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Defining Character: A Curriculum Analysis of the Boy Scouts of America and the National Kappa League

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DEFINING CHARACTER: A CURRICULUM ANALYSIS OF THE BOY SCOUTS

OF AMERICA AND THE NATIONAL KAPPA LEAGUE

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ABSTRACT

Since the early 2000s and the dawn of No Child Left Behind and standards based accountability character education has been neglected and for the most disappeared. Many school districts can no longer justify spending part of students' school day discussing character. Some character education remains, however, it is often only addressed in health, student financing, and college and career readiness. Most other character education programs have been contracted out. Schools now rely on community partners to help students develop values and morals. This thesis will examine two of these community partners: the Boy Scouts of America and the National Kappa League. Evaluation of these organizations' curricula will answer the following questions. First, how do the Boy Scouts of America and the National Kappa League define character? Is there a connection between their definition of character and masculinity? Last, if there are differences between the two curricula, what do these differences say about race, and masculinity.

CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTER EDUCATION: SO WHAT?

What is character? Are there certain qualities a person must possess in order to be considered a righteous and virtuous person? These questions have complicated and often heavily disputed answers. Philosophers have spent the greater part of three thousand years attempting to answer them and still no consensus has been made. While these are questions that this thesis will grapple with, it is first important to narrow the scope. Instead of asking what character is and attempting to develop a definition that is encompassing of all faiths and traditions, this thesis asks only how two American organizations define character and how their definitions inform their curricula and practice. Specifically this thesis will explore how the Boy Scouts of America and the National Kappa League define character. While discussion of these two organizations will consist of the bulk of this curriculum analysis, first it is crucial that one acknowledges the necessity of these questions. In other words, it is important that the present day context of these problems is thoroughly examined.

Character Education Today

Chicago Public Schools list the following four student responsibilities in their 2014 student code of conduct. First, students are responsible for telling a school staff member about any dangerous behaviors or bullying that occurs at school, on the way to and from school, or in the school community. Next, students must also know and follow

the school rules and instructions given by the school principal, teachers, and other staff

Third, they must treat everyone in their school community with respect, and last, they

must respect school property, community property, and the property of others. Every one

of these student responsibilities, without proper time allotted for character education,

requires that students are inherently good. Helen R. Stiff-Williams, a longtime educator,

however, is concerned. According to Stiff-Williams the United States has the highest

youth homicide and suicide rates of the twenty-six wealthiest nations in the world. She

also quotes the Josephson Institute's "2008 Report Card on the Ethics of American

Youth," which found that of the 8,600 high school students surveyed 35 percent of the

boys and 36 percent of the girls disclosed that they had stolen something from a store in

the past year, that more than 25 percent they would lie to get a job, and that nearly 65

percent said they had cheated on an exam at least once in the past year. While these

statistics are startling it is important to remember that they do not include the illegal

behaviors that take place in schools. Students are bullied, physically and emotionally,

students are either freely or coerced into joining gangs, and sell and use drugs. Clearly,

given these statistics, character education is necessary (CPS, 2014; Stiff-Williams, 2010).

It is also impossible to deny the rampant inequality that exists in our school

system. Take Chicago Public Schools (CPS) for example. CPS is the third largest school

district in the United States and serves a very multicultural city. Chicago population, as of

the 2010 census, was 2,718,782. 31.7 percent of residents self-identified as White, 32.9

percent identified as Black, 28.9 percent as Hispanic or Latino, and 5.5 percent as Asian

(US Census 2010). However, the school population does not reflect the city's population.

39.3 percent of CPS students are Black, 45.6 percent are Hispanic, 9.4 percent White, and 3.6 percent Asian. Also, with 86.02 percent of CPS students recognized as economically disadvantaged CPS students do not represent the overall Chicago population (CPS, 2015). Last, although 75 percent of CPS students graduate from high school, in December 2014 the Chicago Tribune quoted a study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago. It concluded the average CPS graduate is not prepared to succeed in college. It also found that nearly one third of all high school graduates have below a 2.0 GPA and those who have decent grades often do not pursue higher education (Chicago Tribune, 2014). Most would agree there is a serious problem in American education when the third largest school district in the country only sees 14 percent of its students graduate with a bachelor degree by their late twenties. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to develop a character education curriculum that will fix American schooling, it is vital the discrepancies that exist between gender, race, and academic success are examined more thoroughly and that the following question is answered. What does the character education available to young Black boys teach them about being a man with integrity and is it different than what young White boys learn?

Literature Review

While it is critical that the philosophical theories used in this thesis are clearly identified and summarized, it is first important to examine the both the history of character education in the United States and to determine a clear definition. This work will provide the necessary context in which the two case studies are explored. Robert W. Howard, Marvin W. Berkowitz, and Esther F. Schaeffer in their article "Politics of

Character Education" provide a comprehensive and thorough definition of character education. They suggest character education has been given many different names throughout the history of public education in the United States, and while character education is both the most common and most current, it is quite broad. According to Howard et al. character education can refer to either the entire field or to one of three major approaches. The first two approaches, caring and development, tend to use the term moral education rather than character education, in which "knowing the good" and "desiring the good" are emphasized. In traditional character education "doing the good" is fundamental. According to Howard et al. the three approaches are frequently integrated. Therefore, in order to better understand how the approaches are intertwined this thesis will examine two sources: Hunter Brimi's "Academic Instructors or Moral Guides? Moral Education in America and the Teacher's Dilemma," and Steven Mintz' *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. Together, using these two pieces of academic writing, this thesis will tell a rich story of character education in the United States and its impact on children, teachers, administrators, and the greater community.

Historically, the primary focus of public education in the United States was the development of moral citizens. In colonial America Puritan values reigned supreme and educators trained children to act morally within the confines of religious expectations. These religious morals were so deeply engrained in the curriculum they even survived schools inspired by Enlightenment thinkers, which advocated for a curriculum aimed at creating practical thinkers. In the early nineteenth century the popular McGuffey Readers illustrate the continuation of moral education, which focused on the stories of the

country's earliest patriots in an attempt to merge Christian and middle class values. This compromise between Christianity and the middle class was instrumental in the formation of Horace Mann's common schools. However, at the height of the common school movement, schools shifted funding structures. Now state and federal taxes funded schools. This change was significant and led to the prohibition of the Bible in public schools in 1870. The state and church were to be officially separated from this point forward. Hunter clearly articulates the purpose of education thus far. He (2009) writes, "The power of the schools to teach students values not solely for the betterment of the individual, but more important, for the stability of the society" (p. 127). In other words, schools build citizens (Hunter Brimi, 2008; Howard et. Al, 2004).

In the mid 1800s the common school movement began to pick up speed. Increased attendance and accessibility, although a good thing, raised a few concerns for educators and parents alike. Adults worried that students instructed outside of the home would not acquire the same values as homeschooled students. Therefore, women, due to their perceived good character and caring nature, were recruited as teachers and textbooks that also served as moral instruction were introduced. The most popular of these textbooks were McGuffey's *Readers*. William Holmes McGuffey, who historically had strong opinions on both religion and education, wrote the *Readers*. He was also known for his ability to memorize full books of the Bible. These beliefs served to greatly influence the *Readers*, which were one of the final Puritanical character educational tools. However, as the more nonsectarian Protestant values infiltrated public schools, recently immigrated Catholics were forced to establish a system of parochial schools in order for

their own version of character education to exist. These Catholic schools served as the

first step towards a separation between church and state. Protestants, who insisted on a

connection between morality and religion, "'saw the public school as a way to spread the

general tenets of Protestant Christianity. Yet in order to prevent state aid to Catholic

education, they were compelled to expand the religion neutrality of the public school'"

(Howard et al., 2004, p. 191).

By the end of the 19th century, two character education approaches were evident.

The first, traditional character education, emphasizes doing good and argues that seeing

an action over and over again will form a habit of doing good in a student. B. Edward

McClellan discusses this approach and its setbacks in his book *Moral Education in*

America: Schools and the Shaping of Character from Colonial Times to the Present.

McClellan (1999) writes, "The codes and clubs so cherished by these reformers

sometimes did little more than reinforce the standards of middle-class respectability" (p.

54). Ultimately, traditional character education showed very little tolerance for cultural

diversity. Instead, the focus was on eliminating the differences that reformers believed set

immigrants off from the mainstream American life. Moral prescriptions served as weakly

veiled patriotism and calls for rigorous assimilation (Howard et al., 2004; McClellan,

1999).

The second approach, progressive character education, view ethical decisions and

action as contingent upon context. Instead of educators modeling what they deemed

proper character traits, students were taught to think critically about ethical issues and to

ultimately make up their own minds. Howard et al. (2004) writes, "The progressive

tradition is more Socratic, with its emphasis on reasoning captured in the phrase […] "to know the good, is to do the good"' (p. 192). Progressives believe that if the individual is fully developed society will benefit. Advocates for progressive character education, like the philosopher and educational theorist John Dewey, placed more value on great social and political issues than on private conduct. McClellan (1999) writes, "they expressed little interest in the drinking habits or sexual conduct of individual as such personal behavior did not impede the ability to operate as intelligent and productive citizens" (p. 57). In short, character had nothing do with adhering to some made up code of conduct; instead it was defined as having the ability to contribute to the creation of a more just and humane society (Howard et al., 2004; McClellan, 1999).

While advocates for both approaches argued in favor of schools' adopting their approach, most offered a hodgepodge of both moral education programs. Ultimately, progressive education failed to root out and replace the virtue-centered programs of the past and schools utilized both approaches until the onset of the Second World War during which vocational educator Charles Prosser created a curriculum aimed at giving students the real world technical skills they would need to survive in the "modern world." Prosser's push for technical education, however, did not last long and in 1959 the National Defense Education Act named the federal government as the primary education policy maker. The government's first act was to call for an added emphasis on math and science. They feared that American students were not globally competitive and were quickly falling behind their Soviet counterparts. Positivism, anti-communism, and a greater distinction between public and private behavior took over. Policy makers and

educators feared the character education was seen as invading the privacy of students and

families and stopped advocating for its implementation in schools. Additionally, with the

onset of the Anti-war and civil rights movements, traditional sexual norms and values

were challenged. The United States was more diverse and culturally pluralistic than ever.

Now schools attempted to educate students about moral decisions without imposing the

teacher's or the community's preferred values. The students were expected to discover

for themselves how they should act rather than being told how to act (Brimi, 2008;

Hunter et. al, 2004; McClellan, 1999).

As quickly as character education fell out of fashion it experienced a revival and

between the mid-1960s and the late 1990s three dramatically new approaches to character

education emerged. The first, values clarification, had the earliest impact on educational

practice. Similarly to the progressives of the 1920s, values clarification was concerned

about situational character and moral decision-making. In short, advocates of this

approach "denied that any one set of values could possibly obtain at all times and in all

places. In a world of constant change, children needed to learn not a set of fixed values

but rather a process of valuing" (McClellan, 1999, p. 79).

The second approach to gain significant momentum was cognitive

developmentalism, which emphasized the development of moral reasoning or judgment.

In theory this moral judgment was free of a specific set of values. Kohlberg, the lead

cognitive developmentalism theorist, feared indoctrination and saw more value in the

decision making process than the actual decision. To aid his crusade Kohlberg designated

six stages of moral development. Kohlberg's work in Chicago convinced him of the

universality of his stages of moral growth. Unfortunately, regardless of Kohlberg's original intent, his system was hardly value-free and his stages clearly articulated a clear commitment to the principle of justice. The practical implementation of this approach came in the form of discussing hypothetical ethical dilemmas in curricula. For example, is it ethical to steal a drug to save your dying wife? To help students answer these questions, teachers were to stimulate thought and to encourage a process of ascribing value that would ultimately allow the students to freely choose. Kohlberg's opponents attacked his moral dilemmas, charged him with narrowness, and accused him of having a liberal bias and promoting participatory democracy, sexual freedom, and children's rights. While, according to McClellan, some of Kohlberg's ethical dilemmas have not been entirely lost, most mainstream schools never acknowledged their benefit or implemented his suggested practices (Howard et al., 2004; McClellan, 1999).

The feminist approach to character education was the third popular approach of the 1960s and 1970s. Simply put, the feminist approach was a response to Kohlberg's cognitive developmentalism. Feminists argued that Kohlberg's emphasis on justice and rights had a masculine bias. Noting that women tended to score lower than men on Kohlberg's scale of moral development. They argued that Kohlberg's scale failed to take into account women's process of moral reasoning. Carol Gilligan, Kohlerg's colleague, led the charge. She believed that women differ from men, in regards to character, in three concrete ways: "(1) they tend to pay more attention to the effect of actions on relationships; (2) they tend to be more interested in the context of moral decisions; (3) they tend to be more concerned about the resolution to real rather than hypothetical

dilemmas; and they are more likely to tie moral judgments to feeling of empathy and compassion" (McClellan, 1999, p. 88). Using the aforementioned three ways, Gilligan created a new scale in which to measure a woman's moral development. She entitled this new scale "Three-stage Growth of Caring." Ultimately, working in collaboration with Nel Noddings, Jane Roland Martin, and others, an entirely new approach to moral education was developed. An approach that took into account the emotional component of moral growth and made a central place for an ethic of caring. This program served to balance the voice of the father, who traditionally speaks the language of rights, and the mother, who speaks the language of caring and compassion (Brimi, 2008; McClellan, 1999).

Ultimately, while these approaches sparked significant conversation among character education advocates, educators often blended them. More traditional moral education advocates, in an attempt to compete with new theories, relabeled their virtue-centered approach as character education and the distinction between the different movements was quickly forgotten. In the 1980s Ronald Reagan's "Just Say No Campaign" was born out of the progressives' failure. Once again children were simply told how they should act when morally conflicted and character education curriculum spread like wildfire throughout the nation's elementary schools. Supporters claimed it reduced alcohol and drug abuse, encouraged school attendance, and helped combat vandalism. Skeptics, however, questioned how any program that occupied only a few minutes a day could have any real impact.

In the late 1990s character education became a priority for many school districts across the country and new curricula was developed to meet the increased demand. Unfortunately, not much has changed since the dawn of the new century and demand changes. In fact, character education has been significantly cut across the board. George Bush's No Child Left Behind stressed results and standards based accountability, and character education was not able to readily supply them. There was no way of measuring whether or not a student's character was greatly impacted by the curriculum, which quickly led to significant decreases in character education curricula funding. Instead, schools relied on its external partners to take the lead (Brimi, 2008).

While the history of character education chronicled above is important it fails to acknowledge one very important thing; it is not a complete history. Not until recently have African Americans had access to the same educational opportunities as Caucasian Americans. Steven Mintz in his book *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* explores the childhoods of American slaves and black children during the era of legalized discrimination. He argues slavery robbed children of their childhoods and certain defining elements of a human identity. Worse yet, "Slavery instilled in some children a profound sense of inferiority and shame" (Mintz, p. 95). Next, Mintz quotes Thomas Jones, a freed slave who spent his childhood in slavery in North Carolina. He (2004) writes, "'my recollections of early life are associated with poverty, suffering and shame. I was made to feel, in my boyhood's first experience, that I was inferior and degraded, and that I must pass through life in a dependent and suffering condition.' Denied an education, constantly reminded of his subordinate status" (p. 95). The horrors of slavery

caused parents to grieve for their newborn children knowing that they too would face severe injustice (Mintz, 2004).

Meanwhile slaveholders continued to prohibit their slaves to be educated. They believed that by allowing these men and women an education they were risking the creation of a population full of dangerous ideas concerning freedom and natural rights. Therefore, the only education slaves were offered was in the form of church on Sundays. This Christianization continued after the Civil War. The New England Freedman's Aid Society traveled to the south to instill their Christian values on an "ignorant" population. (Hunter Brimi, 2008; Mintz, 2004).

In addition to the physical demands slave owners placed on adults, children were separated from their parents at an early age and were much less likely to grow up in a two-parent household than any other American child. Children who were lucky enough to have both parents in their lives were often separated from them for the entire day. Their parents spent days in the fields and children were assigned less physically demanding jobs. Formal education was forbidden, but stories, song, and folklore served as important source of amusement and edification. Additionally, racial etiquette was taught from birth. In short, although the children's education was informal, it was thorough. Regardless, "[The] denial of an education was among slavery's most painful traumas" (Mintz, 2004, p. 108). James W.C. Pennington said, "'There is one sin that slavery committed against me, which I will never forgive, […] It robbed me of my education'" (Mintz, 2004, p. 108). On the eve of the American Civil War only 5 percent of slaves were literate. The demands of slavery and in some places the illegality of the education of slaves made

learning to read an arduous process that required both tenacity and determination. Learning to write proved even more difficult. In rural areas enslaved children had few examples of cursive writing. Given how few options there were for an education, most enslaved Americans turned to religion as a form of education. The Bible served as much needed reading material and taught children endurance. Clearly, given the discussion above, the typical African American childhood prior to the Civil War and during it was significantly harsher than any White Americans could ever understand. The horrors of their childhood inflicted both physical and emotional scars that lasted a lifetime. Scars so embedded that they still exist today in the form of discrimination and educational inequity (Mintz, 2004).

The end of the Civil War brought slavery to an end; however, African Africans continued to face severe discrimination. In the summer of 1955 a young fourteen year Emmett Till spent the summer with his extended family in Money, Mississippi. After flirting with a young White cashier Till was kidnapped from his uncle's farm and brutally murdered. In 1957 Till's uncle identified his murders in open court, yet, after only one hour of deliberation the jury found both men innocent. Till's story is both horrific and common. African Americans throughout the United States faced discrimination and death. The verdict in Till's murder case came back two years after the Supreme Court's landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education in which they declared the segregation of schools to be unconstitutional. The schools were slowly desegregated, but children continued to live a life of fear and mistrust. Anne Moody, who was fifteen at the time of Till's death, captures the fear of many African American children at the time in

her memoir *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. She writes, "'Before Emmett Till's murder […] I had known the fear of hunger, hell, and the Devil. But now there was a new fear known to me- the fear of being killed just because I was black. This was the worst of my fears'" (Mintz, 2004, p. 303).

In 1849 African American Attorney Robert Morris argued that school segregation "'Brands a whole race with the stigma of inferiority and degradation'" (Mintz, 304). Although the court ruled against Morris and the schools in Boston remained segregated, some one hundred years later lawyers for Oliver Brown, an African American railroad conductor in Topeka Kansas, echoed Morris' plea. The case Brown v. Board of Education made it to the Supreme Court and school segregation was ruled unconstitutional. This case was not the last battle of the Civil Rights Movement, but as Mintz (2004) writes, "the seeds of social change were already germinating" (p. 308). While racial discrimination continued after the Supreme Courts decision in Brown v. Board of Education and continues today, it is beyond this scope of this thesis to address the racial discrimination and segregation that occurs in American public schools today. However, race will be discussed in the case studies as each organization's curriculum is examined as racialized texts (Mintz, 2004).

Research Methods

To properly analyze both the Boy Scouts of America and the National Kappa Leagues' character education curriculum this thesis will rely solely on a thorough survey of existing literature. Secondary data was reviewed initially through the use of the Loyola's university library search functions. Databases, educational, philosophical, and

historical, were also utilized. Finally, general Internet searches were conducted. In addition to existing secondary literature, this thesis will examine a few primary sources. For example, the websites of both organizations were thoroughly analyzed and quoted. To aid the search, a table of key terms was constructed in which to correlate located sources and to broaden the reach of database and general searches.

In addition to research gathered using the methods aforementioned, this thesis relies on R.W. Connell's *Masculinities* and William F. Pinar's *Understanding Curriculum* to provide the necessary contextual frameworks in which to evaluate both case studies. To ensure that texts are properly utilized a brief overview of both author's key points is necessary. Therefore, this thesis will first present R.W. Connell's most significant and relevant arguments. Next, William F. Pinar's argument is discussed.

In R.W. Connell's *Masculinity* she argues, "Masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition" (p. 44). In other words, Connell suggests that culturally masculinity and femininity are polar opposites and only understood in their duality. Additionally, as Connell suggests, discussing masculinities is to speak about gender relations. Neither concept can be discussed without the other. Furthermore, Connell proposes that the mainstream understanding of masculinity is incorrect. Society's belief that masculinity is fixed and due entirely to biology is limiting. Instead, Connell (1990) writes, "For men, as for women, the world formed by the body-reflexive practices of gender is a domain of politics – the struggle of interests in a context of inequality.

Gender politics is an embodied - social politics" (p. 66). In simpler language, gender and masculinity order social practice (Connell, 1995).

While Connell's definition of masculinities is critical to evaluating the character education curricula in this thesis, her discussion of education and the role schools play also deserves attention. In order for curricula to be effective Connell (1990) suggests, "Any curriculum must address the diversity of masculinities, and the intersections of gender with race, class and nationality, if it is not to fall into a sterile choice between celebration and negation of masculinity in general" (p. 239). If a curriculum is able to meet Connell's high standard then curricular justice is achieved. Although Connell and her theories on gender and specifically on masculinity are critical to a thorough analysis of the case studies, her curricular justice standard will be of particular importance (Connell, 1995).

The final source that warrants discussion in this literature review is William F. Pinar's *Understanding Curriculum*. Proper use of this text serves to legitimize the entire case study analysis. Three chapters in particular are useful. First, there is chapter six "Understanding Curriculum as Racial Text," in which Pinar suggests that racial categories are not fixed and continue to change throughout time. For example, those identified as "people of color" changes according to the political climate and circumstance. Unfortunately, given the ever-changing definition of race and the identity of the racialized "other," race was overlooked by politically oriented curriculum scholars until quite recently. Pinar summarizes Susan Edgerton's very useful theory on race and representation. Edgerton argues that marginality is created by centrality and vice-versa.

In simpler language, this theory suggests that the very existence of a dominate culture serves to marginalize racial minorities. She goes as far as to suggest that marginality can often lead to a feeling invisibility, and once one is made to feel invisible a sense of being both unimportant and inferior is not far behind (Pinar, 1995).

Pinar also identifies proposed curricular solutions and highlights the issues with each theory. Ultimately, Pinar (1995) writes, "The American cultural identity has been predicated upon exclusions, and in the imagery of an intrapsychic politics of the self is replicated the politics of repression evident in the public sphere" (p. 357). Furthermore, these exclusions, as Pinar notes, are perpetuated in textbooks and in most curricula, which results in the construct of identity becoming increasingly powerful. Ultimately, Pinar's discussion of race and how curricula addresses, marginalizes, and portrays it is of crucial importance when evaluating this thesis' two cases studies (Pinar, 1995).

Pinar's chapter seven is also of particular importance. In chapter seven he explores curriculum as a gendered text. He examines the reconceptualization of gender most thoroughly and suggests that curriculum exists outside objects and textbooks. Therefore, when analyzing curriculum as gender text one must also study the symbolic and phallic order created by men. Additionally, one must investigate the student's reading of the classroom discourse. Unfortunately, as Pinar (1995) concludes, "Feminist thought [and gender discourse] to date operates in relative isolation from other eddies of curriculum theory and practice" (p. 403).

The last chapter of Pinar that is of particular importance is chapter 13, "Understanding Curriculum as Institutionalized Text." Throughout the majority of the

chapter Pinar explores schools as institutions. However, his analysis is also relevant when exploring both the Boy Scouts of America and the National Kappa League, both of which are institutions in their own right. Therefore, according to Pinar's findings, it is necessary to examine how curriculum is developed, from the policy, to the planning and implementation, and ultimately, the evaluation and supervision (Pinar, 2995).

Now armed with a proper understanding of the history of moral and character education in the United States, masculinity, and curriculum discourse the case studies can be thoroughly explored and ultimately evaluated.

CHAPTER TWO

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

In the early 1900s the progressive movement was at its height and families were migrating from farms to cities. This migration ignited concerns that young men were no longer being exposed to the values of patriotism and individualism. The Young Men's Christian Organization (YMCA) and the Boy Scouts of America were founded to address these concerns. Both organizations also formally adhered to Protestant values and had a strictly enforced no catholic policy. They also insisted that girls be organized separately. Author David I. Macleod acknowledges these prejudice policies in his book *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA and Their Forerunners, 1890-1920.* He (1983) writes, "The YMCA and Boy Scouts left large areas of youth work to other agencies" (p. 3). Macleod goes as far as to suggest that the YMCA and Boy Scouts purposely staked out the "normative" position in boys work to ensure they only worked with middle-class protestant young men. It is important to note, although Macleod does not, that these boys were also white. Later young men of color were allowed to form their own troops, but the majority troops remained segregated until the 1950s and some councils did not overturn their policy of racial discrimination until 1974 (The Boy Scouts of America, 2013). Initially the Boy Scouts also discriminated based on age. Programs were established to work with boys only between the ages of ten to sixteen. They believed these boys to be the most pliable. The organization could inform their character,

but they were mature enough to retain the impress of good influence. However, this position was quickly revised and the organization was opened to boys from seven to seventeen years old soon after its founding (Macloed, 1983).

In 1909 Chicago publisher W.D. Boyce returned from visiting London inspired by his encounter with the "Unknown Scout," and incorporated the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) on February 8, 1910. In January of 1911 Boyce turned the movement over to James E. West who became the first Chief Scout Executive. That same year the very first Boy Scouts Handbook was published and Boys' Life, the official magazine of the BSA, premiered. Both publications clearly articulated the Scout Oath, which of 2015 still reads, "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight" (Boy Scouts of America, 2013).

In 1916, only six years after the incorporation of the BSA the first college course in Scouting began at Columbia's Teachers College. Clearly scouting fever was spreading. The BSA also proved quite strategic in its recruiting efforts. For example, during the First World War the organization adopted the slogan, "Help Win the War." This slogan coupled with the Scouts' substantial war effort of selling Liberty Bonds totaling $355 million and intensive community work fueled a significant increase in awareness and enrollment (Macloed, 1983).

In 1919 in recognition of its commitment to the United States and wartime efforts President Woodrow Wilson established National Boy Scout Week. Just a few short years later, in 1925, due to increased enrollment, the San Francisco council organized an Eagle

Scout program. It was a huge success and within a year a second group was organized in San Mateo County. Shortly thereafter a third was formed in Atlantic City and just four years later delegates from six chapters met in San Francisco to organize a national board. The national board's primary purpose was to supplement the cost of running each chapter, however it also provided supplies and hosted annual national conferences. Next came the official Eagle Scout Association, which was formed for the sole purpose of promoting Eagle Scouting. Ten Eagle Scouts met with Scout Executive Raymond O. Hanson of the San Francisco Council to organize an association that would hold the interests of Eagle Scouts, uphold the dignity of the Eagle Award, and provide a base for continuing leadership in the Scouting movement. The official name of the association was the Knights of Dunamis, which is derived from a Greek word meaning, "power" or "spirit." The name denotes the increased power that is an Eagle Scout's to use for the good of the Scouting movement and his greater community. The founders also believed that young men seeking Eagle Scout membership fulfilled many of the same requirements as the Knights of Old. Founders' also believed that the Knight's Code, which stressed honor to his country, the preparation to defend it from any enemy, and the commitment to service to his fellow man mimicked that of the Boy Scouts of America and so the name stuck. The Knights of Dunamis insignia consisted of an eagle perched on a sword that rested on the shield of Dunamis. The eagle was symbolic of each member's achievement and the sword was a replica of Sir Galahad's, from which Galahad is said to have derived his power. Lastly, the triangular shield of Dunamis signified the three parts of the Scout Oath; duty to God and country, duty to others, and duty to self. Earning

Eagle Scout rank was a real honor and a dream of many Scouts (Macloed, 1983; National

Eagle Scout Association, 2015).

Aided by the creation of the National Eagle Scout Association the BSA grew

exponentially. The organization had to expand to meet the demand. Therefore, in 1930

the BSA formally launched the Cub Scout program in 1930. When the United States was

once again involved in a world war the Boy Scouts took action. They collected 30 million

pounds of rubber, distributed stamp posters, collected aluminum, wastepaper, and

salvage, conducted defense housing surveys, and assisted emergency medical units. Once

again their loyalty was rewards and in 1945 20,000 Scouts earned the General Douglas

MacArthur Medal for Victory Gardens.

Given the BSA's early success, it is important the reasons behind its founding are

discussed. Macloed suggests that the original intentions of the Boy Scouts of America

founders were both social and religious. He writes (1983), "Since character builders

believed that morality demanded both social and religious training, the fourfold formula

can be simplified still further to a balance of strength (mental and physical) and virtue

(social and religious)" (p. 29). Unfortunately, this is as clearly as the Boy Scouts ever

directly define character. Instead, they assume that by using the word "character"

everyone knows exactly what they mean. This assumption is no accident; it is a very

strategic move. By not defining character the organization has a broader reach. More

people can relate to the Boy Scouts' mission and goals. It also allows the organization to

adapt to changing times and developing definitions. Therefore, given the lack of a

historical definition, this thesis will continue to examine the Boy Scouts' history and

current official opinions in an attempt to fully develop a working definition (Macloed, 1983).

The Boy Scouts of America's founding ideals of strength and virtue rebelled against the common late 1800's opinion that character was a configuration of moral qualities gradually molded in each person. Instead, the Boy Scouts argued that character was something that adults could foster in the young. Character also began to be seen as an inner power with the ability to propel men forward in their careers. The BSA named Theodore Roosevelt it's Chief Scout Citizen, because of Roosevelt's moralistic energy and forceful conventionality. Roosevelt epitomized the conventional virtues and strengths enumerated in the Boy Scout Oath and Law. Public opinion, however, was not on the side of the BSA. When the BSA was founded culture regarded women as more moral than men. Therefore, the BSA had to develop public opinion; boys must be manly yet dependent, and virtuous with femininity. This position initially seems at odds with the "traditional" definition of masculinity, which is thought to proceed from men's bodies. For example, using this traditional definition of masculinity, men are inherently more violent then women; their bodies drive or direct this innate urge for violence rather than society or their environment. However, the BSA's interpretation of masculinity, while initially recognizing the morality of women, suggests that there is a strict gender duality where women are different, in an incomplete or inferior way, to men (Connell, 1995, p. 68). Furthermore, by using Theodore Roosevelt as a model of the social norm for the behavior of men the BSA perpetuates the traditional understanding of masculinity. While this treatment is common of the early 1900's United States, what is so surprising is the

organization's unwillingness to evolve its definition. As R.W. Connell (1995) argues, "Rather than attempting to define masculinity as an object (a natural character type, a behavioral average, a norm), we need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives" (p. 71). In other words, instead of developing one type of character and strictly adhering to one interpretation of masculinity and femininity we, as a society, need to better understand how this practice limits individuals. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any development in the Boy Scouts of America.

Today the Boy Scouts of America is one of the largest and well-known nonprofits in the world, which was always the goal. Macloed (1983) writes, "On one hand, they [the Boy Scouts] wanted to foster initiative and achievement; on the other, they wanted obedience and sustained dependence" (p. 28). Clearly the Boy Scouts have a two equally as important goals. They want to develop character in young boys, but they want this character to be Boy Scout specific. They want scouts to forever feel a connection to the organization so that when they have children their sons will also be scouts. Clearly tradition is important, but loyalty is what has kept the organization a leader among all organizations for young boys.

Merit Badges: Character Realized

It would be impossible to discuss the Boy Scouts of America without examining merit badges. In addition to serving as gatekeepers to BSA ranks, merit badges provide the perfect opportunity to explore the BSA's values and ultimately determine the

organization's definition of character. However, due to how many the BSA offers this thesis will only examine a few of the required Eagle Scout merit badges.

One of the most well known BSA required merit badges is camping. Historically, BSA character builders saw camping as an opportunity to create a world apart from urban America; one where they could recreate an ideal boyhood. Camping, however, was not simply a return to nature; character builders considered hiking and camping to be part of their overall strategy. It met boys' natural and primal needs. It made them tougher and immune to the moral ills of modern America. It let them follow their instinct and live their biological code, which ultimately promoted an incorrect, but common definition of masculinity. Additionally, as Macloed notes, camping also served an ulterior motive. He (1983) writes, "by cloistering the youngsters in pastoral surroundings, camps also keep them dependent and safe from city voices" (p. 234). In other words, the BSA became not only the voice of reason, but also the only voice the young boys heard. Ultimately, the isolation of young scouts created men who were both lifelong BSA practitioners and advocates (Connell, 1995 & Macloed, 1983).

Today, camping is equally as important. An Eagle Scout is required to earn one camping badge, which has ten requirements. These requirements are incredibly detailed and tedious, however, it is important that each requirement is outlined, because only with a detailed exploration can one truly understand the intensiveness of each badge. Therefore, the requirements are as follows: first, the scout must show an advanced knowledge of first aid and injury and illness prevention. Second, the scout must learn the Leave No Trace principles and the Outdoor Code and write a personal plan for

implementing these principals. Third, create a written plan for an overnight trek that includes: directions, using a topographic map, to and from a selected camping spot. Fourth, write a duty roster showing how your patrol is organized for an actual overnight campout and help a Scout patrol unit in your immediate area prepare for an actual campout. Fifth, prepare a list of clothing you would need for both a warm weather and cold weather overnight campout, discuss footwear, explain proper care and storage requirements for camping equipment, list outdoor essentials, and present yourself and your pack to you Scoutmaster for inspection. Sixth, write a document outlining the importance of camp sanitation, including water treatment, describe the factors one uses to determine where to pitch a tent, discuss the differences between internal and external frame packs and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each pack, and discuss sleeping bag types. Seventh, prepare for an overnight campout with your patrol and present your pack to be examined using the following criteria: comfort, weight, balance, size, and neatness. Eighth, explain safety and advantages and disadvantages of lightweight cooking stoves. Ninth, camp a total of twenty days and twenty nights, hike up a mountain, gaining a least 1,000 vertical feet, backpack, snowshoe, or cross-country ski for at least four miles, take a bike trip of at least fifteen miles, take a non-motorized trip on the water of at least four hours, plan and carryout an overnight snow campout, and rappel down a route of thirty feet or more. Last, discuss how the things you did to earn this badge have taught you about personal health and safety, survival, public health, conservation, and good citizenship. In this discussion the scout must address how this

badge applies to the Scout spirit, the Scout Oath, and the Scout Law. This last requirement is a standard requirement for every merit badge (Merit Badge, 2014).

The priority the BSA places on the camping badge suggests the organization values the skills Boy Scouts learn from completing these requirements. They value a boy who can help prevent and treat illness and injury, who can navigate the land and properly use its resources, who can organize and lead a group, and who is physically fit. This value assignment helps construct the BSA's larger definition of character. It also suggests a definition of masculinity - one where a man must be courageous and have grit; he must be able to survive on nothing but his knowledge of the outdoors; the modern day incarnation of Theodore Roosevelt (Merit Badge, 2014). Macleod (1983) summarizes, "camping was for use; character builders wanted an ideal community in which to foster boyish activism and perhaps reap a small harvest of adolescent idealism […] They fitted camping to middle-class tastes in recreation by making it a boyish surrogate for work-steady, structured, and mildly demanding" (p. 246-247).

While camping clearly plays a crucial role in a boy scout's development, the BSA also stresses citizenship. Eagle Scouts are required to earn three citizenship badges: (1) Citizenship in the Community (2) Citizenship in the Nation, and (3) Citizenship in the World. These badges are equally as intensive as the camping badge. However, instead of outlining each requirement, only the final requirement of each badge will be discussed. The first badge, Citizenship in the Community, requires the Scout develop a public presentation about important and unique aspects of their community. In other words, by making this merit badge required the BSA is indirectly arguing that possessing character

means having a strong connection with the community. While this addition to the BSA's

definition of character supports a well-rounded individual, it also likely increases BSA

awareness and contributes to the organization's recruitment. In addition to a boy being

commitment to his local community, the BSA requires Eagle Scouts learn about the

national government and the role they play in its operation. This knowledge is acquired in

the form of the Citizenship in the Nation merit badge. This merit badge's requirements

include both a rather detailed history and outline of the national government and personal

action. The final requirement mandates, "Name your two senators and the member of

Congress from your congressional district. Write a letter about a national issue and send

it to one of these elected officials, sharing your view with him or her. Show your letter

and any response you receive to your counselor" (Merit Badge, 2014). It is important to

note that nowhere in the requirements are issues prohibited. The lack of a list of

prohibited issues suggests the BSA holds no political affiliation, even if policies suggest

otherwise. The final required citizenship badge is Citizenship in the World. This badge

follows a similar structure as the previous two. It requires that boys learn about

international affairs and politics and expand their cultural experiences. The merit badge

strikes a balance between learning and participating. While it may appear that these merit

badges simply reinforce the BSA's commitment to democracy, one distinction must be

made. The BSA strictly regulates how Eagle Scouts participate in democracy and the

democratic process. It provides a thorough outline that scouts must adhere to in order to

receive the merit badge. It also, while promoting democracy across the world,

simultaneously limits boys' ability to practice these newly refined skills within the organization itself (Merit Badge, 2014).

In addition to the four merit badges aforementioned, the BSA requires eagle scouts to earn seventeen badges. They range from first aid and emergency preparedness to personal management and family life. While each badge has numerous requirements that ultimately contribute to an ideal "Boy Scout," only the Family Life merit badge will be discussed in detail. The family life merit badge has seven requirements, three of which will be discussed. The first asks the scout to prepare an outline of what a family is and discuss why families are important to individuals and to society. The sixth requirement requires the scout conduct a family meeting, at which the following subjects are discussed: substance abuse avoidance, understanding puberty and making responsible decision dealing with sex, how your chores contribute to their role in the family, personal and family finances, a crisis situation within your family, the effect of technology on the family, and good etiquette and manners. The final requirement states, "Discuss the following with your counselor: Your understanding of what makes an effective father and why, and your thoughts on the father's role in the family, and your understanding of the responsibilities of a parent" (Merit Badge, 2014). While the badge does not explicitly define family it ascribes to what Dorothy Smith identifies as the Standard North American Family (SNAF) ideological code. The badge assumes a particular familiar makeup. One in which the parents are legally married, the adult male is in paid employment and his earnings provide the economic basis of the family-household. SNAF families often also have a working adult female, but her income is secondary to the

male's and her primary responsibility is to the care of husband, household, and children; the quintessential nuclear family. While the perpetuation of this ideal is not uncommon, it is damaging to a young boy's understanding of masculinity. It assumes that certain personality traits are biologically either male or female and genders household and family duties. R.W. Connell discusses this common misconception in her book *Masculinities.* She (2005) writes, "True masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies- to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body" (p. 45). This belief, as seen by the BSA Family Life Merit Badge, is a strategic element of modern gender ideology in the English speaking world and completely inaccurate. These body-reflexive practices are not internal to the individual, but instead they involve social relations, symbolism, and large-scale social institutions. Therefore, by requiring the Family Life merit badge the BSA aims to develop a particular type of boy, rather than accomplish its objective of catering its programming to boys' needs and desires (Connell, 2005, Merit Badge, 2014, & Smith, 1993).

Implications of Character Education Curriculum

While thorough examination of required merit badges sheds real light on the BSA's definition of character, one particular issue provides the necessary context in which to further evaluate this definition and its impact. On February 10, 2014 Pascal Tessier received the highest honor awarded to any Boy Scout; he was awarded his Eagle Scout badge. This was an honor, however, that Tessier, an openly gay boy, never expected. The BSA's official policy regarding homosexuality is as follows, "While the BSA does not proactively inquire about sexual orientation of employees, volunteers, or

members, we do not grant membership to individuals who are open or avowed homosexuals or who engage in behavior that would become a distraction to the mission of the BSA" (Boy Scouts of America, 2013). In short, the BSA recognizes homosexuality as deviant behavior rather than as a natural sexual identity. Thankfully, with Tessier leading the charge, in 2013, the organization agreed to lift the ban on gay youth and Tessier earned the title of the nation's first openly gay Eagle Scout. Tessier's title, however, was short lived, and on his eighteenth birthday, just a few months later, he was no longer eligible to be a Boy Scout. Tessier wrote to the BSA president. He said, "'Despite the Boy Scouts' historic decision last year to open its ranks to gay youth, the Scouts still ban gay adults. And as of today, that means me.'" (Bever, 2015).

Tessier's story is heartbreaking, but also a common one. Brian Peffly, a 35-year-old volunteer assistant scoutmaster, who has been involved with scouting since first grade, recently had his membership revoked. Additionally, a Seattle chapter that refused to remove an openly gay scout leader had its charter similarly revoked. BSA spokesman Deron Smith told NBC that the organization was saddened by the development, but that officials had no other option since the church has chosen to stand by Geoffrey McGrath, who was ousted from the scouting organization for being gay: "Because the church no longer agree to the terms of the BSA chartered organization agreement […] it is no longer authorized to offer the Scouting program"' (Leitsinger, 2014 & Wong, 2014).

Clearly, given the three aforementioned stories, the BSA sees homosexuality as incompatible with its values. In short, the organization is indirectly arguing homosexuals are avoid of character. Zach Wahls, Executive Director of Scouts for Equality, however,

sees things quite differently. When asked about Tessier Wahls said, "'I think the leadership he exhibited in standing up against the ban on gay youth is the kind of character you want Scouts to learn at camp"' (Bever, 2015). Tessier's actions most clearly align with the BSA's citizenship merit badges. He selected an issue he felt passionate about, which the badge requires, and reached out to his elected officials and to the BSA president in an attempt to solicit change. He went above and beyond what was required of him. He successfully changed the BSA's policy, whereas the badge merely requires the scout to identify an issue. Therefore, using the BSA's own method in which to measure a scout's integrity and character, Tessier is clearly an exemplary member. He is one of the best.

While currently the BSA's policy regarding gay scout leaders is damaging to the overall mission of the organization, change does appear to be in the near future. On May 21, 2015 Robert M. Gates, president of the Boy Scouts of America and former secretary of defense, called to end the Scouts' ban on gay adult leaders. He said, "'we must deal with the world as it is, not as we might wish it to be"' (Eckholm, 2015). He acknowledged the mounting pressure felt by the organization from the United States government, particularly the upcoming Supreme Court decision, and gay rights activists to change their policy was burdensome. Gates said, "'If the Boy Scouts do not change on their own […] the courts are likely to force them to, and we must all understand that this will probably happen sooner rather than later"' (Eckholm, 2015). While Gates did not publically defame the outdated and prejudice policy, his announcement is a step in the right direction. However, when the ban is lifted the BSA must also amend its merit badge

requirements to properly represent this newfound inclusivity. As Connell attests, "Patriarchal culture has a simple interpretation of gay men: they lack masculinity" (p. 141). This assumption is based solely on the traditional belief that masculinity and femininity exist in duality, which research suggests is false. Last, it must be acknowledged that while an open policy regarding homosexual leaders is positive and does impact the BSA's antiquated definition of masculinity, in order to promote an overall more inclusive character education curriculum the BSA must distance itself from the idea that boys are inherently one certain way; that their nature is a concrete biological code. If they are able to do this by modifying merit badge requirements, adding new merit badges, and shifting the focus of the merit badges away from a patriarchal understanding of society the Boy Scouts of America may have a long and prosperous history (Connell, 2005 & Eckholm, 2015).

CHAPTER 3

THE NATIONAL KAPPA LEAGUE

The National Kappa League is affiliated with the historically black fraternity,

Kappa Alpha Psi. Therefore, it is important to first briefly outline the history of the

fraternity and its mission. Kappa Alpha Psi was officially founded on the night of January

5, 1911 on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Unlike other

traditionally black fraternities Kappa Alpha Psi's constitution never contained any clause,

which either excluded or suggested the exclusion of any person from membership

because of his color, creed, or national origin. The official website for the fraternity

states, "The Constitution of Kappa Alpha Psi is predicated upon, and dedicated to, the

principles of achievement through a truly democratic Fraternity" (Kappa Alpha Psi,

2012). Clearly, Kappa Alpha Psi is both proud of and dedicated to their democratic roots.

Over the next ten years Kappa Alpha Psi worked diligently to establish a strong

foundation, which most definitely paid off. Today Kappa Alpha Psi has chapters on more

than 406 college and university campuses and alumni chapters in some 367 cities in the

United Sates and in 9 foreign countries. Each chapter, both undergraduate and alumni,

remains committed to two founding principles, maturity and dedication. The organization

defines maturity as the, "acceptance of reality, the ability to sacrifice and set goals,

consideration of others, incisive judgment, emotional balance, development of social

skills, intellectual competence, and moral rectitude" (Kappa Alpha Psi, 2012). The

fraternity also offers a definition for dedication. It states, "Dedication means putting those characteristics of maturity into a lifelong program of action to advance the goals and purposes of Kappa Psi" (Kappa Alpha Psi, 2012), and while the fraternity wants its members to be dedicated individuals, it is clear that one's dedication to the fraternity always supersedes personal goals. In short, the fraternity hopes members are mature individuals who accept and dedicate themselves to the shared identity of Kappa Alpha Psi. Rooted in the history and mission of Kappa Alpha Psi are three goals: democracy, dedication, and maturity. The National Kappa League adopts these goals. However, before proper analysis of the organizations' shared goals can be accomplished it is important to quickly summarize the brief history of the National Kappa League (Kappa Alpha Psi, 2012).

In the fall of 1968 the Los Angeles Alumni Chapter's Social Action Program, under the chairmanship of Mel Davis, started a training program for the young men of Alain Leroy Locke High School. It was designed to help young men grow, receive, and develop their leadership talents in every phase of human endeavor. The program was meant to be both challenging and rewarding and to thoroughly enhance the young men's lives. Membership was open to male students from the tenth through twelfth grades. The fraternity's alumni chapter sought to help the boys achieve worthy goals and make constructive contributions to their community. They also wanted the boys to have leadership positions before they graduated high school. The program was a success and the very next year Kappa League was founded and adopted by the Grand Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. at the 56th Grand Chapter in August of 1970. The

official founders were listed as Mel L. Davis, Elder Watson Diggs, and Edgar H. Bishop, the current president and vice-president of the Los Angeles Alumni Chapter (Kappa League, 2013).

Shortly after the official founding, the Kappa League identified five phases of youth development. The first phase is self-identity, which requires that the youth develop discipline, assurance, awareness, and improve their appearance. Second- training. Youth receive academic, career-choice, preparation, and organization training. Third- competition. Youth are encouraged to complete politically, career wise, and through sports. Next- social. Students are expected to examine their religious beliefs, the arts, entertainment, conversation/communication, and etiquette. Last, health education, which stresses physical fitness, sex education, drug education, and health and safety. The hope is that if young boys successfully completed these five phases and graduate from the program they will achieve in both college and their careers. Similarly to Kappa Alpha Psi, the National Kappa League does not limit membership to only young boys of color. However, regardless of its commitment to inclusivity, the majority of Kappa League members are African American (Kappa League, 2013 & Kappa Leadership Institute - Chicago, 2015).

The Kappa League and Racial Identity

While the history of the National Kappa League may not span nearly as many decades as the Boy Scouts of America, the organization serves an additional purpose. Shawn Ginwright explores this purpose in his article, "Black Youth Activism and the Role of Critical Social Capital in Black Community Organizations." He (2007) argues,

"that community-based organizations in Black communities provide Black youth with

critical social capital, which consists of intergenerational ties that cultivate expectations

and opportunities for Black youth to engage in community change activities" (p. 15).

Furthermore, Ginwright suggests community-based organizations, similar to the Kappa

League, provide Black youth with a connection to smaller communities that foster a sense

of political consciousness, which ultimately prepares Black youth to address issues in

their communities. In other words, these organizations promote relationships between

their members, institutions, and groups and these relationships increase one's ability to

access resources such as jobs, educational opportunities, and neighborhood safety. In

short, Ginwright argues Black community organizations provide a vehicle in which black

youth can participate in democracy. This argument is very much in line with the founding

principles of both the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and the National Kappa League.

Furthermore, Ginwright's argument relies on a shared identity, which is one of the

founding principles of the National Kappa League. One concrete example of how this

shared identity is fostered and realized is Kappa League's strict dress code. The

organization requires all members to dress professionally for all events. This

"professional dress" includes dress pants, neckties, and white dress shirts (Ginwright,

2007 & Kappa Leadership Institute - Chicago, 2015).

     Ginwright, however, is sure to clarify while mostly organizations foster increased

social capital, black community organizations also build critical social capital. Critical

social capital departs from traditional notions of social capital by placing a greater focus

on the collective dimension of community change, and centers directly on how racial

identity and political awareness serves as an important community and social resource for youth. Most importantly the facilitation of critical social capital development by intergenerational community organizations challenge the negative concepts of Black youth. Additionally, Ginwright (2007) writes, "African American social organizations and networks are critical elements in providing an information nexus through which African American perceptions of racial group interests are framed… It is through these networks that the intergeneration transmission of African American political values, morals, and beliefs occur" (p. 2). While some might argue that critical social capital simply involves acting out mutual expectations between the oppressed Black youth and their oppressors, this assumption is incorre ct. Instead, it creates a collective racial and cultural identity among Black youth that provides them with a unified understanding of their plight in American society. Once again the National Kappa League and its goals align with Ginwright's argument. The National Kappa League requires that all members actively engage in community enrichment activities. Kappa Leaguers' are expected to acquire a rich understanding and knowledge of their community and the world outside of the classroom. In addition to the rigorous academic readiness programming, all Kappa Leaguers must complete forty hours of community service every year. Members are also encouraged to participate in a six to eight week study abroad program in conjunction with the American Field Service (AFS) during the summer preceding their senior year of high school. The community service and the study abroad requirements allow Kappa Leaguers to invest in their communities while simultaneously broadening their understanding of democracy and its incarnations worldwide. Furthermore, the high achieving Kappa

League members are able to make deep connections within the larger black community. These connections serve to foster critical social capital among both Kappa Leaguers and members of the community, which in turn serves to combat the historically white public school curriculum. Programs like Kappa League empower young men of color by pulling both their communities and history away from the cultural periphery and portraying them as dominate. Gone are the feelings of invisibility and inferiority (Ginwright, 2007 & Pinar, 1995).

Shawn Ginwright outlines another crucial element of Black community organizations in his article "Racial Justice Through Resistance: Important Dimensions of Youth Development for African Americans." In it he clearly defines youth development writing, "Youth development can be described as a process that prepares young people for healthy and productive adulthoods" (Ginwright, 2006, p. 41). Additionally, while youth development is an ongoing and natural developmental process for all youth regardless of racial identity, Ginwright argues that for young African Americans the youth development process is often a more difficult task than for other children. This difficulty is likely due to the structural racism in most schools, communities, and places of employment. Additionally, economic isolation has created a caste-like system of poverty, which has in turn posed significant barriers to political engagement for most African Americans. Therefore, youth development programs for children of color are more important than ever (Ginwright, 2006 & Pinar 1995).

Traditional youth development theory suggests there are three crucial components of a youth's development. The first component is the child's support system. Next, the

opportunities he or she is given, and third, the social assets the child and those in his or her support system possesses. African American you have one additional element- the collective experience of discrimination. Therefore, Ginwright (2006) argues, "[an] analysis of how black youth are socially constructed in public discourse, schooling, and juvenile correction systems [is fundamental to their development]" (p. 42). Ultimately, this analysis allows for a newly conceptualized youth development framework for young men and women of color. This framework changes how one interprets young people's response, resistance, and confrontation to development. It is also necessary when examining the impact of organizations like the National Kappa League.

The National Kappa League Association attempts what Ginwright argues works. The organization brings young men of color together to develop a collective racial and cultural identity. It brings black identity to the mainstream and building lasting relationships. According to the Kappa League website and promotional materials Kappa Leaguers never truly "graduate" from the program. They are forever apart of Kappa League. This sentiment is echoed on the National Kappa League's website in the user comments. One member self-identified as Jaylen Thomas writes, "Congratulations to the success of all my Kappa League bros around the country. We're definitely the example of what a young man is supposed to be in today's society. Much love from the Memphis Alumni Chapter of Kappa League" (Kappa League Association). Kenny Willis, another member writes, "I just want to say to my Kappa League Bruhs you guys are looking good, keep achieving. I'm a member of the Long Beach Inglewood Southbay Alumni chapter also Vice President over the Kappa League of Morningside High School in the

city of Inglewood" (Kappa League Association). In both comments the Kappa League members reference the success achieved by current members and make mention of their continued personal involvement in the organization. Both feel a connection to current Kappa Leaguers without ever meeting them; clearly Kappa League's collective identity runs deep (Ginwright, 2006 & Pinar, 1995).

The Kappa League and Masculinity

Undoubtedly the National Kappa League positively contributes to members' critical social capital by addressing the exclusion of African American history, prospective, and experience from most public school curricula. It also fosters the creation of a common identity in which members can combat institutional racism. However, as Pinar writes, "The pyscho-political dynamics of race intersect with another important effort to understand curriculum" (p. 357) – gender. Therefore, this thesis must examine the impact the National Kappa League's collective identity has on young men's understanding of masculinity.

Given that Kappa League's primary focus is academics, exploring the leadership development aspect of the program is likely to shed greater light on the organization's understanding of masculinity. Chicago's Kappa League describes its leadership development initiatives, "Our program's [aim is] to better prepare our students to see themselves as leaders and embrace leadership opportunities and roles with confidence" (Kappa Leadership Institute - Chicago, 2015). Kappa League provides tremendous opportunities to access quality educational institutions and to interact with a diverse group of business professionals. Kappa League Chicago claims, "These social, cultural

and educational resources position our students to stand out amongst their peers and leaders and make a more powerful impact in their communities" (2015). It is important to note the boys are actively encouraged to pursue their passions, but only if these dreams allow for the development of the "art of sophistication," or provide practice in the art of conversation versus communication and etiquette versus manners.

The National Kappa League's focus on corporate America, politicians and monetary success contributes to the perpetuation of "traditional" masculinity. Western patriarchal institutions that rely on wage systems and bureaucracies provide a solid institutional base for the normalization of "traditional" gender identity and imagery. By subscribing to this gender hierarchy, the National Kappa League inadvertently supports the increasingly visible global gender order where American and European gender arrangements are hegemonic. Furthermore, in service driven economies, like the United States', symbolic meanings of masculinity are elaborated and run rampant (i.e. fast cars and heavy trucks are masculine vehicles). Unfortunately, the tie between money, power, and traditional masculinity make it incredibly challenging and sometimes counterintuitive to combat the system. Therefore, organizations, like the National Kappa League and the Boy Scouts, that benefit from preserving gender order do nothing to combat male heterosexual privilege (Connell, 2005, p. 199- 203).

African American men have a particularly challenging time combating traditional masculinity. In 2008, then Senator Barack Obama addressed a packed congregation at one of Chicago's largest black churches. Invoking his own absent father, Senator Obama had a message for African American men. He said, "'we need fathers to realize that

responsibility does not end at conception […] Too many fathers are M.I.A., too many fathers are AWOL, missing from too many lives and too many homes […] They have abandoned their responsibilities, acting like boys instead of men. And the foundations of our families are weaker because of it"' (Bosman, 2008). In this statement, then Senator Obama suggests one universal truth about African American men. He argues men are the foundation of the American family and without men families are weaker and ultimately incomplete. While this sentiment may not have been Obama's intention it suggests a particular gender order: one where men who have a family who they financially support are at the top. Now as President, Obama continues to scold Black America. In 2013 the president addressed Morehouse College's graduating class. He said, "'we know that too many young me in our community continue to make bad choices"' (Coates, 2013). However, according to the president, there is no longer room for excuses; black America must be better. Kappa League and other organizations working with predominately African American boys echo President Obama's call. They define manhood by referencing the family and the role of the father. Being a man means taking care of your responsibilities, providing for your family, and overcoming racism and discrimination (The Kappa League, 2013 & Kappa Leadership Institute-Chicago, 2015).

Ta-Nehisi Coates of the *Atlantic* worries about President Obama's "convenient race-talk." He writes, "At a higher level, there is the time-honored pattern of looking at the rather normal behaviors of black children and pathologizing them" (Coates, 2013). It is as if society is saying the only way to succeed is to abandon black culture and to conform to the larger gender, masculinity and racial hierarchy. In addition to conforming

to the global gender hierarchy, African Americans must contend with the rampant

homophobia and hypermasculinity of the US black church. Black churches in the United

States are a significant source of the homophobia that pervades many black communities.

Churches hold a central and influential position within black cultural and often weekly

reinforce and legitimatize homophobia. Furthermore, the theologically driven

homophobia found in black churches supports a strong and exaggerated sense of

masculinity, which according to Elijah G. Ward, takes a significant toll on members'

psychic and social lives. Ward (2005) writes, "These forces adversely shape the lives not

only of black gay/bisexual men but also those of black heterosexual males and females"

(p. 494). For example, heterosexual men who might not normally express

hypermasculinity may feel pressure to do so given the "impassioned church-inspired

homophobic messages" (Ward, 2005). Furthermore, expressing hypermasculinity is

socially popular in many black male circles; "it seizes upon opportunities for projecting

male dominance, possibly functioning as a means to vent the extra frustrations that black

men experience in a racist society, while also shoring up a sense of identity in a uncertain

social world" (Ward, 2005, p. 489-499). Ultimately, Ward argues that religion based

homophobia and the hegemonic constructions of masculinity it supports can never be

disentangled from the racism, patriarchy and capitalism for which these are the

conditions in which such homophobia developed (Ward, 2005).

While the National Kappa League is not affiliated with any religious organization,

it does aim to foster a collective identity, one in which family and hegemonic masculinity

are stressed. Therefore, given the connection between homophobia, masculinity, racism

and capitalism, it is unclear whether or not the construction of Kappa Leaguers' critical social capital and the creation of a safe space in which boys of color can build a collective identity and support system outweigh the negative global impact of hypermasculinity and homophobia.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION & AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

While the Boy Scouts of America and the National Kappa League have different

missions and work with different populations, both organizations attempt to develop

members' character. The Boy Scouts of America requires members earn twenty-one

merit badges to be named an Eagle Scout. These merit badges and their requirements

shed real light on how the BSA believes character is developed and also on what it

believes character is. Ultimately, given the above analysis, one can conclude the

organization's definition of character. It believes men of character are strong, physically

and civically active, and fathers. In short, they are America's role models. Kappa League

echoes this definition. Kappa Leaguers are hardworking, academically successful,

physical strong, and civically active members of society. Both organizations also

successfully develop a collective identity among members. Men, long after their

adolescence, still consider themselves either Boy Scouts or Kappa Leaguers. They feel a

connection to both one another and to the organization.

While both organizations' definitions of character may have merit and often

positively impact members' lives, the organizations fall short in regards to masculinity.

Both rely on an antiquated definition that suggests men are inherently or biologically one

way. In simplified terms Boy Scouts are strong pioneers who have the ability to live off

the land and Kappa Leaguers are well educated and successful, often defined by financial

success, men. While the expectations of members and the tasks they are required to complete may differ, both organizations subscribe to a strict Western engineered gender hierarchy. Furthermore, the collective identities both organizations successfully foster aid in the perpetuation of this outdated and often-discriminatory definition of masculinity. This is damaging and in some ways in conflict with the organizations' missions. Instead of accepting boys as they are and because of their uniqueness, both organizations require that members align with the organization's traditions and goals. In other words the National Kappa League and the Boy Scouts require boys conform in order to belong. Thankfully there is some recent news to indicate the Boys Scouts are changing member requirements to be more inclusive. Hopefully this is just the first step and soon the programming will change to mirror this step towards inclusivity. The National Kappa League must also change. The organization must develop its definition of success. While an education and being financially stable are important, the narrow scope of its definition of success threatens to perpetuate a gender hierarchy that is at odds with the greater Kappa League mission.

Areas of Further Research

While this thesis thoroughly outlines both the National Kappa League and Boy Scouts of Americas' definitions of character and the impact of these definitions, a few questions remain. First, do these collect identities impact individual member's achievement, both school and future career success? What does this connection or lack of there of say about boy only mentorship? Exploring retention rates might shed some real light on this question. For example, it would be interesting to see how members maintain

contact post high school. Do they volunteer, mentor, donate, etc.? Next, what impacts do these collective identities have on society? This question also merits a few follow up questions. First, what role do these organizations play in the perpetuation of the greater American gender hierarchy and what are the organizations' responsibilities to their members regarding gender norms and practices?

It would also be interesting to include some qualitative data in any further analysis; to interview current and previous members, both adult and child, so that the collective identities of both organizations could be thoroughly examined and qualified. Also, these interviews would help further develop each organization's working definition of character.

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VITA

Helen Gerety was raised in Flagstaff, Arizona. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, she attended the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration in 2011. Upon graduation she moved to Chicago, Illinois to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA. While serving as an AmeriCorps volunteer, she developed an interest in local Chicago educational issues and policies. Therefore, after completing her year of service, Gerety joined Loyola University Chicago's School of Education staff as the Student Services Coordinator for all GEAR UP programming. As a member of Loyola University Chicago's staff Gerety had the wonderful opportunity to work closely with Chicago Public School students, staff, faculty, and administrators, which furthered her passion for educational equity. She is a dedicated lifelong learner and educator with special interests in local politics, environmentalism, and issues regarding children's access to educational opportunities.