hasn't really changed. When I first started [graduate school], I was definitely interested [in

community-engaged work], but I also thought this might lead to something that could be a little bit more fulfilling than just a straight up academic job. Now, my relationship has changed somewhat because it's now my actual job. I get paid to do it, and I get paid an actual living wage to do it. It's not on top of my other work. It's not something that I'm kind of scrambling to do in between classes or anything like that.

Similarly, Etta remembered challenges confronting her and other PAGE Fellows particularly at research one institutions where community-engaged work was viewed as separate from or on top of work related to traditional faculty success metrics like research, grants, and publishing. She reflected,

I think almost everybody [in my PAGE program cohort] was at research one institutions…, universities that privilege research and do not privilege community engagement. They talk about it, but you don't get any points for that if you're a professor. …for doing community-engaged work unless it's connected to some type of grant, or it's connected to something you're about to publish on, or you're doing some type of research that you're ultimately going to publish on. You can't be doing it just to do it. So you have folks who are interested in doing engaged work that may or may not end up in an academic journal, that may or may not be a part of some publication, or it's connected to some grant that they're trying to get, or whatever it is.

Lori recalled concerns about a career in academia, including what counts toward tenure and promotion and how community-engaged scholarship is undervalued in this regard. This was a major concern as someone straddling multiple professional identities in graduate school. She stated,

That had been definitely something that was a great concern to me as someone who has one foot in exhibitions and one foot in writing, and at the time, one foot in academia with my doctoral work and one foot in museums. Just worrying about what was going to happen to me as I matured professionally and came out into the job market, how was I going to navigate these spaces and how was I going to…be a professional with these different types of vehicles for my scholarship.

Relatedly, Mae struggled to receive support from her graduate committee to pursue career options outside of tenure track faculty positions. She only felt supported when pursuing a position in an art museum after graduation because it was located at an ivy league school. Mae shared,

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I was running from academia. I was just drowning in my last year, trying to just get out. I was in an environment and had a committee that was pretty clear that the only trajectory that they were supportive of me was a tenure track professor trajectory. Tenure track, research one institution. I mean I had more than enough of that in grad[uate] school and was just at a crisis. I think I was looking for anything else. The [art museum] fellowship at [an ivy league institution] came up…I think the only reason why my committee supported that move was because it was at [an ivy league institution]. …They saw it as post-doctoral training, which had its own value.

Maya, who became a faculty member, knew as a graduate student that not all institutions and departments support community engagement. Upon graduation her strategy was to only pursue positions that would support her community-engaged and activist work. She shared,

I'm in a department right now. I'm actually helping write our T&P documents. Part of our tenure and promotion is you've actually got to do community-engaged work. So boom, I'm required to do it, and I'm in this department because of that reason. I applied for that very reason. There was an emphasis on wanting somebody who did community-engaged work. That's why I want to be here. I was on the market last year. I applied to several public history, public scholarship positions. That's what I was looking for when I was in the market. That was actually one of the questions that I asked when I went on job interviews, "Can I continue to do community-engaged work?" I want to be upfront. I'm an activist. I'm intimately in community in these ways, and I know that some departments are averse to that type of work unfortunately. I wanted to be in a department that would not only support me, but would encourage me to do that work, and it would be recognized, and it would count towards tenure and promotion.

Also a current faculty member, Tom shared that in his experience community engagement does not always get support from leadership. For example academic leadership, such as deans, can often be scared off by how long community-engaged work takes. In his case, Tom chose to integrate his community engagement work with traditional metrics for faculty success, like publishing, to be better supported. He shared,

We know how long engagement work can take, and that's the thing that scares deans. They want to see you do very traditional sort of research, lit review or whatever it is, traditional research where you have cutoff dates. "I'm going to collect data from September 1st to December 1st. Done. Analyze it from December 1st to February 1st. Whatever. Get this thing out the door." Engagement doesn't work that way. I have not received too much feedback in terms of, "Maybe you should stop doing engagement research." I mean, people have sort of hinted at it, but they also see me publishing this book. They're like, "Oh. Yeah. Okay. We see how that works." And I'm far enough along

in my relationship-building that it's easy. It's as if it were a traditional research project.

New Conceptualizations

Participants named both PAGE and IA as spaces that provided opportunities for them to see advocacy for and examples of community engagement. These observations created new imaginings of higher education community engagement and new understandings of different approaches to community-engaged work. Through these new imaginings and understandings, participants began to shift their mindsets toward more integrated identities, adopt new vocabulary, and consider new professional choices.

Reimagining Higher Education and Community Engagement

PAGE and IA provided opportunities for participants to explore and imagine the future of higher education and community engagement. Specifically, participants mentioned the IA conference as a space for recognizing new possibilities and having crucial conversations. For Tom, being a PAGE Fellow and attending the PAGE summit and IA conference opened his eyes to the existence of community engagement in and across higher education institutions. He shared, "that was my entry point to engagement on a national level, like, 'Oh, this is a thing.' It was outside of the realm of things that I would even consider as being anything before that." Similarly, Mae felt PAGE and IA influenced new realizations of what might be possible for her professionally around community engagement in the arts. She stated,

> I feel like PAGE, as a professionalization precursor, showed me via my peers and what they were involved in and working on, but then Imagining America, what it was involved in and working on, just the vast possibilities for things I was interested in, that I had never even known existed in the world. Which seems really crazy to say. But it was really about exposure too, for me. I was exposed to a lot of things that were just right up my alley, or I was definitely in line with, but just had no context for encountering them in the past.

Further, Maya spoke about the importance of PAGE and IA as spaces that fostered conversations

about community engagement outside the context of a single higher education institution. She

shared,

> Imagining America and PAGE helped with some of that glue and provided a little bit of
> an anchorage, sort of a house, to be able to do this and also a space to be able to share it.
> It's not just Syracuse [a former IA host institution] that's doing this or UC Davis [IA's
> current host institution] that's doing this. It's under the Imagining America umbrella,
> which I think in many ways has provided some flexibility and accessibility to other
> scholars to be able to move in and out of the space as well, to be able to have these
> conversations on...community engagement.

Additionally, Amelia shared how conversations at IA conferences and through PAGE led to new

imaginings on the future of community engagement in higher education more broadly. She

reflected,

> Being able to go to the Imagining America conferences…and [be] in this third space we
> created in the conference felt like, "Oh, this is what higher ed[ucation] could be…We can
> just totally rewrite the way higher ed[ucation] is, instead of…giving up and giving in and
> letting things being the way they are." I think that's what PAGE is all about too, a place
> where people can really think in especially unique and dynamic ways about what higher
> ed[ucation] could be and then try really hard to support each other in making that a
> reality. I don't know many places that are like that.

> Beyond new realizations and conversations, PAGE and IA were spaces for feelings of

hope and inspiration for change in higher education and community engagement. While Sylvia

no longer works in higher education, after her experience with the PAGE program she felt more

hopeful about the future of higher education and for those who remain working in the sector. She

explained,

> It also just gave me so much hope for the future of academia because the people that are
> in PAGE, or have gone through PAGE, that are staying as university-based scholars as
> opposed to community practitioner-scholars are so incredible and are uncompromising in
> their identity and how it informs their work and their ethics.

Relatedly, Lori shared that through participation in the IA conference, PAGE Fellows saw

advocacy for community engagement in higher education, including changing university

recognition and reward systems to better support the work of community-engaged practitioner-

scholars. She stated,

> As we went to Imagining America together, it was wonderful to see codified in this conference setting these beliefs that I had been holding onto for a long time about the value of publicly accessible scholarship and the value that should be placed in an academic setting on that type of work. To be in this conference was to hear everyone talking about how exhibitions should count for tenure and all kinds of other different scholarly work should be valued toward tenure and toward academic professionals, toward all of the merits you need to advance within academia.

Additionally, Martin's experience with the PAGE program led him to consider how to translate advocacy for community engagement in higher education to advocacy for sustainability in higher education, for example through the development of professional associations and career roles. He shared,

> There's lots of ways that I've tried to learn from the ways that civic engagement and service-learning have grown and institutionalized and integrated into higher ed[ucation] and how there's things that sustainability can learn from that. …There's definitely a lot of overlap. I think that experience with PAGE was part of helping me see that as a possibility for myself and for higher ed[ucation].

Exploring Critical Perspectives and Arts-based Approaches to Community Engagement

PAGE and IA provided participants opportunities to explore critical and social justice perspectives within community engagement, as well as arts-based approaches to community engagement. These opportunities facilitated both personal growth and professional growth in terms of expanded participant views on possibilities for their work. Jane spoke of how PAGE Fellows served as exemplar leaders within higher education committed to underrepresented ways of being and doing in the academy, such as community engagement, which impacted her work in leadership studies. She stated,

> I really, really try to hold a space for critical perspectives on leadership studies. Acknowledging the ways of being and doing leadership that have long been in existence but not been represented or the story most often told in academic literature. …PAGE Fellows just gave me these beautiful examples of scholars who are trying new things and stepping outside of their disciplinary perspectives and being really attached to their neighborhoods, their home communities, their communities that they made these genuine

connections with. They're all doing leadership while they were facing a lot of resistance from their peers or from their institution, from faculty advisors. And doing it anyway.

Similarly, Billie described how PAGE and IA provided exposure to social justice-oriented perspectives on the purpose of community engagement and how life changing that was for someone who had not been exposed to these perspectives before. She reflected,

> [The other PAGE Fellows] were all so radically different from me. Looking back, I frame that as a really good thing, as probably a really defining experience. At the time, it was immensely unsettling. I felt like I was the other, because everybody was just so social justice oriented. …It was before, I think, Black Lives Matter happened. But this same vein of radical advocacy, it made me really uncomfortable, because I never experienced it before. …Fast forward now a decade, they absolutely are my values. But I didn't know they were my values at the time, and they were values I'd never experienced before…It was hard, but I think that was part of why it was so transformative. I think those were the longer-term outcomes. As you continue to grow, you see it.

In addition to the importance of exploring critical perspectives within community engagement, PAGE alumni reflected on arts-based approaches to this work fostered by involvement in IA and PAGE. Frankie explained how attending sessions at the IA conference provided important examples of engaging both with the arts and with the community outside of traditional classroom spaces and practices. They shared,

> I think one thing that always stands out and I look forward to going every year is just the type of work that is shared out. The type of practices, the type of models that are used within that space that are not just lecture-wise (although they can happen as well), but also bringing in the arts. Engaging the folks that are in that space. …We get to go out into the community and go see these organizations and the work that they're doing and be in their space, rather than having them move into these classroom spaces.

Martin also spoke to the unique role the combination of arts and community play in IA conferences, as well as the long-term influence of this on his professional practice. He explained,

> One of the things I remember that was so interesting about Imagining America was this emphasis on the arts and going to [the conference host city]. I feel like a lot of what we did was went to some place where there was a dance company that was also these folks from some university that were doing interesting community projects that integrated the arts. Or we went to this place where there's this Catholic priest who does screen printing and murals and stuff with gang bangers [in the city]. There was this interesting way that

arts was integrated, both in terms of people who teach and are academics and the arts, but also artists and community practitioners and activists and stuff. For some of the people who I remember who were other PAGE Fellows, that was right in their wheelhouse, and they were doing theater or they were doing things related to activism and community stuff in the arts. That really wasn't so connected directly to my own identity or academic formation. I remember that was cool and different and maybe helped me think about just how to integrate the arts more [in my own work].

Moving toward New Integrated Identities

As they explored these new ideas and opportunities, participants recognized PAGE and

IA were spaces where they did not have to separate and could connect different pieces of their

identity and blur the lines between different aspects of identity. For Ada, the PAGE program was

a space of approval for all parts of her identity, in contrast to spaces that emphasized only the

scholarly part. She stated, "PAGE definitely gave me permission to connect all of those pieces of

myself – the activist, the artist, and the scholar pieces – rather than just trying to project a scholar

image that was obviously informed by earlier things." Etta further explained that it was within

the PAGE program that she began to figure out how to connect different parts of her identity and

work that previously felt disconnected. She shared,

> I think community was already a part of things I was interested in. Education I was already interested in. Art I was already interested in. I think PAGE helped me realize that those don't have to be three separate things. I can figure out how to be those things together.

Amelia also felt support for connecting her identities, especially at the IA conference, which

helped her see how to incorporate her creative side into her work as a faculty member. She

stated,

> [At the conference], it was all of these different parts of me in my identity meeting up, because there is just openness and welcoming to creativity in the arts. There's a hard-core equity focus. There's also this focus on higher education as a mechanism to create change. …I think that's where I was really like, "This doesn't have to be totally separate. I can find ways to bring artistry and creativity into everything that I do." I do try to do that in my writing, in being creative in how I approach research, and then definitely teaching.

Finally, Martin explained how the PAGE program showed him that even for those

interested in more traditional faculty roles in academia, it is possible to blur the lines that

separate the concerns of academia from the concerns of the community. He reflected,

> I do think that the PAGE Fellows was really helpful in seeing there's people who are doing, in many ways, this conventional academic education and formation, but who are interested in blurring those lines and interested in connecting their really rigorous research with community projects, community needs, community partners. And that that combining and hybridizing and blurring was also a real thing. …That I remember being pretty cool and I think affirming my own sense of how academic work could blur these boundaries around who is a scholar and who's a practitioner and an activist and an artist.

Developing New Vocabulary

Tied to integrating and developing new identities were the ways participants developed

new vocabulary through participation in IA and PAGE. This new vocabulary was intertwined

with discovering new models and framings for the community-engaged work in which

participants were already involved. Further, participants used this new vocabulary to advance

their ongoing work in new ways within academia. Sandra remembered how the PAGE program

not only provided her with new words to describe the work she was already doing, but also

brought together different areas of her work under the framing of public scholarship. She

explained,

> [PAGE] was part of a larger development for me where I had been moving in this direction of doing something that at least incorporated more elements of public scholarship for a while, but this was probably the first time that I had actually thought of calling myself a public scholar or somebody who works in that area. It brought together some of the threads of the things I had been doing in my first couple of years at grad[uate] school, and it helped me articulate why those were actually forms of public scholarship or publicly-engaged scholarship in a way that I might not have thought as seriously about. For me, the program came at a time where I was really probably seeking some sort of definitions or structure around what I was doing. That was helpful even if I might not have gone in the exact directions that I thought I was going to at the time. I think it gave me some vocabulary.

Ada also reflected on how PAGE and IA provided new language and models to articulate her

community engagement and relationship building work, as well the opportunity to be in

conversation with other professionals using those terms to describe their work. She stated,

> [Being] the builder of not just my own, but other peoples' networks is something I really want to do and am dedicated to doing. I think that that has always been instinctively something I've been working on. It's definitely something I did in running an arts not-for-profit. I wanted to get poets, visual artists, musicians, dancers, and theater people working together in a way that we were not. I wanted to get scholars hooked in, and I wanted to get activists hooked in. The concept of finding and bringing out great work that other people were already doing and helping other people hear and build upon that is something I think I have always done. It's what led me to be a dramaturge, and it's what led me to be interested in not-for-profit work…[and] when I discovered the officially theorized world of public engagement in academics, that just made sense to me. …I didn't have the scholarship to really theorize or think through that relationship building. It wasn't that I wasn't being intentional, but it was helpful to have more language, more models, and other people who were thinking intentionally about it to talk with. That was definitely one of my favorite things about being involved in PAGE and Imagining America.

Further, Maya relayed how the new language and framings she learned through the

PAGE program were tools to advance her existing work in new ways within academia, as

universities have also begun learning the language and value of community engagement. She

explained,

> Folks in ethnic studies have for the most part always been doing very movement and community-aligned work. …Being in academic spaces and also just learning how you play the game, how you apply for grants, how do you make yourself marketable, you see that these are keywords that are being used. Part of my identity is I've always seen myself as a scholar activist. However, I recognize that terms like community-engaged and public scholarship in many ways are being monetized in institutions. …So I will say that PAGE in many ways gave me the language to think about what it was that I was already doing. Build support where I'm at. I think it also gave me the confidence to be able to name it. Because also it's like, "Oh, the university's paying attention." And I think that's something that Imagining America has done overall. It's really forced the university, and I say university broadly, to really find value in community-engaged scholarship and public scholarship, and in ways it already had. There wasn't this sort of deep appreciation…of some of these community-engaged projects, many of which center on race, on social justice issues, food justice issues. It's kind of just seen as race work. But then you name it as community-engaged, and it takes on a whole new life for some new reason. So, for me, it allowed me to develop a new confidence because now the university has language to be able to talk about the work that we've already been doing.

Considering New Professional Possibilities

As participants considered new ways of naming and talking about their work, they also considered new ways of doing their work as a result of participating in the PAGE program. For participants who knew they were interested in careers in academia, being a PAGE Fellow helped clarify the nature of their community engagement work. Involvement in the PAGE program influenced other participants to consider professional possibilities beyond a tenure track faculty role after graduation. Finally, for some participants, the reverse happened; being in the PAGE program helped them see the possibility for an artist or practitioner to consider a career in academia.

Jane knew that she wanted to pursue a career in academia studying higher education; however, she was less clear how her interests in community engagement could be incorporated into this career. The PAGE program helped refine the way she thought about her work, as she stated, "I feel like it pushed me to question, 'Okay are you just studying community engagement or are you doing community engagement? How could you hold both in concert?'"

For some participants, like Sylvia, who later discovered they did not want a career in academia, the PAGE program was a lifeline that kept them in graduate school and encouraged them to explore other potential professional possibilities. Sylvia shared,

> I think a lot of people have said this in PAGE, so it's not really a cliché, but I don't think I would have stayed in grad[uate] school if I hadn't found the PAGE community. When I decided I didn't want to be a professor, the PAGE folks made it very clear that was fine and that there were so many other avenues. I had kind of amorphously known that there were other avenues, but if I hadn't been part of Imagining America, I wouldn't have seen that.

For PAGE Fellows who already knew they did not want to become professors after graduate school, like Etta, the PAGE program gave them more confidence to go against graduate school norms and explore other options. Etta reflected,

Before I became a PAGE Fellow, I knew I didn't want to be a professor, but everybody around me were becoming professors. My advisors only knew how to tell me how to become a tenure track professor, and I didn't want to do that. Once I became a PAGE Fellow, …[I met] folks who are interested in being completely outside of the academy, or using the academy for what they can use it for in order to do other community work. It's all different kinds of ways. I think I got just more inspired by PAGE. Even though I knew what I didn't want to do, I felt like I became more comfortable with being okay with doing something different, like going down a road less traveled.

Sylvia also identified with the PAGE program as a space that fueled feelings of liberation and openness to exploring expanded career opportunities, whether inside or outside of academia. She stated,

I came back [from the conference] so liberated with possibility around what could be available to me, that so many of the PAGE Fellows had that same ethic. Whether it was, "Yeah, of course I'm not going to be a professor, I want to be a curator." Or "I don't think I'm going to be a professor because I'm going to be doing X." Or even some of them that clearly are professors but were always open to the idea of there being other paths. Even if they weren't clear on the path that they want, just being very, very understanding and nonjudgmental about pursuing a different path.

Finally, a few participants, like Derick, came from careers outside of academia before starting graduate school. For these participants, the PAGE program influenced them to consider that a career path within academia might be possible for an artist or practitioner. Derick remembered,

By participating [in PAGE], it made me think about my career in academia. It made me take that part of my work more seriously because it wasn't necessarily something that was facilitated for me by the program that I was in. I found, in a lot of ways, that participating in Imagining America [and] PAGE offered me some professional development opportunities that I wasn't getting elsewhere. Part of that was on the level of understanding or being more literate in the career pathways of academics from other disciplines. That's something that I think is pretty rare in art programs because you really aren't necessarily exposed to that. And so, that was really helpful.

New Relationships

Together, PAGE and IA provided a unique space and network where participants experienced relational versus transactional approaches (i.e., approaches more focused on long-

term rather than short-term benefits) to professional networking and support around their emerging identities as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. These relational approaches were facilitated through finding a group of similarly minded people who understood community-engaged work and were guided by an ethic of care and compassion for others as people, which led to different kinds of opportunities and support in professional spaces and networks.

Finding your People

Overall, participants felt that PAGE and IA were positive, affirming spaces where they felt validation, as opposed to shame, for both their personal backgrounds and their professional choices. They also found a group of people with similar backgrounds, mindsets, and career interests, including those who could serve as mentors. In addition to developing interpersonal connections during the PAGE program, the majority of participants felt a sense of relief in not having to explain and defend their community-engaged work to the people they found in PAGE or IA spaces, as often this is how they felt with their advisors, departments, or disciplines. Amelia noted that the PAGE program was important for her because it provided space to connect with folks like her, coming from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education. She said, "The PAGE Fellows, they're super diverse. There are a lot of folks of color, a lot of first gen folks. That was really cool, because I was like, 'Oh wait, there are other people like me out there.'" Amelia also found that many PAGE Fellows connected to each other because they did not necessarily fit traditional expectations of who can be part of academia, especially as artists. She stated,

> We're kind of these weirdo artist nerds. We're trying to find our friends who are also weirdo artist nerds. And then we found each other, and now we're going to do these weirdo artist things with the conference and then also with the PAGE fellowship.

Similarly, Frankie was specifically encouraged to apply to the PAGE program to connect with

people in academia with interest in community engagement. They remembered,

> Folks [told] me, "Hey, there's this fellowship through Imagine America that I think you
> would greatly benefit and also really continue to connect with people that you're
> seeking." I think that's important to note because it wasn't just, "Oh, this will further this
> type of work that I'm doing." It was more, "this type of space is valuing community and
> the important questions that you're already asking as you're entering [community]
> spaces."

When it came to career choices, Sandra noticed that while she did not feel shamed for considering jobs outside academia, other PAGE Fellows who experienced this found connecting to people through the PAGE program played a healing role similar to therapy. She stated,

> I think for some of my colleagues, that was maybe a bigger deal, getting to be around
> people who were also thinking about other types of careers and saw their scholarship in a
> different way. It was great for me too, but I think for some people, it was really sort of a
> therapy session. To be like, "Oh finally, I found my people."

Tom further explained that IA offered an opportunity to develop mentoring relationships through these connections. He shared, "At IA, I met music education professors from around the country. One of them is one of my best friends now and is really a mentor." Jane also mentioned how important it was to develop these mentoring relationships early in her career. She shared about one of her mentors she met through PAGE,

> I feel like I could text him right now and ask for something. If I see him at a
> conference…he stops whatever he's doing and runs up to you and gives you a hug. I think
> that relationship has been really important for a lot of Fellows and for me personally just
> knowing there's someone that you really respect in the profession who would go to bat
> for you.

While a majority of participants found PAGE and IA to be connective spaces, a few participants mentioned their struggles to build connections during the program, which they attributed to differences in age and life experience, as well as degree type and research versus practice focus. Anne found being older than most other Fellows and being a single parent without as much flexibility in her life contributed to feelings of separateness from her cohort.

She stated,

> They started talking about let's do an end of year thing, but that would require that I flew out and found accommodations and had to find somewhere for my kids to stay. I was going, "I can't do it." I ended up not feeling as part of the group as I would've liked to because of being older and a parent.

Derick also indicated some of his own feelings of disconnect were around age and experience and "a reflection of the fact that I was an older graduate student, so part of my objectives were to have a little bit of retreat after a long period of public engagement." However, another participant struggled to connect due to their youth and professional inexperience prior to becoming a fellow. Billie shared,

> A lot of [other PAGE fellows] were a lot older than I was because there's such a broad range [of ages] when it comes to graduate students. …A lot of them had been professionals prior to going into grad[uate] school. So not only did I have this difference in experiences and perspective and values, whether different or just not yet formed. I was [young]. I had no idea what I cared about.

> Additionally, Derick reflected on difference across graduate degree types with regards to focus on practice, as well as how this contributed to a sense of disconnect for him within the PAGE program. He explained,

> I think I was the only MFA. I think that while an MFA is a terminal degree that allows you to teach, there's much more a fluid relationship between practice and academia in art than there is in a lot of fields that people get PhDs in. …It's tricky how art practice figured into the PAGE Fellows. It's much clearer how being a professor that teaches art in higher ed[ucation], how that connects to it. But being an independent artist, that was sometimes a little bit was missing in terms of that point of connection.

> Correspondingly, a few participants who did find community in the PAGE program nonetheless struggled to remain connected after their cohort year ended, due to the structure of IA as a membership association and the lack of clear direction from the PAGE program to maintain alumni connections. Sylvia reflected, "It's the thing I miss most about being affiliated with the university. But there's no justification [in my current professional role] for me to go to

[the] Imagining America [conference] anymore, even though I'd love to." In reflecting how his

own involvement fell off, Martin stated, "Some of that is probably because of the way Imagining

America is structured. There's member institutions, and the school I wound up working at is not

a member. The place where I went to grad[uate] school was a member." Martin also shared,

"There weren't that many ongoing connections [to PAGE]. …After I left [my graduate

institution], I didn't really maintain any connection. …I didn't see a way to do that." Similarly,

Maya stated,

> We had the conference, and then really after the conference it kind of sizzled out. It wasn't much of a structure or a clear expectation on what fellows were supposed to do beyond attend the conference and the blog. I think it really in many ways was a lost opportunity for some great work that could have happened.

However they felt about developing interpersonal connections, for a majority of

participants, being in a different kind of space with individuals from PAGE and IA allowed them

to let go of the extra work of explanatory and defensive conversations and start engaging with

each other from a different place of understanding and acceptance of their work. Frankie recalled

that talking about their work with individuals from PAGE and IA was different from talking

about it in other spaces. They stated,

> A lot of times I have to give so much context and so much information for people to be like, "Oh, I think I get what you're trying to do," versus everybody just started from a place of like, "We get this work. You don't need to do all of this to validate it. Yes, it's important. Let's start from there and just talk."

Similarly, Sylvia shared that her own experience coming together with other PAGE Fellows

provided relief, comfort, and a sense of energy compared to academic spaces. She remembered,

> Everyone felt like they were doing double – how frustrating it always felt and how comforting it felt to come together to be like, "You don't have to explain yourself. We get it." I'm just remembering how often our calls would start with, "My advisor doesn't really understand what I'm doing," or, "No one in my department gets me," or, "I feel all alone in my discipline." Then coming to this space that felt like we all get each other – just what a relief that is, how energetically important that is, to have space like that.

Discovering a Family and Shared Humanity

Participants shared that when it came to the people and the culture of IA and PAGE, their experiences were different from what they found in other academic spaces. The culture of IA and PAGE was positive and affirming, and it fostered relationships that felt as close as family. These relationships sometimes deepened over time, extending beyond participants' cohort year, especially for those who went on to become co-Directors for the PAGE program. Underlying these deep, familial relationships was a foundational culture of care for each other.

While applying to the PAGE fellowship, Mae remembered talking to an alumna of the program who described the culture of the fellowship as a family. She explained,

> The way [the alumna] described PAGE was very much, "This is a family. Come be here in this with us. Grad[uate] school's miserable. We can help." …I wasn't even thinking about what [the fellowship] actually meant, in terms of professionalization within the field. I literally was just like, "I just want to meet other people who are similarly oriented and like-minded and have community."

When it came to initial experiences within the PAGE program and the IA conference, Derick found that these spaces had a different culture. He shared, "There's a certain positive aspect to the culture, affirming aspect of the culture, which feels significantly different than other kinds of academic conferences that I had had exposure to." Beyond initial experiences like the conference, being in community with each other throughout the year was important to participants. Tom remembered regular virtual fellowship meetings included more than just a presentation on the topic of community engagement. He stated, "We would meet monthly...We called them turn-the-page dinner parties. We basically Skyped while we were making food in our respective parts of the country and just talked about everything from public engagement to whatever." For some PAGE Fellows, like Jane, who then went on to become PAGE co-Directors, relationship building continued on an even deeper level. Jane shared,

Vulnerability and relationships and connection and humanizing spaces has always been an interest of mine. …PAGE gave me a group, a support network to help me do that, or to see what I was missing. I'm not sure. It was actually a little bit less as a PAGE Fellow, and it's been more the relationships as a PAGE Director, because that's where a lot of those relationships really deepened. The people who talk about these really deep, intense experiences are often people who've been involved for multiple years, often in a co-Directorship role…We would stay together at the conference. Then we would do a co-Director retreat in a location where we'd cook meals together and do planning and go on walks. I remember the last one I was at, I just got to know [at least one individual] in such a different way.

In addition to nurturing these deeper, more familial relationships, participants shared that

the PAGE program cultivated a sense of care for each other as human beings first. Reflecting on

one of her earliest memories in the fellowship, Jane remembered feeling that sense of care during

a particularly difficult time in her life. She explained,

I showed up to the [PAGE] summit, and…I had just come from caregiving for my dad for the weekend. I missed multiple dissertation deadlines, and I was just not feeling good. Couldn't sleep the night before. I just was not feeling confident, and here I was in this academic space. I'm like, "Great; another reason I have to perform today." We were going around for introductions. It got to me, and I just started crying. I couldn't even get it out, and I said, "Come back to me. I just need a little bit of time." I had never done that before. It was so embarrassing, but I couldn't hold it in. Then we kept going around the circle, and it got to [another fellow]. He started off and said, "I want to share this Adrienne Rich quote, 'There must be those among whom we can sit down and weep and still be counted as warriors.'" Then he proceeded with his introduction. I just felt instantly drawn to this human and felt the sense of relief about what had just happened, as opposed to a shame for not performing my academic self or my professional self in that space. [The fellow who shared that quote] described it as radical care. He'll talk about that a lot. I felt that instantly when he said that quote. Then that carried forth with me – a space where you can care for people where they're at and yes, carry forward supporting their public engagements, identities, projects and scholarship, and career paths, but it's caring first and foremost for each other as humans.

Collective Construction of Opportunities and Support

Grounded in these deep, familial relationships and a culture of care, participants

collectively constructed and took part in the types of professional opportunities and support they

wanted and needed for themselves and for others. These included the IA conference/PAGE

summit and other professional conferences, as well as choosing to be part of IA affinity groups

or serve on the IA board. They developed a lifelong network they could go to. Both the IA

conference and similar professional conferences offered opportunities to develop professional

networks around community engagement. Maya explained that even after her PAGE cohort year

ended, she attended the IA conference and "met some really great folks from a panel, a lot of the

sort of community-engaged groups that are doing work there" and through attending IA

conferences, she been "able to maintain connections and networks." Relatedly, Etta also found

that through PAGE, she and other PAGE Fellows "had access to a discount to go" to another

similar conference where "a lot of activists were there, …and because we're PAGE Fellows we're

able to kind of sit in on those conversations with them at this conference."

Participants also took advantage of other professional development and relationship-

building opportunities like IA affinity groups and service on the IA board. Billie connected to an

IA affinity group that allowed her to explore some community engagement interests in more

depth and to build relationships in that area of interest. She explained,

> The APPS group, the assessment group, I was so excited about that because I was an
> assessment person. I was interested in evaluation. I don't know that I knew it at the time,
> but I was naturally drawn to that aspect of [community engagement] work and so really
> enjoyed getting to know [individuals involved with leading that assessment group].

Further, several participants developed deeper relationships with IA leadership through service

on IA's board. Jane had previous experience with boards, but she reflected that serving on the IA

board felt different in terms of how people treated each other and related to each other. She

shared,

> I served for one year on the [IA] board. I feel like I could call up any of those folks as
> well and know that I have that network. …When I left every person gave me a book. A
> book that had been really meaningful in their life. It just was the most beautiful gift, and I
> had this collection of books from every single person on the board. …There's something
> different there and part of me thinks it's because of the art connection and members of
> the board are also from community organizations. There's something there in an
> assumption about how people relate that feels different. It also might be ways of being,

organizing, and knowing, because there's quite a bit of diversity of thought and of identities.

In addition to these specific professional development opportunities, participants became part of a lifelong professional network. Support came in the form of new connections and a broader network outside of particular departments or institutions to provide advice and opportunities. Sylvia shared how valuable it felt to have a network outside of her department which felt special to her. She said,

> I always like having multiple different networks of people. [During graduate school] there are some folks that made really good friends with people in our own department. Those were their folks, and that's it. That was never true for me. I liked that I could have this additional network [from PAGE] that was just mine and that was kind of a special thing.

Correspondingly, Etta explained that being a PAGE alumna meant being part of a lifelong network that allowed her to continue to connect with leaders working in different areas of community engagement. She shared,

> [There was another alumna] who came into [the PAGE fellowship] before me, and she started that viral inspire within museums #museumsarenotneutral. It was all over the place, as far as museums go internationally. She was invited to [my institution] to speak, and I was able to see her and catch up a little bit. Those types of things, being able to see folks and have access to folks because you have this shared fellowship, that's been cool.

Ada shared that the network she built through the PAGE fellowship continues to provide support and advice in multiple areas of her life, from job searching to writing projects. She stated,

> [PAGE] was fantastic, primarily in the relationships that I built, the people that I met, got to know, and got to feel really have my back. And I can say have, present tense, because several of those people are still the ones that I go to and say, "I just got out of my job interview, and I don't think it went very well." Or, "I'm struggling with this really difficult piece of writing and I need to think it through. Can you have a conversation?"

Additionally, Jane's connections through the PAGE program provided an avenue for seeking advice and support that felt different from other professional networks in that it extended from

the professional to the personal realm. She reflected,

> If you say you're a PAGE Fellow there is this whole network of folks who you could count on both personally and professionally. That's the difference for me. In other types of professional spaces or professional associations I feel like I could probably call on this person for maybe an introduction or information about a job position. But [with PAGE] I feel like personally, too, I could call up someone, say like [a former IA board member] in Chicago who's working now in the Public Housing Museum. I feel like I could call them up about something with my family in Chicago, like to get a recommendation or referral. That feels different.

Further, Mae viewed ongoing relationships with PAGE Fellows as valuable not only for the support they provide in her current professional role, but also for how she chooses to support other Fellows in their professional roles. She explained,

> I just commissioned [a PAGE alum] to do a major work as part of an exhibition that I'm curating. It's all in the family. I've stayed connected professionally and personally with a lot of PAGE folks…Whenever I have something that I can do or something I need to fill with a speaker, an artist, or some person, I always am like, "Who do I know from PAGE that can do this?" They're a loose network of peers that I really love…I always try to advance them and amplify the work they're doing first.

Lori held a similar view of the PAGE network as a place for advice and collaboration on projects, and she is correspondingly committed to supporting and advancing other PAGE Fellows. She shared,

> I felt like I had built this community through the PAGE program that I could always reach back to and reconnect to whether for support or to talk through these issues in collaborating across these different realms. …If somebody came to me and said, "Hey, remember you were in my PAGE cohort, would you like to do this?" I would say, "Absolutely." …I feel a responsibility to continue talking about PAGE and assisting with that in any way that I can.

New Practices

PAGE and IA influenced not only how participants saw themselves and related to those around them, but also how they saw and related to academia and their ability to create change in this environment. Their change-making approaches embodied different ways of thinking, being, and doing, which were present across collaborative, relational, community-oriented, activist,

arts-based, and/or interdisciplinary approaches to community engagement. These approaches are representative of not only how participants go about their work, but also how they go about their lives and greater purpose in the world.

Inspired and Empowered to make a Change

As a result of their time as PAGE Fellows, participants felt inspired to make change within IA itself. They were inspired and empowered to push IA to be more radical in its efforts to support community-engaged practitioner-scholars and to support community-engaged work within higher education institutions. During her time as a PAGE Fellow, Ada remembered pushing IA to play a greater role in challenging the norms of academia and feeling proud to work alongside others involved with these kinds of radical change efforts. She shared,

> Imagining America, and particularly PAGE, was the place where I saw people saying, "Let's try to be the kind of academics that we want to work with. Let's try to make the kind of academia that we want to work in, in the future." Basically, be the change you want to see, in a professional way. …We were very conscious of trying to push Imagining America to be more bold in terms of critiquing academic institutions, conventions, and traditions [and] in making space for less traditional forms of scholarship and young scholars who wanted to also be artists, organizers, and rabble-rousers; who wanted to talk about decolonizing, indigenizing, and browning the academy; and who wanted to also find ways to confront ourselves and each other about our racist thinking. It wasn't always easy, and it wasn't even always fun, but I definitely feel like we did good work. I felt proud of what we were doing. I felt extremely reassured that there were other people at other institutions who also cared about that kind of work.

Similarly, at the end of her time as a PAGE Fellow, Lori remembered feeling a sense of collective empowerment to begin changing some of the norms of the academy. She shared,

> I wasn't alone, and a lot of really smart and interesting people [were] working on this issue and were like minded with me about it. Coming out of the [IA] conference and coming out of the PAGE program generally, I felt a sense of empowerment. I felt a sense of kinship culturally and academically, and a sense of power as a group, that we could begin to change some of the norms in academia together.

New Ways of Thinking

Tied to their efforts to create change, participants developed new ways of thinking about

their community-engaged work related to understanding others' lived experiences, incorporating

different forms of expertise developed outside academia, asking different kinds of questions as

community-engaged researchers, considering different approaches to working toward a more just

world, and contemplating what kinds of work actually matter. During her time with the PAGE

program, Billie recognized for the first time that while people can be living in the same reality,

the way they experience the world can be fundamentally different. She stated,

> The distinguishing thing for me that I got out of [the PAGE fellowship] was, my reality is different than your reality. Yes, we exist in the same reality, but they're radically different. That was not a thing for me because I went to a high school where everybody looked like me. Everybody had the same access and opportunities that I did, where I was on the lower end because I didn't live in a million-dollar house. Then to go to college at [the university I went to] and not recognize the diversity of backgrounds of experiences and to have IA be that thing that triggered it. Then you're like, "Oh, crap." That's what IA did for me, and PAGE.

Lori also experienced a shift in thinking through the PAGE fellowship, both realizing and

advocating that community-engaged work that seeks to build a more just world must recognize

that there are many different kinds of expertise included in this work, not just academic

expertise. She shared,

> The PAGE program and the work I do now are both about social justice. The collaboration necessary to build a more just world has to straddle this aspect of the academic and public realms, and they have to do it in a particular way. They have to do it in a way that privileges many different kinds of expertise. I think that's something that I was very excited about with PAGE and decided to maintain in my work. …We need to privilege multiple kinds of expertise. We need to privilege multiple kinds of communication. In fact, it's only equitable and just that we should communicate in multiple ways that bring out work behind the walls of academia in a productive, useful way.

Through her experiences with the PAGE program and the IA conference, Maya began to

ask different questions as a researcher, especially regarding community-engaged and activist

approaches to research traditionally undervalued in academia. She reflected,

> I would argue some of my faculty members, I'm thinking African American historians

who are very much rooted in the archives, weren't talking about what does it mean to do community-engaged work? What is knowledge production? Who produces knowledge? How do we decolonize the university? All these sorts of discussions. What is the role of a researcher? What does it mean to be in service? What is this sort of intersection of being a scholar and activist? What does that mean? How do you do community-engaged work? How do you do it ethically? …I try and go [to the IA conference] because these are folks who are explicitly thinking about how you engage community and publics. That's not going to happen at my African American history conference. …Whereas IA and PAGE provide a new space as being about the method, the ethics, the people, the ephemeral, and ways that I don't always get into in more research-driven spaces. Not to say that community-engaged work is not research-based, but I think there has been a tendency to devalue community-engaged work in the past and not view it as a form of research. Because, especially in history, and I keep saying history because that's my traditional training, if it ain't archived and if it's not an oral history, then it ain't research.

Sylvia's worldview shifted because of her time with the PAGE program and the PAGE Fellows. Specifically, her thoughts on what it means to have a healthy democracy expanded to include the arts and humanities. She explained,

I was in a very progressive, feminist program. …My department was very liberal, very relational, very intersectional. But I think the PAGE program was so much more diverse than my own program – ethnically, disciplinarily, what people were working on, how that showed up in the world. My worldview was deeply shaped by PAGE. …Most of my social media that is not my immediate friend group are PAGE people sharing things about museums, or immigration, or writers, and the arts. There's just always stuff that is informing me. …It's hard to even parse them, but my work and my worldview are intimately impacted by everybody that I met at PAGE and the kind of ways of knowing that see arts and humanities as integral to a healthy democracy.

Following his experiences with PAGE and IA, Martin began thinking differently about what kinds of scholarship matter and experienced more joy in creative forms of public scholarship and less worry about producing traditional forms of scholarship. He stated,

I've started to think differently about how media like podcasts can be a form of scholarship or public scholarship. Thinking about myself as a creative producer of scholarship that's maybe as much creative content as it is analytical or the kind of things that sometimes seem more who I was and what my academic life was about. …That's maybe something that experiences like Imagining America helped me not worry about so much and just have fun, make connections in the community, and who knows where it'll go. Why worry about whether that's peer reviewed always or whatever sort of academic norms used to matter to me or to other people.

New Ways of Being

Participants developed new ways of being in relationship with others as a result of their experiences with PAGE and IA. They focused on relationship building from a place of authenticity and vulnerability, leading to deeper relationships centered on collaboration and support. Ultimately, this revealed new professional and personal possibilities. Jane reflected on the importance of intentional relationship building leading up to and during the PAGE summit, including how this laid the foundation for her and the cohort to continue working together throughout the year. She shared,

> [A former PAGE Fellow I knew] did a lot of really excellent and thoughtful relationship building with me prior to the experience even starting. I very much so respected that. Just making sure I felt comfortable and I knew what was going on. She told me stories about her connections, urged me to get the most out of this experience, and volunteered to introduce me to people at the conference. Just checking in to see what I needed. That was really influential. When I showed up to our day long summit at the Imagining America conference I already knew [her], and I felt instantly very comfortable. …[Also at the summit], there's certainly an agenda but they're very flexible with the agenda in the moment, depending on what people are interested in and how it's going because it's really trying to create a foundation for the relationships at this one day that you can use to carry throughout the rest of the year.

During the PAGE program Amelia observed that people practiced authenticity and vulnerability more than might be expected from a professional fellowship, which led to deeper connection and comfort within PAGE and IA spaces and her own ability to be more authentic and vulnerable. She explained,

> A lot of fellowships, there's a lot of posturing and a lot of ego. …But PAGE is unique because for the most part, that shit didn't happen. People were really authentic, and there wasn't as much posturing. There's just more vulnerability. I think that has a lot to do with IA leadership. They created this space where that was not going to be acceptable. The way they modeled their own leadership, they're just down-to-earth, cool, you want to go have a beer with them people. I didn't want to have beers with my faculty. As much as I respect my colleagues, most of them I'm not hanging out with them on the weekends. They're just not as down-to-earth. PAGE is really special because of that. …I felt like I could let my hair down in a way and reveal the more creative parts of myself more explicitly.

Mae found the PAGE program infused with an ethos of mutual aid and support for one another, which resonated with her own ethos. She reflected,

> I don't know if it came directly out of PAGE, but I think it's an ethos that a lot of PAGE folk share. If I ever needed anything, they would drop everything and say yes. That's why anytime anybody coming through PAGE needs anything, I'm always like, "Yes," right away. …That was something that really became important and resonant for me within PAGE – a community of supporters and what else do you need type of thing.

Further, Mae described the PAGE program as an alternative model for not only how to be a professional, but also a person, which she aspired to hold on to and seek out in future professional spaces. She shared,

> I'm so hypersensitive about my own experience as a grad[uate] student that it colors everything I do and say. PAGE gave me an alternative to the abusive relationships that I had with my committee and with my colleagues and with my cohort in school. They provided an alternative community model for how to be a person, but really an academic, a mentor, an educator, and artist, scholar, curator, whatever. …I think I try to project that kind of orientation or ethos or sensibility, whatever we're calling it. I have not felt it reciprocated in the way that I had with PAGE. …Maybe that's possible [where I just moved], that kind of family creating space around who you are as a whole person and as a scholar, in whatever you're doing.

New Ways of Doing

In addition to these new ways of thinking and being, participants developed new motivations and desires for doing their work and pursuing their purpose. After being a PAGE Fellow, some participants were motivated to support other graduate students by becoming PAGE co-Directors or serving on the IA board. Additionally, they were inspired to advocate for and support graduate students at their own institutions. Sylvia felt compelled by her experiences as a Fellow to give back by becoming a PAGE co-Director. She shared,

> I think when it was time to apply to be a co-Director, that was when it was really like, "Oh, no brainer. I love this group. I want to give back." I had such a good time. …I'm glad I could do that for others. I'm glad others could do that for me. It was really a game changer.

Similarly, Frankie felt a deep connection to the PAGE program which moved them to serve both

as a PAGE co-Director and PAGE representative on the IA board. They stated,

> I felt like I had found my group of people and for those reasons I'm a co-Director and
> now a part of the [National Advisory Board]. It all started with my fellowship year. There
> was no doubt when someone's like "Would you be interested in continuing this work as a
> co-Director?" and the following year when I was asked, "Do you want to take on the role
> in the National Advisory Board?" There was like no doubt, because it was a community
> that I needed to be a part of. It was important.

> Inspired by his time with the PAGE program, Tom took on a leadership role for a

community engagement focused committee on his campus as a graduate student. He reflected,

> It positioned me in a unique place at [my graduate institution] as a grad[uate] student who
> might know something about engagement. I ended up becoming the facilitator for the
> Graduate Engagement Committee that came out of [my university's public engagement
> office], basically, to understand what are the trials, tribulations, and successes of graduate
> students? We wrote a whole report that we coauthored.

> Further, Derick now works with graduate students in his full-time job and was inspired

by the PAGE program's approach to developing multi-institutional graduate student networks.

He explained,

> I think PAGE, in particular, made me excited about multi-institutional graduate student
> networking and relationship-building. For instance, I just took my grad[uate] students to a
> conference last weekend, and I made sure that we set up a lunch with another grad[uate]
> program that was also at the conference that was from a school [in that same city].
> …That immediately was very exciting for the grad[uate] students to see themselves in
> relationship to people from another institution. Maybe this is particularly important
> within small departments.

> Outside of supporting other graduate students, participants sought to integrate

interdisciplinary approaches to community engagement into their work, as well as arts-based

approaches. Through committee work at his graduate institution, Tom developed an appreciation

and familiarity with working with colleagues doing community-engaged work across disciplines.

He reflected,

> It was people from all across campus, from veterinary science to music to English, all

kinds of fields, STEM. We basically authored a short paper about engagement opportunities at [my graduate institution] and challenges. That is a really cool thing to do as a doctoral student, totally outside music education. It put me in contact with people who think about issues in different ways as opposed to being cloistered in my school of music office. To this day, I think that the tentacle that I couldn't see as a PAGE Fellow that has extended into my professional life at [the university where I now work] is that it's easy for me to work with colleagues across campus. Whether it's for a one-off lecture, doing the scholarship of teaching and learning activities, giving a talk at another school, …it gave me a place to begin conversation through public engagement. I learned that a lot of us are doing this kind of work all across the university.

Similarly, as an art professor, Derick found he had a new understanding that methodologies can form a common ground across disciplines and a new desire for interdisciplinary collaboration. He shared,

I'm very aware of the limitations of art as a standalone disciplinary category. Part of that is because I've had experiences like the PAGE Fellows program and Imagining America that brought lots of people together, and you could see the way they fluidly move in a collaborative way with people in other kinds of disciplines. That was exciting to me. It almost stood out as a contrast to the place that I work now, which is an independent school of art and design. It actually doesn't have those other disciplinary categories to bounce off of. That has specific consequences for the kind of stuff that I teach in terms of social engagement because society is a complicated system, and it is made up of many different kinds of knowledge. To work at a school where so few of those kinds of knowledge are represented actually sometimes makes it hard to have conversations about social engagement because you can't just walk down the hallway and talk to somebody who works in a different form of knowledge production because they're just not there. The PAGE fellowship made me aware of that and of the value of having cross-discipline collegial relationships. …There's a way that rather than having a disciplinary common ground, we have a common ground in terms of our methodologies. That is a really exciting place to meet people and connect.

Amelia is now a faculty member working with public policy and administration students and finds ways to incorporate creative approaches to her teaching. She described,

I try to get [my students] to really tap into that part of them – creativity. …That's one thing I think Imagining America really helped me to get back to. That and also to encourage my students to see themselves as artists, either artists of administration or public policy, to bring more visual elements into their work. …Some of them are really intimidated by it. Some of them are like, "I'm not an artist. I'm not a visual person." …One thing I work really hard with students on is to unravel that kind of self-concept that can be limiting and help them tap into their own creativity. …I think there too, Imagining America provided space to really think about how you can bring in that artistry

and creativity to all aspects of our work in the academy.

Finally, as their approaches to community-engaged work changed, participants found more clarity in the possibility and purpose of their work. Derick gained greater clarity in the job search process and the types of jobs he would or would not accept. He reflected,

> One of the things that was really on my mind was a very Imagining America kind of framing of the job where I was like, "If I can find a job that has equal parts orientation towards the classroom, the institution, and the city that it's in, then I'll totally go for it. But if it's a different kind of configuration, then I think maybe those jobs in higher ed[ucation] aren't for me." Sure enough, I was able to find a job like that. It's been really satisfying because it's kind of oriented around those three different areas.

Once in her role as a faculty member, Maya expressed greater clarity in terms of how she navigates her institution and advocates for support for her work. She stated,

> The models and language PAGE and IA provided absolutely inform how I navigate this institution, some of the things that I ask for here. I see an absence of this and think, "You know we can do this. There are models for it." In many ways, Imagining America…helps me to be able to provide language as well as models for the institution that I'm at now, saying, "This is possible."

Etta, who is an entrepreneur, gained greater clarity on how her work, paid or unpaid, contributes to the greater good of her communities and neighborhoods. She shared,

> The bulk of my work, it has to do with my business. But I also do stuff that I don't make any money off of. These TED events, they take up much of the year to plan, but I don't make any money off of that. I don't get anything from that, but I think it's for the good of the culture. It's for the neighborhood. It's for the community. TED is an international platform, and if you know that there are people who've got stories that need to be shared, ideas that need to be spread, then it's like, if I have the flexibility and the ability to ensure or to work towards doing my part and letting other folks know about their greatness, then I'm going to try and do that. I think many of the PAGE Fellows embodied that.

Tom, who is a faculty member, saw greater clarity in how his work is ultimately in service to supporting the next generation of community-engaged practitioner-scholars. He explained,

> I'm hoping that students when they graduate…, particularly my music education students, that they'll want to continue the work of exploration. They'll want to make sure that their future learners are out in the community doing things, not for trophies and gold medals…but they'll want to do it because they know it's a good thing to do for the

community. It's a good thing to do for their students and to continue that cycle. I think, possibly, it could be PAGE and [the public engagement office I worked in as a graduate student] that were the genesis of this heart of service and service at the heart in my professional career today.

Summary

At times during their professional development journeys, participants found their emerging professional identities out of alignment with the values and norms of higher education institutions. Yet, in IA and the PAGE program, participants found a space more aligned with their values, motivations, and desires. Despite varied backgrounds, through the PAGE program, participants found examples of people and approaches that resonated with their values and motivations and drew them toward new conceptualizations, relationships, and practices as professionals. Being in this space of revelation, affirmation, and transformation was important to participants' professional identity development as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. While the PAGE program was situated among these complex connections and played a role in participants' professional identity development, it is by no means the only experience or setting which had influence. However, there is a clear link between participants' experiences with the PAGE program and their complex, evolving professional identities as community-engaged practitioner-scholars.

CHAPTER 6: EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION

My research sought to answer the question: How does participation in a graduate fellows program offered by a community engagement professional association contribute to the professional identity development of a community-engaged practitioner-scholar? In pursuit of answering this question, in the first three chapters I described why and how I examined this question through semi-structured interviews with 15 alumni of the Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows program (See Appendix D for a more detailed description). As this was a basic exploratory qualitative study, I was open to what might emerge from these interviews through an inductive versus deductive approach to data collection and analysis. From collection and analysis of the narratives shared by these 15 PAGE alumni, six major themes emerged. I grouped these themes into two areas of focus – the people and the setting. The people focused on the themes of participant backgrounds and ways of work, and the setting focused on themes of tension within the academy, new conceptualizations, new relationships, and new practices. Below, I share my thoughts on these findings as related to my research question, to relevant literature, and to those who may hold similar interests in graduate student professional identity development.

The People

In Chapter 4, my focus was to provide greater understanding of the individuals who participated in my research study. First, I outlined brief demographic summaries of participants, as well as anecdotes of significant aspects of participant backgrounds which they chose to share as key to understanding their professional identities and work. Then, I offered additional participant anecdotes that provided insight into the varied ways participants described their current professional identities and work as community-engaged practitioner-scholars.

What participants chose to share demonstrates that it is necessary to go beyond traditionally examined demographics (e.g., race, gender, class) to understand the professional identity development of these community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Based on what participants felt was important to know about them to understand their professional identity development, several kinds of life experiences emerged as significant because of how they influenced participant values and motivations. For example, geographical places where graduate students found themselves throughout their lifespan were important, especially from a young age. It was also critical to look at families of graduate students and how familial relationships influenced them in supportive or challenging ways. In my study all participants attended college, so it was important to understand the role of educational settings from high school through college and the learning choices individuals made as participants grew older. World events also played a role in the lives of graduate students, especially those that contributed to individual or collective trauma, so these were useful to consider. Finally, it was important to look at the relationship of identities to privilege and marginalization within the systems and structures that graduate students found themselves both personally and professionally.

The complexity of participant identities and life experiences mirrored the complexity of how they described their identities and work as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Again, this is important to recognize in order to understand participants' professional identity development. For example, participants varied the words and language they used to describe their engaged identities and work, and they also pointed to the importance of shifting the narratives they used to describe themselves and their work depending on the audience and purpose of sharing those narratives. These variations and shifts in language and narratives are important to acknowledge. Participants also spoke to the often-multifaceted nature of their roles

as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Their roles spanned across university and community lines, crossed boundaries of academic disciplines, and incorporated different approaches to engagement. The intricate interweaving of these roles is also critical to consider. Finally, participants described their community-engaged work as having deeper meaning, specifically being in pursuit of social change and justice, as well as something they do regardless of financial compensation. This layered significance of their engaged work is central to greater understanding of participants as professionals.

Studying professionals as whole, complex people emerged as a vital research study finding and should also be considered by those who seek to conduct similar future research or design supportive spaces, communities, programs, or policies for graduate students with an interest in community engagement. Whether interested in theory and research studies or practice and program administration, an important takeaway from this study is that it is important to pay attention to the personal and social identities and life experiences of graduate students interested in community engagement, as well as how those factors may influence values and motivations for why and how they do this kind of work. These findings resonate with more recent student development theories that seek to understand student identity holistically (i.e., Jones and McEwen's (2000) Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI)), that examine how identity is tied to context, such as life experiences (i.e., Abes, Jones, and McEwen's (2007) Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (RMMDI)), and that explore how student identity is situated within structures and systems of both privilege and oppression (i.e., Jones and Abes' (2013) Intersectional Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (I-MMDI)).

Those interested in supporting the professional development of community-engaged practitioner-scholars must be prepared and open to considering the layered identities and

experiences of individuals, as well as the complex values and motivations behind the work these individuals want to do. Regardless of graduate students' desired roles or ideal organizations or how they conceptualize and go about their work, professional development programs for community-engaged practitioner-scholars must find a way to support the desire to pursue this work as a calling meant to bring positive social change and greater justice into the world. Learning and development experiences, both within higher education and professional associations, must not only acknowledge these personal identities, experiences, values, and motivations, but also encourage graduate students to draw upon them as they learn and grow into their professional identities, roles, and work as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. This is similar to arguments made in adult learning theory, which state that older students, like a majority of graduate students, have already formed a sense of self and social roles, draw from their lived experiences, and bring their own internal motivations to learning experiences (Merriam, 2001).

Assuming it is possible to compartmentalize professional lives from personal lives would be a disservice to these graduate students and likely result in misalignment between who these individuals see themselves to be, both as human beings and professionals, and the kinds of institutions in which they study and may later work. According to Slay and Smith (2011) there are three key influences on how individuals view themselves and their identity in relation to their profession: socialization processes, career transitions, and internal redefinitions of priorities. My research study focused on the socialization processes graduate students experienced while part of a professional association fellowship program and how those experiences related to their professional identity development as a community-engaged practitioner-scholar. As indicated in Weidman et al.'s 2001 graduate student socialization model, the individual backgrounds that

students bring into graduate studies are part of socialization; and therefore, these backgrounds are tied to professional identity development. However, when placed alongside my research study findings, the socialization model seems lacking in how it helps us understand community-engaged practitioner-scholar identity development. For example, the 2001 Weidman et al. model points to just preparation and predispositions as critical areas of graduate student backgrounds.

Over the last two decades, Weidman et al. (2001) and other scholars who used this model recognized these background areas were incomplete in scope, which led to the revised 2020 student socialization model (Weidman & DeAngelo, 2020). The more recent model takes a broader look at all students (e.g., undergraduate and graduate), and adds additional critical background areas to consider, including aptitude, agency, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender identity, and nationality. While this revised model better aligns with some of the graduate student backgrounds that emerged in my research study (i.e., personal and social identities like class, race, gender, and nationality and preparation through prior education), it does not directly take into account more of the lived experiences described by participants, such as place, family, world events, or privilege and marginalization. These lived experiences and connected values and motivations point to the underlying "why" behind my study participants' backgrounds and interests in community engagement, and they are not likely to be "relinquished" during the professional identity adoption stage of the graduate socialization process described by Weidman et al. (2001).

My study results demonstrate that when seeking to understand professional identity development, it is not enough to know that various graduate student backgrounds exist. Going deeper and seeking to understand how and why those backgrounds came to exist is also necessary. For example, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model describes different

forms of what she calls capital, or assets and relationships, which include aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. Yosso also explains these forms of capital frame the backgrounds students bring with them into higher education, in particular marginalized students. Forms of capital, like linguistic and familial, connect to the critical life experiences that emerged in my study such as how and why places and families (including their language use and cultural practices) can shape graduate student backgrounds. Privilege and marginalization based on identities and experiences represent other critical life experiences of my study participants, which formed a kind of resistant capital similar to those Yosso characterizes as going against the "norm" (2005, p. 76).

Acknowledging experiences of marginalization, as well as resistance to marginalization, is useful to understanding how and why the life experiences community-engaged graduate students bring into higher education and professional association settings influence their professional identity development. As shown in my study, when graduate students with an interest in community engagement have those interests misunderstood or disregarded within their academic institutions, receive both pushback against and lack of support for engaged teaching and research as graduate students, and are told to wait to pursue their passions not only as graduate students but also as early career faculty, this goes beyond the expected disequilibrium most graduate students experience during their graduate studies and instead results in marginalization of their developing community-engaged practitioner-scholar identities. New ways of mentoring these students are needed, including through external groups like professional associations and community organizations (Krabill, 2012).

Delving more deeply into participants' professional ways of work as community-engaged practitioner-scholars, it is clear the work of community engagement is also often complicated

and messy. Similar to participants' backgrounds, when it comes to participants' ways of community-engaged work, it is important to pay attention to potential complexity, to be prepared and open to considering a variety of ways of work, and to support and encourage community-engaged practitioner-scholars in their explorations of these ways of work. In my research study, the choice of words, language, and even conceptualization and framing of what "engaged" work is varied from person to person. This is reflective of the deep, multifaceted legacy of community engagement (see Part 1: Histories of Education and Engagement in *The Cambridge Handbook of Service-Learning and Community Engagement* by Dolgon et al., 2017) and similar to other recent reflections and scholarship from emerging engaged scholars (Gilvin, et al., 2012; Post, et al., 2016), where different identities and experiences give rise to different ways of doing this work.

However, recent research on faculty attempts to provide a new conceptual model of engaged scholarship outlined in four frames: civically-engaged scholarship, community-engaged scholarship, publicly-engaged scholarship, and critically-engaged scholarship (Blanchard & Furco, 2021). Yet, despite being a helpful starting point to teasing apart the complexity of engaged work, even Blanchard and Furco acknowledge that while their model "shows distinct delineation among and between the frames, in reality, each frame incorporates aspects of the others to varying degrees" (p. 33). This acknowledgement aligns with what emerged in my research study, that to date, there is no one definition or conceptualization that truly captures the reality of engaged work.

Beyond the many individual conceptualizations that may guide community-engaged work, my research study indicates that understanding this work is complicated because it crosses multiple boundaries, in particular personal and professional, community-university, and

disciplinary boundaries. The concept of boundary spanning (Van Schyndel, et al., 2019; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010) offers a starting place from which to understand the types of boundary-spanning professional roles community-engaged practitioner-scholars may take on. Further, my research study shows that any framing of the professional work of community-engaged practitioner-scholars must take into account that for many, their work encompasses more than a job. It is a calling to make a difference in communities both close to home and around the world. As described by Palmer (1999), it may be viewed more as a life purpose or vocation. This calling reaches beyond the professional realm and aligns the whole person. Again, it is not enough to know that complex ways of engaged work exist. Those who seek to conduct future research on graduate students with an interest in community engagement should explore how and why these different ways of work exist, and administrators should seek to design spaces, communities, programs, or policies that support, rather than marginalize, exploration of this type of work during graduate studies.

The Setting

In Chapter 5, my focus remained on my study participants, but it turned to their experiences as related to involvement in the PAGE program and the relationship between these experiences and their backgrounds and ways of work. First, I described challenges faced by these community-engaged practitioner-scholars as part of their particular experiences within academia as graduate students and recent graduates. Then, I turned to ways the setting of PAGE and IA created spaces for participants to not only recognize, but also challenge traditional notions of professional identity development within the academy. Finally, I described the ways participation in the PAGE program affirmed certain aspects of participants' developing professional identities, brought together PAGE alumni and other individuals in a supportive

community around these professional identities, and contributed to continued acts of resistance to the traditions and norms of the academy as part of participants' ongoing journeys as community-engaged practitioner-scholars.

As participants described not only their current professional roles, but also their journeys into those roles from graduate school onward, many stories of tension within the academy emerged. While it may be that some spaces and individuals supportive of community engagement exist within academia, my study participants on the whole did not experience the types of support Gardner (2009) describes as critical to graduate student success and development (e.g., strong faculty, advisor, and peer support for community engagement). During their graduate studies, most often participants experienced tensions with individuals in their academic programs, departments, and even the broader institution who did not understand, support, or in some cases directly challenged their emerging community-engaged practitioner-scholar identities. Similar tensions emerged during job searches, both from within their graduate institution (e.g., advisors writing recommendations) and from institutions to which they were applying (e.g., search committee evaluation). For those who continued to work in academia, tensions remained evident once they were employed and on an academic career path with the pressures of tenure and promotion policies. Even in cases where institutions or programs were not actively against community engagement, participants often needed to seek out understanding, support, resources, and community elsewhere.

Participants pointed to the PAGE program and the broader IA network as places where they examined tensions within the academy and emerged with a variety of new professional conceptualizations. Participants realized that there were others inside and outside academia working to reimagine higher education and community engagement. In particular, they observed

how arts-based and/or justice-oriented approaches to community engagement could be incorporated into their community-engaged work. Participants then began shifting their own mindsets and moving toward more integrated professional identities and ways of work that embraced community engagement. This included developing and utilizing new vocabulary and narratives around their work. As a result of these shifts and embraces, participants felt more confidence to consider new professional possibilities as community-engaged practitioner-scholars.

At the same time as participants were examining these tensions and developing new individual conceptualizations of themselves, many were developing new relationships. They found people within the PAGE program and the broader IA network they related to in ways that they could not relate to others in their existing professional networks. In finding these people, participants were able to start conversations about their work from a different place, less focused on explaining and justifying their efforts and more focused on understanding and affirming. As they developed new relationships with others part of the broader IA network, participants discovered that these relationships felt more compassionate, familial, and relational versus competitive, individualistic, and transactional. Through these types of affirming relationships, participants were able to collectively construct opportunities and find support for their emerging identities as community-engaged practitioner-scholars.

Finally, because of their individual and collective development, participants both experienced and developed a set of new practices as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. The PAGE program and the broader IA network were spaces where participants were inspired to make and be the change they wanted to see in the world and in academia, including supporting future graduate students. This inspiration also sparked new ways of thinking, being, and doing,

especially more interdisciplinary and arts-based approaches to their work as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Participants also experienced greater alignment not just in their paid jobs, but also in their life purpose.

Another vital study finding was that community engagement professional associations which offer fellowship programs, for example the IA PAGE Fellows program, can have a deep impact on graduate students and their emerging professional identities and practices as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Study findings demonstrate that despite sometimes facing a lack of support for community-engaged work in their discipline, department, and/or institution, after participating in the PAGE program participants felt more confident embracing community-oriented aspects of their identity and work, more motivated to expand the scope of their community-engaged work, and more driven to pursue community-engaged roles and create similar spaces for others interested in this type of work.

The Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) graduate student socialization model that provided a starting place for my study describes three main socialization processes (i.e., interaction, integration, and learning) and the mechanisms that drive them (i.e., knowledge acquisition, investment/involvement, and engagement) in higher education settings. The model also mentions personal and professional communities as important settings for socialization; however, it has a more minimal focus on the importance of the ways graduate students are professionally socialized outside of academic programs and institutions. Further, in reference to the updated Weidman and DeAngelo (2020) student socialization model, the authors state "socialization processes that occur largely outside higher education institutions but during the periods in which students are enrolled remain one of the most under-studied and least understood areas of college impact scholarship" (2020, p. 317). In line with this gap in the research, results

from my study reinforce the need to further study professional associations and their fellowship programs as important sites of socialization.

More research should also be done on spaces like the PAGE program by those interested in the topic of community engagement professional development or in the design of supportive spaces, communities, programs, or policies for graduate students with an interest in community engagement. In particular, my study points to the importance of additional research on communal spaces. The PAGE program is a cohort program with an extensive alumni community, and fellows' learning experiences were both individual and communal. Participants took away not only new ideas, vocabulary, concepts, and approaches to their work, but also a collective sense of community through new relationships that formed during their time in the fellowship.

The PAGE program seems to mirror the social learning Lave and Wenger (1991) labeled as communities of practice, where groups share a concern or passion for something they do and learn to do it better by interacting regularly. Wenger (1998) further described three dimensions of communities of practice, including: mutual engagement (i.e., how it functions), joint enterprise (i.e., what it is about), and shared repertoire (i.e., capabilities it facilitates). Given what emerged from my research on PAGE alumni who view themselves as community-engaged practitioner-scholars, the lens of communities of practice may help future researchers uncover more about what the PAGE program is about, how it functions to provide professional development opportunities, and the resulting experiences and capabilities it facilitates for participants and alumni.

Regarding how PAGE functions and the opportunities it provides, a small number of participants expressed struggles connecting with individuals in the PAGE program due to

personal circumstances or differences in degree type. A few others that did form relationships during the PAGE program did not stay as connected as they would have liked due to lack of clear PAGE alumni engagement opportunities, especially as tied to IA's membership association structure which excludes non-members from certain association benefits. With the PAGE program's focus on both individual and communal development, it is not surprising that participants noted the lack or loss of connection to individuals in the PAGE program. For those interested in studying or designing professional association fellowships or similar professional development opportunities for graduate students, student and alumni engagement should be key concerns throughout program design and evaluation. Alumni engagement seems to be a key area of improvement for the PAGE program. It also represents an ostensibly missed opportunity for IA to maintain engagement with PAGE alumni (who are representative of its main membership audience) beyond graduate school.

In addition to considering alumni engagement experiences, those interested in researching or designing similar fellowship and professional development programs for graduate students may also want to examine other issues that affect program impact, like feelings of imposter syndrome. A few of my study participants had a hard time conceptualizing themselves as a "professional" as they transitioned away from a student identity and into new professional environments with different norms and expectations. For some, the term "professional" carried the weight of White male norms of "professionalism" in the workplace, as well as the privilege experienced by those holding majority identities and marginalization experienced by those who do not. U.S. higher education institutions are serving an increasingly diverse society (Ellsworth, et al., 2022), and young people are bringing more diverse ideas to the workplace of what professionalism looks like (Goldberg, 2021). Professional associations and professional

development programs like fellowships must keep these diverse perspectives and the potential for imposter syndrome in mind as they create programming and opportunities for emerging practitioners and scholars in their fields.

Beyond individual professional development and developing a sense of community, additional complex dynamics occurred within the PAGE program. As mentioned, my study uncovered that nearly all participants experienced challenging higher education institutional environments due to their unique identities, experiences, values, and motivations as emerging community-engaged practitioner-scholars. They brought those challenges into the space of the PAGE program and the broader IA network, and rather than finding additional tension, they found the opposite – a community that recognized their challenges and actively worked to address them through a reimagining of higher education. They found an affirming community and collectively worked to provide a supportive space to further explore and learn new ways of knowing, doing, and being that embraced this identity and work.

Additionally, the relationships participants cultivated through this community went beyond the communal into the familial, providing a depth of support that was both professional and personal. As participants transitioned through their graduate student journeys into new professional roles and organizations, they brought these new ideas, relationships, and ways of work with them, as well as a sense of confidence to challenge traditional norms and make space for others with similar community-engaged identities. IA and the PAGE program cultivated a space for community-engaged graduate students to see examples of other individuals and practices that resisted oppressive traditions in the academy, to blur the lines of traditional expectations and bring together all parts of themselves in their professional roles, to feel validation and affirmation in their identities and work, to engage in their own strategies that

respond to oppressive traditions in academia, and to feel a sense of kinship and empowerment to do things differently.

The ways most participants outlined how they were marginalized within the academy yet were empowered and supported through IA and PAGE mirrors the idea of counterspaces proposed by Case and Hunter (2012). They describe counterspaces as a lens to examine settings, as well as processes and mechanisms which take place within those settings, where individuals experiencing oppression may find support to challenge deficit-oriented narratives concerning marginalized identities. Via this lens, "challenging" can happen through at least three processes and the means by which those processes occur (i.e., mechanisms). First, narrative identity work includes examining the creation and maintenance of both oppression and resistance narratives and reimagining personal narratives. Second, direct relational transactions include developing a shared sense of community which fosters empathy and security, as well as constructing and sharing adaptive strategies to respond to oppression. Third, acts of resistance include joining in collective critique and engaging in non-normative practices. The tensions within the academy described by my study participants influenced their professional identity development by challenging their identities as community-engaged practitioner-scholars. Yet, IA and the PAGE program also functioned as a counterspace which influenced their professional identity development through new revelations, affirmation, and transformation in the face of academia's often oppressive and deficit-oriented narratives toward community-engaged work.

Given my study results, the lenses of both communities of practice and counterspaces may support greater understanding of the professional development processes and mechanisms happening within IA and the PAGE program, as well as similar community engagement associations and professional development programs, and the ways these settings contribute to

the professional identity development of community-engaged practitioner-scholars. For example, a recent study on the experiences of past Chairs of the Graduate Student Network (GradSN) of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement found that participation in this role created connections, expanded their networks, developed their professional identities, and cultivated cultural capital (Kniffin, et al., 2021). Lenses like communities of practice and counterspaces may provide a way to explore these professional growth areas in more depth and also delve more deeply into the experiences of all GradSN participants. Imagining America's Joy of Giving Something Fellows program for undergraduate students or the Engagement Scholarship Consortium Emerging Engagement Scholars Workshop for graduate students and early career faculty may also find it helpful to explore professional identity development through these lenses, with a particular focus on different populations of community-engaged practitioner-scholars (i.e., undergraduate students versus early career faculty).

Finally, beyond a focus on community engagement professional associations, these two lenses may help future researchers, educators, or administrators outline, develop, understand, and evaluate the complex processes and mechanisms that may underlie professional development programs for graduate students, particularly those involved with communities outside of higher education institutions and perhaps experiencing marginalization across one or more of their identities. For example, they may be useful for community engagement offices or other units within higher education institutions that support students' community engagement efforts and which might offer graduate certificate programs, fellowships, or affinity groups related to community engagement. They may also be helpful for those who support professional students, such as in medical or nursing education or teacher education. Through these areas of professional

education, students are actively engaged in learning and conducting research alongside communities in areas like clinical care, public health settings, or PreK-12 teaching environments. Lastly, other types of organizations outside of higher education or professional associations (e.g., industry, nonprofits, etc.) that seek to engage with communities and employ graduate students or recent graduates may also find these lenses useful in their intern or early career professional learning and development initiatives.

Conclusion

The experiences, values, and motivations participants held prior to the PAGE fellowship were already informing their developing professional identities and work. However, the learning experiences, supportive relationships, and adoption of different ways of knowing, being, and doing that were part of their experiences with IA and the PAGE program served to both challenge and reinforce this identity development. As a space of resonance (and sometimes discord), the PAGE fellowship continued shaping participants' professional development journeys as community-engaged practitioner-scholars, despite obstacles from academic programs, departments, institutions, and/or their own mindset. The ways of knowing, being, and doing exemplified within PAGE program alumni and the broader IA network are a reminder that there are multiple ways of relating with each other, as well as multiple ways of understanding and creating new knowledge and practice – one does not need to follow a "traditional" path in academia as a graduate student.

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Invitation Letter

Dear [participant name],

Hello! I am writing to invite you to take part in a semi-structured interview as a part of a research study for my dissertation. The purpose of this study is to identify and interview former Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows who currently consider themselves community-engaged practitioner-scholars in order to better understand their perceptions of their professional identity development and its relationship to their participation in the IA PAGE Fellows program. You have been identified as a former IA PAGE Fellow and a potential study participant.

The interviews will take place in September and October 2019 and will be scheduled at your convenience. Interviews will be conducted in person at the Imagining America Conference or virtually via online video conferencing software for those not in attendance at the conference. I expect the interviews to last between 30-60 minutes.

If you currently identify as a community-engaged practitioner-scholar and are interested and available to participate in this study, please respond directly to this email indicating your interest. Individuals who complete interviews will be compensated with a $20 Visa gift card.

If you would like more information or to ask questions before deciding to participate in this study, please also respond directly to this email. I will follow up with you in 2-3 business days.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Trina Van Schyndel
Doctoral Candidate
Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education
Michigan State University
trina@msu.edu
217-502-2870

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Research study title: Developing a Community-Engaged Practitioner-Scholar Identity Through Participation in Professional Associations as a Graduate Student

Person(s) responsible for research: Primary Investigator (PI): Marilyn Amey; Co-Investigator (Co-I): Trina Van Schyndel

Researcher's statement: I am asking you to take part in a research study as part of my dissertation. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please let me know if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be provided to you.

Explanation of the research: You are being asked to participate in a qualitative research study. The purpose of this study is to identify and interview former Imagining America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows who currently consider themselves community-engaged practitioner-scholars in order to better understand their perceptions of their professional identity development and its relationship to their past participation in the IA PAGE Fellows program. You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this research.

Interviews will be conducted in person or through online video conferencing software. Prior to your interview, you will be provided with a brief introduction to the research study. The interview is intended to last 30-60 minutes. Interviews will be semi-structured. The researcher will guide the discussion when necessary to address the purpose of the research.

An audio/visual recording through a recording device or the online video conferencing software will be made of each interview; however, the identity of participants will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be kept completely confidential, and you will never be identified directly or indirectly with your answers. Participants will be assigned pseudonyms, as will their institutions or organizations. All data from this study will be saved on a password protected computer for three years. Only PI Marilyn Amey and Co-I Trina Van Schyndel will have access to this information.

Your right to participate, say no, or withdraw: Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

Costs and compensation for being in the study: Risks to you are considered minimal, nor is there any cost to you for participating. You will be compensated with a $20 Visa gift card after the end of your interview.

Who to contact if you have questions about the study: If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researchers: PI, Marilyn Amey at amey@msu.edu or 517-432-1056 and Co-I, Trina Van Schyndel at trina@msu.edu or 217-502-2870. The researchers can also be reached by regular mail at Department of Educational Administration, Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane Rm 423, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at phone: 517-355-2180, fax: 517-432-4503, email: irb@msu.edu, or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

Documentation of informed consent: You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by beginning this interview. Beginning this interview also indicates that you have read this consent form and have had all of your questions answered, as well as that you are 18 years of age or older.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Interview Number: _____

Interview Sections:
_____ A: Introductory information
_____ B: Professional work and identity
_____ C: IA PAGE Fellows experience
_____ D: Final comments
_____ E. Researcher's post-interview notes

A. Introductory information

Thank you again for participating in my research study. To facilitate note-taking and interview transcription, I would like to record our conversation today. Only researchers on the project will have access to the recordings and transcriptions, as outlined in the consent form. Please read the consent form now if you have not already, in order to meet Michigan State University's human subject research requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm.

Thank you. If you have any questions after the interview, please contact me, Trina Van Schyndel, at trina@msu.edu.

Before we begin, I would like to remind you that the purpose of this study is to identify and interview former Imaging America (IA) Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows who currently consider themselves community-engaged practitioner-scholars in order to better understand their perceptions of their professional identity development as related to their participation in the IA PAGE Fellows program. I have planned for this interview to last between 30-60 minutes. During this time, I have a series of questions that I would like to ask you. You indicate that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study by proceeding with the interview. Beginning this interview also indicates that you have read the consent form and have had all of your questions answered, as well as that you are 18 years of age or older. Is it okay if we begin the interview and I begin recording now?

B. Professional work and identity

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

2. Tell me about your professional work.

3. What motivated you to do this type of work?

4. How has your motivation to do this work changed over time?

5. How does this work connect to your professional identity?

6. How would you describe your professional identity?

7. How has your professional identity changed over time?

C. IA PAGE Fellows experience

8. Tell me about your experience with the IA PAGE Fellows program.

9. What motivated you to participate in this program?

10. In what ways does this program connect to the work you do?

11. In what ways does this program connect to your professional identity?

D. Final comments

12. Do you have any other comments to share related to what we discussed today?

13. Would you be willing to share any publicly available documents related to what we discussed today (e.g. CVs/resumes, syllabi, publications, presentations, websites, social media, etc.)?

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me today. Please reach out to me at any time if you have any questions or concerns about this research study.

E. Researcher's post-interview notes:

14. What other topics were discussed?

15. What further leads came from this interview?

16. Were any documents obtained? (list types of documents)

17. What connections or differences am I starting to see across the interviews?

18. What went well with this interview? What could have been improved?

APPENDIX D: ASSOCIATION AND FELLOWSHIP DESCRIPTION

All information in this document and more details about Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life (IA) and its Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows program can be found on the website: www.imaginingamerica.org.

MISSION

The Imagining America consortium (IA) brings together scholars, artists, designers, humanists, and organizers to imagine, study, and enact a more just and liberatory 'America' and world. Working across institutional, disciplinary, and community divides, IA strengthens and promotes public scholarship, cultural organizing, and campus change that inspires collective imagination, knowledge-making, and civic action on pressing public issues. By dreaming and building together in public, IA creates the conditions to shift culture and transform inequitable institutional and societal structures.

VISION

We envision a world of expansive social imagination, constructed by multiple ways of knowing, where people work together to nurture healthy, vibrant, and joyful communities.

VALUES

IA is committed to bringing people together as our full selves in critical yet hopeful spaces to imagine better ways of living, learning and working together. To do this work, we believe:
- It is important to struggle with the idea of 'America'.
- Creative culture is an important site of liberation.
- Organized ideas matter in the project of personal, institutional, and societal transformation.
- Nothing is completely new.
- Our work must be radically inclusive.
- How we learn and work with one another matters.
- Living up to our values requires institutional and societal change.

MEMBER BENEFITS

Current members include 70+ colleges and universities across the U.S., including public and private, two-year and four-year, rural and urban, and minority-serving institutions. These institutions share a commitment to IA's mission, vision, and values. Students and employees of our member institutions can take advantage of a variety of current member benefits, including:
- National Gathering
- Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellows Program
- IA/Joy of Giving Something (JGS) Undergraduate Fellows Program
- Research Initiatives
- Webinars
- Mail Art Project

- Social Community
- Regional Campus-Community Organizing
- PUBLIC: A Journal of Imagining America
- Leadership Forum
- National Spotlight

PUBLICLY ACTIVE GRADUATE EDUCATION (PAGE) FELLOWS PROGRAM

Purpose

Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) is Imagining America's (IA) network for publicly engaged graduate students in humanities, arts, and design. PAGE enhances the praxis and pedagogy of public scholarship; fosters a national, interdisciplinary community of peers and veteran scholars; and creates opportunities for collaborative knowledge production. The PAGE consortium, made up of alumni and allies of the program, promotes opportunities for mentorship and peer support from IA's network.

History

When IA launched in 1999, the national conversation about the state of higher education included deep concern for the future of graduate education, especially in the humanities—in large part a result of the acute job crisis. However, there was very little room in these conversations for input from graduate students. As IA's Founding Director Julie Ellison remembers, "I went to a lot of meetings about humanities graduate education. All of these meetings were about graduate students, and there were virtually no graduate students in the room. Those that were present were not welcomed as peer leaders."

Meanwhile, several programs devoted to fostering broad opportunities for graduate students were emerging around the country. As IA developed, Julie Ellison; David Scobey, University of Michigan's Arts of Citizenship founder; and IA's first Associate Director Dr. Kristin Hass knew the involvement of graduate students was critical in shaping the conversation about the role of public cultural practice and the future of higher education.

In 2003, University of Michigan graduate student Dana Walker worked on implementing plans for IA's graduate network, titled **Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE)**. An early invitation letter explained PAGE's intentions: "The purpose of this new graduate network, supported by Imagining America, is to both inspire and inform graduate students interested in pursuing public and community practice through the humanities, arts, and design. Because of the inevitable fiscal constraints, PAGE is a modest enterprise. But the goal–of building a national alliance dedicated to taking seriously the public capacity of graduate students in the cultural disciplines–is an ambitious one."

The PAGE network got a jumpstart at the 2003 IA conference in Illinois when University of Texas at Austin graduate student Sylvia Gale used her time on a panel intended to highlight graduate student leaders in public engagement to ask the obvious: Where was the graduate voice in this conversation? What were students actually doing in the field, and what might they have to say about their own professional preparation? How far would conversations about "transforming" higher education go without participation from the newest and soon-to-be faculty

members? Ellison approached Gale immediately and asked if she would be willing to undertake leadership of the PAGE initiative, already imagined by IA as central to the organization's mission but not yet mobilized.

Over the next year, with Ellison's support, Gale laid the groundwork for the program, and due to the dynamic participation and critical feedback from each new cohort of Fellows, PAGE's role has grown. Former Fellow Kevin Bott became the program's second director in May 2008. In 2009, Adam Bush became director, pushing the network's leadership structure towards greater collaboration.

At the start of its second decade, PAGE reframed itself as a peer network organized by a rotating cohort of PAGE alumni who share responsibility for designing support structures for the new cohort. The program has used its funding from IA to host monthly peer-designed webinars and virtual dinner parties, to support fellows as they visit one another's campuses, to generate conference programming, and to fund the co-creation of scholarly artifacts.

Eligibility Requirements
Students must be enrolled in a graduate program at an IA membership institution in order to apply to be a PAGE Fellow. Applicants can be at any stage of their graduate programs. Applicants must be graduate students during the entire academic year, but they do not have to be planning a career within higher education. Historically underrepresented groups in higher education (e.g., people of color, international students, non-US citizens, persons with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQIA persons, first-generation students, non-traditional students, and/or individuals from working-class backgrounds) are especially encouraged to apply.

2022-2023 PAGE Fellowship Benefits and Expectations
Through the requirements below, PAGE aims to foster a cohort of fellows interested in pursuing collective and innovative scholarly and community-engaged practices.

PAGE Fellows will receive:
- $500 honorarium
- Lodging and waived registration fee to attend the 2022 PAGE Summit on October 13 and the Imagining America National Gathering from October 14 – 16 in New Orleans, LA (Applicants must be able to attend the PAGE Summit and IA National Gathering to be considered).
- Opportunity to apply for professional development funds.
- Access to year-long mentorship and community-building events, both within PAGE and the Imagining America networks. These can include but are not limited to research projects, publication opportunities, and skill-building workshops.

PAGE Fellows are expected to:
- Contribute to the PAGE Blog salon
- Present a Lightning Talk (5 minute presentation) during the Imagining America National Gathering.
- Attend the PAGE Summit and IA Gathering. *Exact schedule to be determined pending changing COVID circumstances.*

- Participate in bi-monthly conference calls/webinars & cluster meetings
- Work towards a publicly engaged project