

There Will be Struggle: The Development and Operational Issues of Social Justice Programs at State Universities in the United States of America

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Abstract:

This paper presents a two part analysis of social justice programs (SJPs) at state universities in the United States of America (USA). Two main questions are addressed: firstly, in Part I, “What might it take to develop a social justice program at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)?” and secondly, in Part II, “Why do some universities have social justice programs and others do not?” In Part I, a preliminary analysis of hard and soft-data is conducted in an attempt to locate a case study comparison with UTEP. This preliminary analysis revealed mixed results and suggests that the best comparative sample for case study with UTEP would be a university most alike in ideological position. Part II, presents a qualitative analysis of interviews obtained from twelve SJP representatives from seven state universities across the USA. The findings reveal numerous intertwined issues that are organized and discussed as common, salient, and unspoken themes. I argue that there is no one reason for the existence of a SJP at a state university, but this is a multi-factorial endeavor requiring all the “bits and pieces” to make it happen. The common, salient, and unspoken themes may also prove a helpful guide for a future SJP developer or coordinator.

There Will Be Struggle: The Development and Operational Issues of Social Justice Programs at State Universities in the United States of America¹

The phenomenon of a university level academic course of study labeled as a social justice program (SJP) is a rather new historical development. This academic development, seen as a trend by some or a nuisance by others, is not universal and this research, focusing on the state university in the United States of America, is an exploration into this phenomenon.

Literature Review

What is social justice? There are differing ideas as to what may constitute social justice, but what is generally implied is a movement toward *inter-individual* and *inter-group fairness*, or *societal impartiality*². Though imbued with philosophical ideals, the work of social justice is not an abstract endeavor: social *injustices* are amenable to empirical analysis. One can easily observe “wealth gaps” when analyzing society through the structures of race/ethnicity, class, and/or gender³. And someone having a concern for social justice might analyze a societal injustice and its circumstances in an attempt to determine whether an individual or group is being discriminated against or receiving their “just rewards.” Within this paper, it is assumed that this person concerned with social justice is also *actively* exploring possible remedies to injustices as a means of working toward a more just and impartial society.

The Social Justice Program (SJP)

¹ The title of this paper, *There Will Be Struggle: The Development and Operational Issues of Social Justice Programs at State Universities in the United States of America*, is very specific and for specific reasons. Firstly, only programs that somehow utilize the self-identifying label “social” and “justice” are studied. This is due to the discovery that “there is something to a name”: the labels given to academic programs may be used to reveal program content, attract a certain student market, or stand *for* or *against* some form of political and/or academic “correctness”/status quo. The findings herein indicate that the name “Social Justice Program” can carry political/ideological implications. Secondly, this paper only analyzes state universities. This is due to both a personal interest in the intersection of social justice and the state university and the fact that a study inclusive of state, private, and self-identified “religious” universities was beyond my allotted time and purposes. This being said, a comparative study, inclusive of all university “types”—state, private, religious—is recommended for further research. Thirdly, only schools in the USA are studied. This is due to the discovery that the term *social justice* is primarily an Anglophone phenomenon and different nations with different geo-politico-historical realities and often different languages, though certainly having their similarities, also have differences in their approaches to education.

² Taking the two words apart: Merriam-Webster (2007) defines *social* as “of or relating to human society, the interaction of the individual and the group;” and *justice* as “the quality of being just, impartial, or fair.”

³ To simply show one example of many: in the USA in the first quarter of 2005 the average weekly income for white men was \$731.00, for white women \$601.00, for black men \$579.00, and for black women \$506.00 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005). Allan (2007) points out, “In a country that has outlawed discrimination based on race and sex, black women still make on average about 31% less than white men.”

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Narrow and broad. For the purposes herein, the SJP is defined as a college or university level interdisciplinary academic program that analyzes the discriminatory systems of race/ethnicity, class, and gender, has an activist orientation, and is labeled as a social justice program. This is considered a strict or *narrow* definition as opposed to a general or *broad* definition. The term “narrow” is distinguished by the claim of activism⁴ and the *social justice* label. Conversely, the “broad” label of the SJP is more general and may include a large list of pedagogic items not limited to: global studies, peace studies, human rights, African American studies, Latin American and Chicano studies, gender studies, ethnic and diversity studies, cultural and multicultural studies, development studies, social work advocacy and community development (Sinclair, 2003). The *broad* SJP, though concerned about issues of social justice, development, diversity, etc., does not utilize the *social justice* label and may or may not make the *activist* claim⁵.

Though this particular study only analyzes SJPs at *state universities*, for a sampling of all narrow SJPs in the USA, see Table 1 below⁶. When observing Table 1, it can quickly be seen that two thirds of all SJPs are offered by independent schools and about half of these self-identify with Christian, Lutheran or Roman Catholic tradition⁷.

⁴ It is duly noted that there are many in academia that feel that an orientation toward activism adulterates the ideal of the academic as an unbiased/objective ivory tower observer.

⁵ The activist claim may take different forms such as: *doing social justice*, *social engagement*, *practical involvement*, *civic leadership*, *social responsibility*, and *advocacy*. Note that this research does not explore the veracity of the claim: is activism actually practiced and how? Investigating the “activist claim” is recommended for further research.

⁶ The wording “state-supported” is synonymous with *public* or *state* university.

⁷ Though it is recommended, a study inclusive of both independent and state-supported schools is beyond the scope of this analysis.

Table 1 – All Narrow SJPs at Universities and Colleges in the USA

Source: www.petersons.com (2008) and specific university websites (2008).

	School	SJP Title	School Type
1	Antioch University Seattle, WA	Social Justice Studies	Independent
2	Columbia University, NY	Racial, Economic and Social Justice	Independent
3	Occidental College, CA	Critical Theory and Social Justice	Independent
4	Roosevelt University, IL	Social Justice Studies	Independent
5	Tufts University, MA	Peace and Justice Studies	Independent
6	Vanderbilt University, TN	Social Justice Program	Independent
7	Berea College, KY	Peace and Social Justice Studies	Independent Christian
8	Valparaiso University, IN	Peace and Social Justice Studies Minor	Independent Lutheran
9	Cabrini College, PA	Social Justice Minor	Independent Catholic
10	DePaul University, IL	Peace, Conflict Resolution & Social Justice	Independent Catholic
11	St. John Fisher College, NY	Peace and Social Justice Studies	Independent Catholic
12	St. Norbert College, WI	Peace and Justice Minor	Independent Catholic
13	Georgetown University, DC	Program on Justice and Peace	Independent Catholic
14	Loyola University Chicago, IL	Master of Arts in Social Justice	Independent Catholic
15	Arizona State U. (Tempe)	Justice and Social Inquiry	State-supported
16	California State U. San Marcos	Criminology and Justice Studies	State-supported
17	Michigan State University	Peace and Justice Studies	State-supported
18	U. of Minnesota Twin Cities	Social Justice Minor	State-supported
19	U. of Missouri (Columbia)	Social Justice Minor	State-supported
20	U. of North Carolina (Chapel Hill)	Social and Economic Justice Minor	State-supported
21	U. of Wisconsin (Oshkosh)	Social Justice Minor	State-supported

Social Justice and the University

Social justice education. The SJP⁸ can be subsumed under the umbrella of *social justice education* (SJE) for which there is a great body of literature concerning all grade levels, subjects, content, student diversity, and educational methods. SJE is an effort to both recognize and eliminate education's role in the continued reproduction of socioeconomic distinctions and discriminations in society. These societal distinctions, as alluded to earlier, are usually attributed to differences in race/ethnicity, class, and gender (Anyon, 1980; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Connell, 1993; Enns & Sinacore, 2005; Fischman et al., 2005; Schall, 2006). Like its namesake,

⁸ Unless otherwise stated, when the acronym *SJP* is used, it is only meant to refer to the SJP in the narrow sense.

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social justice, SJE is not a new phenomenon, but most recently has its origins in: critical pedagogy and its forerunner Paulo Freire; critical theory and the impacts of the Frankfurt School; Marxist theory, Hegelian dialectics and other methodologies directed at raising critical consciousness (Appelrouth and Desfar Edles, 2008; Feagin and Vera, 2001; Freire, 1974; Pongratz, 2005; Popkewitz, 1999). SJE can also be seen as a contentious movement, as it attempts to engage students in a critique of society and structures of privilege and disprivilege.

The SJP. The university SJP might be considered a small spot on this large area called SJE. But unlike SJE, the existing literature on the SJP is sparse and there appears to be “ground breaking” aspects to the research herein. Sinclair (2003) though, publishing in Australia and employing an assortment of economic terms directed at higher education, writes of a burgeoning social justice market; its goods and services; supply and demand; liberalization, globalization, and a diversity of social justice clients. Though inclusive of SJPs in the narrow sense, Sinclair is specifically referring to SJPs in the broad sense—global studies, development studies, diversity, etc.—and offers an insightful critique: there is, in fact, no empirical data confirming the societal effects of SJPs. They may actually be ineffective at reducing socioeconomic inequalities⁹ (Clark, 2006; Sinclair, 2003).

The university. Concerning the university in the USA, the institution that houses the SJP, the recent literature is rife with critiques and, again, economic terms, claiming that the university has given way to business and military interests (Bousquet, 2008; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Collins, 1979; Giroux, 2007, McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2002; Newfield, 2008). This admonitory cry, coming from a faction of critical and sociological pedagogues, warns that rather than creating an educated populace universities have become training/credentialing centers catering to military and market forces. Bottom-line thinking has forced many professors into fundraising as their teaching duties are consigned to contingent adjuncts (Aronowitz, 2001; Bousquet, 2008; Donoghue, 2008; Johnson, 2003). A reduction of tenure track positions, and the resultant job insecurity, has damaged the very foundation of the profess-ori-ate—the ability to speak openly

⁹ In short, the contention is that as social justice “goods and services” accrue, due to witnessed social inequalities, the expected reduction in these said inequalities does not seem to be occurring (Sinclair, 2003). Critics also claim the existence of academic professionalizing and/or cooption (Allan, 2007), but these issues require proper study. The effectiveness of the SJP and how it might translate into social change, though certainly an important question, is beyond the specific focus of this analysis and is recommended as a topic for further research.

and freely without fear of discrimination or recrimination (AAUP, 1940; Bousquet, 2008; NEA, 2008). Giroux (2007) declares that this attack, leveled against the university by extreme right-wing conservatives, is an ideological protection tactic striking at the heart of democracy: an informed public and an engaged citizenry. From this contingent of concerned scholars comes a stern counsel for academic reform: there is “hope,” but critical democratic steps must be taken now (Aronowitz, 2001; Giroux, 2007).

Some might like to imagine the university as a think-tank, separate from society; others contend that the university and society are best seen as reflections of each other (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). As there are struggles for power and justice in society; there are struggles for power and justice in the university¹⁰. The university may well prove to be a challenging environment for those with a concern for social justice (Baca Zinn, 2000; Feagin and Vera, 2001; McGriff et. al., 2004).

A point-of-departure. The above review quickly summarizes the dominant literature on social justice and the university in the USA in 2008. This review is an attempt to situate an epistemological point-of-departure for the subject of this research. In sum, this appraisal of the university appears to position the SJP, and its inherent concerns, within a challenging or perhaps unfriendly environment where, as aforementioned, groups appear to be struggling over economic, ideological and political control. This study and its subsequent findings confirm this assessment.

This paper explores two primary questions, one specific and one general: in Part I, the specific, “What might it take to develop a social justice program at UTEP?” and in Part II, the general, “Why do some universities have SJPs and others do not?” The overall objective of this study is to gain insight into the development and operational issues of SJPs at state universities in the USA.

Part I: Preliminary Data - University Comparisons

Since literature on the narrow SJP is sparse, this research progresses in an exploratory manner

¹⁰ Not anything new for the university, it has oft been accused of being a gendered, classed, and racialized place (Apple, 1979; Boyer & Larson, 2005; Wallerstein & Starr, 1971; Xu, 2008). Though clear advances have been made, especially for women, universities are still hard-pressed to replicate the demographics of their surroundings.

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attempting to unearth any data or information with explanatory power concerning the development of a SJP. What might be considered a double-qualitative manner; in a preliminary step, Part I, initial informal conversations were conducted with professors, and in some cases administrators and students, who might be knowledgeable concerning the development of a SJP. Questions of the following form were asked, “Do you think there are certain variables or preexisting conditions that might predict when a university has a SJP?” After reaching a point of reasonable data saturation, a spreadsheet was compiled containing these possible “predictor-variables” for the universities with SJPs. As a means of facilitating this analysis, a comparative sample was used. UTEP was accepted as the SJP *non-event*—a reference point for study—in the search for a “twin” or comparable university *having* the SJP *event*: the *event* or *non-event* being the existence or non-existence of a SJP respectively. The abovementioned “data collection” and university comparison is considered *Part I* of this research; *Part II* is a more traditional qualitative analysis.

Method

The possible predictor-variables were derived from over twenty conversations. Respondents were often individuals who were referred to me by someone else after I had explained the subject of this research. Generally these respondents were university professors in academic areas such as political science, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, or education. Though two tables (forthcoming below) have been constructed comparing respective state universities, this is not an attempt at quantitative analysis, but a means of categorization and an initial observation of “types.” All SJPs were found by means of the Internet and www.google.com was used as a search engine¹¹. All SJPs met the aforementioned definition of a narrow SJP¹². Endowment figures have been taken from the 2005 NACUBO Endowment Study (2006). The majority of university data, especially nearly all “hard-data” (e.g., percent minority students, percent international students, percent students in dormitories, etc.) is for 2007 and is only representative of undergraduate students. This data was taken from www.petersons.com (2008). Only in-state-resident tuition figures for full-time students have been listed. All “soft-data” (e.g., university

¹¹ Key terms for searches amount to a mixing and matching of words and phrases, inclusive of, but not limited to: “social justice program”, “social justice degree”, “social justice minor”, “social justice studies”, and “justice studies”.

¹² Many programs were excluded as they did not meet the definition of a narrow SJP.

mission, character, and details) and any hard-data that was not listed on Peterson's were found on specific university websites. Any information that could not be found is represented by a question mark (?). Soft-data is descriptive information taken from university websites that might contribute to a qualitative "self identification" of the university in question. Soft-data would be the responses to hypothetical questions such as: What claims are being made in the university's stated mission? Does the university espouse a certain character? Why and how was the university founded? And are there any "official statements" on the university website that might suggest a concern for social justice?

Findings

Respondents were asked if they thought there might be certain variables or preexisting conditions that might predict when a state university has a SJP; there were some common and some mixed responses.

Well you're gonna need funding.

You can't do it without money, maybe it has something to do with the level of endowment.

Student diversity might play a role.

I think it has to do with the university's founding, maybe look at its history.

Maybe the mission, what are the schools' stated goals?

As previously mentioned, these responses have been taken as predictor-variable data and are assembled into Tables 2 and 3 below in an attempt to find a "twin" university with the *event* of the SJP for comparison with UTEP. Table 2 contains the "soft-data" and Table 3 the "hard-data".

There are only seven state universities that have academic programs that meet the narrow SJP criteria¹³. They are listed below in the first column of Table 2. In the second column are the names of their respective SJPs and level of academic degree. Note that only two programs have Major degrees or higher and both of these grew out of preexisting criminology programs. Of the remaining five programs, four are minors and one is a specialization.

Table 2 - Soft-data. The universities in Table 2, University Soft-Data Comparison, are not listed

¹³ There are no state colleges in the USA with a narrow SJP.

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in any specific order, except for the fact that the *non-event* sample, UTEP, is listed first. Table 2 might be considered a qualitative compilation of respective website data and it can be noticed that UTEP does appear to have more similarities than differences when compared to the universities with SJPs. All the universities emphasize a commitment to learning; some more toward teaching and others more toward research. ASU claims an “excellence in everything” and nearly half the universities state they are “comprehensive.” UTEP is the only institution that was founded as a “school of mines,” seeming to have occupational leanings, whereas the bulk of the

Table 2 - University Soft-Data Comparison

University	Program Title	University Mission	Mission Details	Founding	Character
UTEP (UTEP, 2008)	No program	Educational excellence, access and opportunity to region	4 goals - learning and teaching, research, scholarship and artistic production, public service and administration	School of mines	Doctoral and research intensive university
ASU Tempe (ASU, 2008)	Justice and Social Inquiry (BS, MA, PhD)	?	Economic development and service to state	Legislative act to train teachers	Excellence in everything
Cal. State University San Marcos (CSUSM, 2008)	Criminology and Justice Studies (BA)	Respond to regional-state needs	Learning, service to community, integrity	State, business, and civic leaders	?
University of Minnesota Twin Cities (UMN, 2008)	Social Justice Minor	Learning, truth and application in community/world	Responsive to needs of many	Land grant preparatory	Comprehensive
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (UWosh, 2008)	Social Justice Minor	Comprehensive and broad	Broad and service; respond to the needs of people, institutions, community; respect human dignity	Teacher training	Comprehensive

University of Missouri (Mizzou, 2008)	Social Justice Minor	Teaching, research, service	World-class research, teaching and service, the obligation to produce and disseminate knowledge to improve the quality of life in the state, nation and world.	900 citizens pledge cash for state university	Teaching and research
University of North Carolina (UNC, 2008)	Social and Economic Justice Minor	Service, including state and nation	To expand the body of knowledge; to improve the condition of human life through service and publication, address as appropriate, regional, national, and international needs.	State	Research university
Michigan State University (MSU, 2008)	Peace and Justice Studies (spec.)	Teaching, research intensive, outreach	Prepare students to contribute fully to society as globally engaged citizen leaders; positive difference, both locally and globally; lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities, at home and around the world	?	Research intensive, but also comprehensive

other schools appear to have grassroots or community organized origins and two were actually founded to train teachers. But the variable “Founding” seems a bit suspect as the majority of these universities have a long history between their founding and this year, 2008¹⁴. Though all the schools claim a mission of “service”—or “response” in the case of UMN, there does seem to be a split amongst them: some making “global” or “world” claims, whereas others appear more focused on their specific locale. Overall, Table 2 does not offer any substantive insights as to how or why UTEP might be distinct from the universities with SJPs and therefore, concerning

¹⁴ Though it seems important to this analysis to explore deeper into the history of each of these respective universities, this “exploration” is beyond the scope of this particular research.

the variables of university *mission*, *founding*, and *character*, UTEP could easily be considered a twin university aligned with the others.

Table 3 - Hard-data. It can be noted, when observing several of the variable categories in Table 3 below, University Hard-Data Comparison, that UTEP is an outlier from the other universities. The percentage of student minority levels at UTEP far exceeds the others; the percentage of students living in dormitories is far less than the others; and the percentage of

Table 3 - University Hard-Data Comparison

international students is more than double that of the nearest university. UTEP is also one of the

University	Locale	Endowmnt (000)	Minority	Int. Stdnts	Women	Dorms	Enrolled	S/T Ratio	Tuition	Entrance Difficulty
UTEP	Urban	\$132,056	80%	10%	55%	3%	17,025	20:1	\$4,551	Minimal
ASU Tempe	Suburb	\$227,335	25%	3%	50%	17%	41,626	22:1	\$5,409	Moderate
CA State San Marcos	Suburb	\$9,084	36%	3%	61%	7%	6,327	24:1	\$3,650	Moderate
U Minn. Twin Cities	Urban	\$836,316	18%	2%	53%	22%	32,294	?	\$7,950	Moderate
U. Wisc. Oshkosh	Suburb	\$350	6%	2%	59%	34%	11,091	22:1	\$5,693	Moderate
U. Missouri	Suburb	\$442,800	12%	1%	52%	29%	21,654	17:1	\$7,077	Moderate
U. North Carolina	Suburb	\$1,486,147	23%	1%	59%	46%	17,628	15:1	\$3,705	Very
Michigan State	Suburb	\$906,342	17%	4%	53%	43%	36,072	17:1	\$9,330	Moderate

only two *urban* schools, the other being the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota, and UTEP is also the only university where the student entrance difficulty is listed as *minimal*. For the remaining variable categories, UTEP does appear to be “in the ball park” with the others. Overall, when considering all the variables in Table 3 together, and in contrast to the findings for Table 2, there does not appear to be an equitable twin university for UTEP.

Discussion

In accord with the findings of Table 3, when all the data, both “hard” and “soft”, are considered

all together, there is not a twin university for UTEP. A point of interest though is the diverse range of endowment figures. Might this diversity suggest that endowment is not a good predictor of a SJP? It seems that this is a valid consideration when endowment figures at UNC are over a billion dollars and the figure for UWosh is beneath half-a-million. The differences in student enrollment figures and tuition rates for these two schools do not seem to make up the difference; though it is duly noted that UNC is the only school in Table 3 with an entrance difficulty that is *very* difficult. Though all of the variables for these two schools do not align, it is admitted that these two tables are a simplistic way of comparing universities. The central finding of Part I of this research is: when considering *all the table data together*, there is not a twin university for UTEP amongst the other state universities with SJPs. A secondary finding is that UTEP may have a twin depending on the means of measure: should hard-data or soft-data be used? Is there some other data set that has been overlooked? Should all the data be taken together or does only some of the data have greater relevance to the existence of a SJP? A more exploratory qualitative type of analysis appears to be required.

Part II: Qualitative Analysis

Method

Participants. The participants in the target group of this analysis self identified as SJP initiators, founders, or present program coordinators. Excluding four professors that were interviewed from UTEP, all of the participants are being considered as SJP representatives¹⁵. Since UTEP does not have a SJP, the professors that participated from UTEP are only being considered as *university* representatives. In all, approximately ten professors and two administrators¹⁶ participated, at least one from each of the universities with SJPs (except for Mizzou, which proved fruitless after repeated attempts) and in the case of ASU, three were interviewed. Except for the case of UTEP, all interviews were conducted over the phone; the UTEP participants were interviewed in person. There was a focus on open ended questions and responses were often probed for greater clarification. Each interview lasted for about an hour.

¹⁵ Whether a SJP representative was the initial founder or current coordinator, they were referred to me and spoke as if they were the most knowledgeable person concerning the program. Herein, the terms *program coordinator*, *initiator*, *respondent*, *interviewee*, and *SJP representative* are used synonymously.

¹⁶ Administrators were quite difficult to contact.

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The object of this qualitative analysis is an exploration into the SJP from the SJP representative's point view¹⁷. Similar to Part I, nearly all respondents came from departments within the liberal arts: sociology, philosophy, gender studies and some self-identified as criminologists. No singular discipline was represented more than the others.

Findings - Common Themes

Themes were extracted from the interviews and have been categorized as common, salient, or unspoken. The common themes showed significant congruence, or “agreement,” amongst all the respondents and are organized immediately below¹⁸. Note that this “congruence” is between diverse SJP representatives: from different academic institutions and from different states. This is not to be considered a comprehensive list as many issues were not universally addressed in all the interviews. For example, though some did, not all respondents held that their programs were “radical,” “controversial,” “threatening to rightwing conservatives,” or that they even represented a certain ideology. The more salient and unspoken themes are addressed further below.

1) Though anyone can have the initial idea, SJPs are faculty driven; a “critical mass” of faculty is necessary. For one university, an administrator had the initial idea; for another, two students; and in yet another, it was the colleague of the interviewee, but having the initial idea was not enough to bring the SJP into existence—a “critical mass” of faculty was required. This “critical mass” was necessary as a kind of inertia against those who might misunderstand the program or, as some interviewees responded, an “unfriendly” administration. Even in the case of a respondent who was an administrator, her first step was to look for faculty interest/drive. The need for a “critical mass” appears to be another way of saying that the development of a SJP is a group effort and not a “solo project.” Note that as an interdisciplinary program, the SJP will naturally require some degree of faculty coordination across academic disciplines and precisely “what” constitutes a “critical mass” appears to be relative. What may be “critical” for one

¹⁷ As a point of clarification, the backgrounds, personalities, education or politics of the respondents are not studied herein. Although this may be an important contributor to SJP development, “founder background” or research into *why* or *what factors* have inclined a certain professor to help initiate a SJP appears to be an enormous question in the realm of human behavior, which itself may be considered its own discipline, and beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁸ These themes are not placed in any specific order, though there is some coincidence with program development.

university might not be “critical” for another¹⁹.

2) *Effort will be required and struggle can be expected.* All the respondents alluded to some form of struggle, e.g., feeling “alone,” continually preoccupied with fundraising, unable to grow the program, or dealing with “hostile” administrators. “Struggle” appears to come with the SJP-territory and perhaps many of these themes could be subsumed under the heading of *Struggle*. Even for a respondent who said, “It wasn’t a hard task!” when referring to initiating the program, he did encounter struggles with “making money” when desiring to expand the program. Another respondent, who could not think of any particular resistance to the program, struggled with people not understanding the program. SJPs are new in the history of academia and studying discriminatory systems and inequality does not appear to be a well known or popular endeavor. As one respondent remarked, “And don’t forget this is the United States of America, a lot of people don’t want to talk about inequality and poverty and oppression.” To be involved in the development of a SJP seems to inherently imply some sort of struggle: political, fundraising, public relations, or otherwise.

3) *Due to the institutional structuring of the university around “the traditional disciplines,” interdisciplinary programs are, at least initially, difficult to build, staff, support, and maintain.* This theme is nearly a direct quote from one of the respondents, but all interviewees did allude to the challenges of an interdisciplinary program. Though they are currently becoming more popular and seen by some as a trend, when compared to the history of the university, these programs are a new development and can be problematic to the organizational structure of a university. When staffing lines are built around departments and the traditional disciplines, finding ways to maintain something interdisciplinary like a SJP can be seen as a bit of a puzzle. This “puzzling nature” can, at the very least, be expected in the initial stages of program development. Some respondents did express though, that as the program grows—if it grows—these programmatic, structuring, and staffing difficulties will diminish. Some respondents experienced their SJP eventually receiving greater acceptance and structures to accommodate its

¹⁹ A question that has arisen from this research is: Is a “critical mass” of faculty both necessary *and* sufficient to create a SJP at a state university in the USA or is it just sufficient? In other words, if a committed group of believing faculty dedicate themselves to the creation of a SJP, even in the climate of an unfriendly administration, would this be enough to bring the program into existence?

interdisciplinary nature soon developed within their university.

4) *Administrative acceptance*²⁰ is essential for finding an institutional base. If the administration does not allow the program—if a “critical mass” of faculty goes from department to department seeking an institutional base and no department is open to it, then there is no SJP. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, the SJP does not necessarily have its own department and may be “looking for one.” This “need” to find an institutional base is, as aforementioned, due to the long-established structuring of the university around the traditional disciplines. Again, the administration does not necessarily need to be friendly²¹ to the program, but “allowance” or some degree of acceptance is essential for the program to exist within the institution.

5) *An administration that is “SJP friendly” is helpful for monetary support.* A friendly administration will be more open, accepting, psychologically supportive, and, in more ways than one, helpful with monetary support. Though the respondents had varied experiences with “friendliness,” they all lauded the benefits of it. For example, there was probably a big difference between one respondent’s experience of an administrator saying, “Well, you can house it [the SJP] here in my department, but we’ll never give you any money,” as opposed to the experience of another respondent whose administrator said, “If there’s student and faculty interest, I’ll provide some resources to help us move forward.” Related to this theme is a similar one: as the administration changes, monetary support may change. This happens because the administrative “friendliness” may change. Two respondents had experiences with “changing friendliness”: for one respondent, the administration became more friendly and for the other, less friendly. Monetary support itself, as a possible result of friendliness, can come either directly or indirectly, e.g., an administrator guiding the program coordinator to other funding sources.

²⁰ The phrasing “administrative acceptance” was never used by any of the respondents. They were more inclined to refer to “administrative support.” For this theme, I use the term *acceptance* because contextually, the term *support* might allude to either *monetary* or *ideological* support: *monetary*, meaning actual assistance with funding and *ideological*, meaning a kind of moral support, but no funding, e.g., just given an “institutional base.” One respondent articulated the distinction well when recounting his experience with a dean: the dean would allow the SJP to be housed in her department, but “would never give us any money.” When the phrase *administrative acceptance* is used herein, it means that the administration *allows it to exist*, but is not necessarily “friendly” or helpful with funding.

²¹ The term “friendly” means that the SJP is seen as desirable and likeable in the eyes of administrators and that they will be helpful in any way possible. “Friendly” does not *necessarily* mean that the administration is helpful monetarily, but that it might be if it could be.

6) *Though funding is required for program growth, due to the extant curriculum, it is not an initial requirement.* To some degree, all the respondents alluded to not requiring a lot of funds. But this may be a relative statement in accord with personal expectations and in comparison with other university programs, e.g., political science, economics, or history. As one respondent mentioned, “It doesn’t take much to move forward.” Depending on what may be desired: “an advisor, some administrative costs, [and] a part-time graduate student.” This “not taking much to move forward” is due to the fact that much of the program can be assembled from the extant curriculum. Most universities already have courses that examine discriminatory systems within society, i.e., courses that analyze race/ethnicity, gender, class and economic/global issues. This extant curriculum, in some ways, can be seen as a SJP “waiting” to be put together.

Program growth, though, is a different issue: this *will* require funding depending upon what is expected, i.e., what degree of dedicated course work, student advisors, and/or external activities. These and other types of growth require more funds and without these said funds growth may be stunted. Many respondents mentioned that fundraising, from a diversity of internal and external sources, was one of their primary occupations.

7) *States are not funding public education like they used to, there is an “educational budget crunch,” a bad economy, a deficit situation and program representatives should be prepared to do their own fundraising.* All of the respondents were asked how they funded their programs, most alluded to a “bad economy” or deficit situation and admitted the need to fundraise. But there were different attitudes toward the issue: some sounded more “positive” and others claimed it was nearly a fulltime occupation. Some struggled more than others depending on their specific situation, i.e., administrative friendliness, program requirements, and/or desires for growth. Respondents were clear though that states are not funding public education like they used to and that there is a strong movement toward privatization. Though, as aforementioned, SJPs do not require a lot of money, they also do not create a lot of money. Again, in accord with the current literature and the interviews, many academics need be, reluctantly or not, prepared to fundraise.

8) *For some universities, there is an image and symbolic aspect to SJPs.* Respondents had at times pointed out that SJPs can be considered as: “controversial,” “radical,” “progressive,”

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“liberal,” “empowering,” “political,” “communistic,” “critical,” “picking fights,” “threatening,” “lacking academic rigor,” or “scary.” For some, these labels—these images and symbolic representations, can carry great political and ideological weight, power, and possible ramifications. As several respondents remarked, some universities can feel “nervous” or “threatened,” but for others, this “SJP image” can be a selling point. This is not a discussion about the degree of congruence between the possible reality and supposed image, but of the importance and potential impact of one’s perceptions—the believed image. For example, for some administrators these perceptions can be seen to work *for them*, and for others, *against them: for or against* their own desired image or identity. As one respondent mentioned, “some institutions have these kinds of programs and there's no big issue, but other institutions, people are more nervous.” But this idea of images and perceptions is not the experience of all the respondents. For example, for one interviewee, her SJP did not seem to have an image, as she remarked, “It’s all about money!” Her main complaint was that her university was being run too much like a business. If the program makes money, administrators will be pleased by it. Consequently, if it does not make money, it may not survive to the next semester. For some universities, there is an image and symbolic aspect to SJPs, but, as the above respondent seems to affirm, not all universities²².

9) *SJPs require a lot of “public relations.”* There was considerable congruence amongst the respondents that their SJPs required a lot of “public relations.” They often needed to explain to others—administrators, colleagues, and students—the intentions of their program. Sometimes the respondents found themselves describing what an interdisciplinary program was; sometimes they were explaining to students where they could find jobs; and sometimes, as one interviewee claimed, he found himself explaining to an administrator how the university mission is “served well by a SJP.” Even during this research, professors were encountered who had never heard of a SJP and were shocked that they existed. As one respondent expressed, “It’s a new major that’s not well known and there aren’t these established frameworks for it.” Another respondent listed “PR” as one of his top two barriers, the first being effort. It appears that anyone who plans to develop or involve themselves in a SJP should always be prepared to give an account of what they do and why they do it.

²² Exploring when a SJP may or may not hold symbolic weight for a university is recommended for further research.

10) *There is a tension between SJPs and the credentialing aspects of education.* Not only was this a common theme amongst the respondents, but this is also a popular critique directed against the university (Collins, 1979). The respondents asserted that though students *are* interested in asking critical questions directed at society, they are *more* interested in “survival,” “getting trained” or “credentialed” in order to “make a living.” Students are often unable to see the return value of a SJP and find themselves questioning, “How will I get job?” This tension can also be connected to the prior theme: *SJPs require a lot of “public relations”* as respondents often need to explain to students the supposed value of a SJP.

11) *Both the study of inequality and activism can make people nervous.* From the interviews, there seemed to be two main types of nervousness caused by SJPs: the first is when someone *does not* understand or misunderstands the program; the second is when someone *does* properly understand the program. This discussion shall explore the theme of those who *do* properly understand and are nervous; regarding those who *do not* understand or misunderstand, they are a concern for the previous theme number ten, *SJPs require a lot of “public relations.”*

There was considerable congruence amongst the respondents that *both the study of inequality and activism can make people nervous.* This nervousness mostly referred to people in the university’s administration or positions of “power” and/or those interested in maintaining the status quo. The interviewees often touched upon how people can get uncomfortable when traditional social structures get questioned. And asking such questions and confronting such structures is one of the tasks of a SJP. Whether one’s nervousness is real or perceived, its basis seems to be founded in fear or a threat of change or loss. But this is not clearly known and requires deeper investigation²³. From a SJP coordinators point of view, it seems that “just knowing” that others, or even one’s self, are liable to get nervous is a helpful caveat reminiscent of theme number two: *Effort will be required and struggle can be expected.*

This concludes the *common themes* portion of the findings. All the aforementioned themes showed significant congruence amongst all the respondents. The following section categorizes

²³ The nervousness issue is recommended for further research.

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themes and issues that were not common amongst the respondents.

Findings – Selected salient and unspoken issues

Though deviating from the common themes, there were salient and unspoken issues that were pertinent. Though not common amongst all the respondents, these appear worthy of mention and are listed below in no particular order.

1) Major degrees and criminology origins versus “from scratch” origins. When coding and categorizing common themes, it was noticed that to certain questions the respondents from the SJPs with Major degrees and origins in criminology had, within themselves, similar answers. But when compared to the programs that started “from scratch,” these similar answers showed some distinct differences. For example, respondents from the programs with Major degrees and origins in criminology programs did not express as much of a struggle with ideological/political resistance. In fact, some professors had actually received encouragement from their university to “change” and therefore, of their own volition, began focusing on “justice issues more broadly.” These same interviewees also did not speak of funding with the same concern as the other respondents. They were concerned with funding, but did not speak of it with the same degree of urgency. Though it is not clear how the issues of a Major or origins in criminology might independently relate to the founding of the SJP, this finding does suggest a split in the manner that these SJPs came into being.

2) All respondents appeared to have a deep personal commitment to social justice. Each respondent appeared to have a deep personal interest and dedicated commitment to social justice. Even during preliminary informal conversations, when explaining the focus of this research, the majority of the SJP coordinators expressed a keen interest in this study; they were curious and wanted to be informed of the findings. They appeared committed to their work and wanted to learn more.

We think there are about thirty other programs like ours, I’d be curious to see what you come up with.

Yes, I’m very interested in your results and seeing what other programs you are focusing on.

If I could, I'd like to see what you come up with.

These comments and others gave the impression that the respondents were not only knowledgeable specialists in their field, but deeply committed to social justice.

3) *Self-fulfilling prophecy*. When analyzing the respondent interviews, there seemed to be another factor that deserves consideration: the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1996; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). In what ways might the pre-believing expectation of the future SJP play a role in the SJP actually coming into existence? This question appears difficult to verify as one's ideas and beliefs may well be affected by one's environment or perceptions of their environment. But the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy seems to be an important dynamic in this research as each respondent appeared to *pre-believe* in the program's potential before they acted on it. Of course *disbelief* may well preclude action, which is also what the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy predicts.

4) *Interdisciplinary/interpersonal dynamics*. Only one professor mentioned this possible issue: that interdisciplinary/interpersonal dynamics might also play a role in the success of a SJP. When trying to work with other departments, she had encountered differences in views, priorities, and personalities. Her point was that since some professors do not get along well with each other, they may not want to work with each other²⁴. There is no data or information on this issue, only hearsay. It also seems that this may be difficult to research—interdepartmental or interpersonal conflicts—as people may not be interested in expressing their dislike of a fellow colleague. Certainly, professors are very busy and interdisciplinary programs are difficult to design and maintain, but this issue would seem to exacerbate the difficulties. To what degree might interpersonal relations play a role in the success, or not, of a SJP?

5) *The leadership of UTEP would be ideologically resistant to a SJP*. This theme is only specific to the respondents from UTEP and there was significant congruence amongst them—though only four UTEP professors. Comments ranged from “This is Texas, there's a conservative right-wing

²⁴ This seems like an important direction for further research, especially for a program which is meant to focus on social justice. For example, if professors are unable to work together for a just cause, is it not presumptuous to expect students to do so?

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dominance here and the state controls the politics of licensing and performance of academic degree plans” to “Not here and not with these leaders.” And “The strategies of UTEP are the strategies of the owner, ‘the man,’ the power system.” It seems that for political reasons a SJP would not be welcomed at UTEP. Perhaps these findings might prove helpful for someone attempting to initiate a SJP at UTEP. For example, it seems that a “critical mass” of faculty *would* be required, that there will be struggle, and that this venture may make some people nervous.

6) *Academic freedom and anonymity.* Two respondents from UTEP did not want their identity publicly revealed in connection with their interview. When another respondent learned of this, he was greatly alarmed and asserted . . .

Those are interesting statements that are worth you writing about, that there are people that don’t feel comfortable publicly discussing these issues. That says something about the topic in many ways and it’s important to say. Whereas I feel that anything I say about the work that I do is public, whether I say positive or negative things about the program that I run at the institution that I run it.

The UTEP leadership may not necessarily be to blame for these desires of anonymity as there may be some hidden issues, but this tendency indicates a point of concern and deserves further exploration. If professors are uncomfortable or afraid to speak, or afraid of the consequences of their speech, then does this not represent, in accord with the literature review, a debility in the academic functioning of the university, its service to society and the state, an informed citizenry, and the promotion of democratic values? It also seems dangerously ironic that precisely those persons with a specific concern for social justice would also desire anonymity. But under oppressive circumstances, might this be the norm? Though literature on academic freedom exists, the findings show that this issue persists.

6) *What a university should be about.* One could surmise that “what a university should be about” is a matter of opinion. Two geographically distant interviewees mentioned this same phrase within separate but similar contexts: a conversation concerning SJPs and political/ideological controversy. They also mentioned issues with the Department of Homeland

Security (DHS). These issues triggered the comment “What a university should be about” and these statements seem worth quoting directly. The first respondent recounts that . . .

. . . there was a bit of a push, not intellectually because anyone cared, but because the government was throwing money to build Homeland Security programs, but almost all of those were technical programs, they could have been just as easily and probably better suited for technical colleges and [our state has] a very good technical college system, but people in [our] system decided, ‘Well, there’s money out there, we want to get on board, and we want to do some of this.’ I was opposed to most of it because I didn’t think that’s what a university should be about.

According to this respondent, it appears that deeper principles should be considered before the university “gets on board” to DHS funding. The second respondent also mentions “what a university should be about” and is even more detailed concerning controversy with her university. She also speaks of DHS funding, the political positioning of her university and that her SJP had been thought of as anti-American, “against our troops,” and even “a little bit communistic.” Since this respondent most closely captures the intertwined nature of many of the aforementioned themes, this specific dialogue has been incorporated in full below.

JB: How are SJPs “potentially too controversial?”

PR: Well, lets say your committed to a . . . program like ours and lets say that the president of your university happens to be well connected in the upper circles of the republican party and he’s not only an enthusiastic supporter of the war in Iraq, but actually goes over there and works in Baghdad after Saddam Hussein is over thrown. That’s the situation here. Now that guy thinks [a SJP] is a pacifist antiwar operation that’s anti-American. . . . So, in fact he was a long time cold-warrior and one of my colleagues in Anthropology heard him say something like, ‘Social Justice Program?! That sounds a little bit communistic don’t you think?’ . . . And there he’s noting the fact that a lot of left wing organizations have been antiwar, he just makes the association. So, a lot of people, if you’re emphasizing [something like, say] peace, well, you’re against the military, you’re against our troops, even if we agree that peace is a good idea, there are people out there in our constituency or maybe on the board of trustees who are going to see this as in some way opposed to our government and that gets me on the bounds of what a university is supposed to be about. So that’s the kind of issue that can arise.

She continues with an example of a problematic when analyzing the causes of inequality. For some institutions “there’s no big issue,” but others “are more nervous and conservative.” She explains . . .

. . . we are developing a program in ethics and development and one of the key issues there is: What are the causes of inequality in the developing world? Well, supposing you say, well, you know, the causes of inequality are corporate policies, corrupt states, bad foreign policy, which is all true, then you're in effect criticizing the American government, American policy, or you can be seen to be doing that. So, that makes some people nervous. Now some people can live with that, so some institutions have these kinds of programs and there's no big issue, but other institutions, people are more nervous and conservative. So, one of the issues is how do you organize these kinds of programs and define them so that they maintain some boundary between academic work and political advocacy. And you've got to be able to indicate ways that you can have an ethical commitment towards justice and still present yourself as an academic program.

JB: How do you mean?

PR: Well, if you emphasize activism as something you're advocating, then you're picking fights with people who have political power, so you can't do that, and you're also politicizing the university in ways that most people are very nervous about. So you have to draw very clear limits. . . . On the other hand, there's an on going battle over what a university should be about. Even like my university, . . . which is pretty conservative on the whole, there's this idea that this is a land-grant university that's supposed to have a social mission that somehow serves the greater good of the state and the country and the world even, they say. Well, I say, when we're talking about these things, well, that part of . . . our mission is served well by a [social justice] program. So, you can use the mission of the institution to justify a social justice focus, but you have to have a sympathetic administrator to find that a compelling argument because they're going to be more thinking about these conservative board of trustees members, sort of the big donors, who are corporate presidents, or you know, wealthy doctors, who are not necessarily interested in radical ideas or critical ideas.

JB: It sounds like I could draw an analogy between the university and an individual: sometimes where someone's ideas are, or where their commitments lie, can have an effect on their ability to economically survive.

PR: Well, there are ways that the profession evolves that has some kind of constraint on developing some perspectives that are implicitly conservative, not explicitly, and an individual who decides that he or she wants a career might have to follow those professional constraints of the field that he or she does and therefore accept what are implicitly conservative guidelines, less critical guidelines, without ever thinking of it in those terms. . . . In fact here . . . we have a so called Criminal Justice program and they're very interested in getting Homeland Security money, there's a lot of money going to universities through the Homeland Security department, so, there's lots of people who are chasing the dollar.

Though for most of the respondents the phrase “what a university should be about” was never mentioned, it seems to have been a central, nearly unspoken theme in this research. As previously mentioned, funding can be an issue, public relations an issue, nervousness an issue, and “what a university should be about,” seems parallel to, if not foundational to, many of these issues. Perhaps this is presumptuous, but it seemed that many of the respondents had clear ideas about “what a university should be about.”

7) *An Overarching Theme: Ideological Positioning.* A related, overarching theme which seems to have both implicitly and explicitly intertwined and informed the content of this research is *ideological positioning*. For good or ill, it seems that universities, SJPs, administrators, professors, stakeholders, activists, and those in academic governance all seem to have subscribed to a particular ideological position. An *ideological position* may be considered the particular location that someone, or perhaps an institution, occupies along a political or ideological continuum, e.g., being politically “right,” “left,” “centrist,” “conservative,” “liberal,” etc. Though these terms seem inadequate for categorizing the opinions, comments, and situational dynamics contained herein, the concept of ideological positioning does serve as a general framework for the positions and themes encountered within this analysis.

But there appears to be another dynamic that deserves attention: the triangular link between ideology, status quo, and wealth. As one varies, to what extent do the others? The reality of this triangle can be seen below in a statement from a UTEP respondent. If there is a shift in

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ideological position/status quo it may affect monetary contributions. This respondent also alludes to the aforementioned themes of “image” and DHS funding.

There’s our image. If you start doing something that looks like social justice, some of UTEP’s contributors will be calling the president’s office. It’s happened before. . . . Frankly, what’s happened to UTEP is that the sacred halls the academy have been invaded by the military-industrial complex. It’s all about money towards intelligence and security programs.

Likewise, this triangular relationship is present in the statement of the respondent who spoke of “professional constraints,” which might also be called “ideological constraints.” In order to not affect incoming wealth or status—personal or collective, one maintains, or at the very least works within, an ideological position/status quo. Similar to the way an employee might be required to perform a certain way, not “make waves,” or lose their job. And as aforesaid, these “professional constraints” can happen more implicitly than explicitly.

But in accord with the literature review for this study and as asserted by one of the respondents, one of the most disconcerting developments at state universities is that they appear to have gone beyond “professional constraints” toward a “strictly business” constraint/ideology. This dynamic is present in the *“It’s all about money!”* comment from another respondent. Below she explains that from her experience the political/ideological aspects of a SJP are secondary to money, universities have become like businesses and corporations.

. . . I think anything that starts, *anything*, conservative, liberal, neutral, the bottom line is, whatever you propose, you have to say that you’re going to make money! So again, I had no resistance about the politics of what we proposed and we were very clear about it not being neutral, and based on Freire and feminist and antiracist, you know, we never had any resistance on that. . . . So, I suppose any way to get it through is to say you’re going to make money for the university, cause that’s all that really matters these days. There’s not conversations about quality, it’s more about quantity and large lectures and money. And that’s a national trend in institutions of higher education, it’s about corporations. Business people are hired as deans, not educators. Business people are hired as university presidents, because the federal government and the state government aren’t

funding education any more because we're at war! . . . It's all about money! So it's less about ideology to me right now, I think, than money.

Certainly a bit reductionist, but could this mean that in this specific case all ideological positioning may be subsumed under *one* ideology: the ideology of making money? Might the university in this instance be considered the “ideological vender” or prostitute²⁵: if there is a market willing to buy, we will sell? As an above respondent claimed, “there's lots of people who are chasing the dollar.”

But what of the university that claims to *not* have an ideology? There are universities that maintain that they are nonsectarian, neither adhering to nor advocating a particular ideology or value. But is this not in itself a particular ideological position and value? A proverbial, “All are welcome here!” In what ways might this “non-ideology” be claiming a certain position, value, or again, attempting to make money? All these questions and issues of ideological position appear to have overarched and intertwined this study and are recommended areas for further research.

A Final Hypothesis. Continuing with the overarching theme of ideological positioning, there is a final hypothesis that returns to Part I of this research: finding a comparative sample/twin for UTEP. As alluded to earlier, a twin university might not be an institution that matches variables like hard and soft-data, but one that most nearly approximates the ideological positioning of the university in question. In light of the findings of the qualitative analysis and the recurrence of the theme of ideological positioning, this appears to be the most appropriate “twin-ing” for the UTEP case. For example, instead of approaching this research by looking for a twin university that meets hard and soft-data predictor-variables and *has* a SJP, might the most telling approach be to find a university with a similar ideological position—the term ideology inclusive of an institutions approach to moneymaking—and then analyzing how the SJP developed?

If this final hypothesis has merit, then perhaps this has already been done herein. There were two

²⁵ The use of this term is not meant to invoke structures of gender. Merriam-Webster (2008) defines a *prostitute* as: “a person (as a writer or painter) who deliberately debases *his* or *her* talents (as for money)” [emphasis mine].

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respondents that spoke of administrative issues similar to the way respondents from UTEP spoke of them. And if peoples' opinions are an accurate means of measuring ideological positioning, then the findings from this research have more merit than speculation. The resultant common themes and salient issues may actually be valid guides for someone trying to develop a social justice program at UTEP. But how, exactly, is ideological positioning to be measured? It seems that more than opinion would be required. Perhaps an exploration into a university's constituency, stakeholders, educational focus and monetary interests is also due. But this is not clearly known; deeper analysis is required.

Conclusion

Part I. This study was conducted in order to analyze the phenomenon of the SJP at the state university in the USA. In Part I, a central question was addressed: What might it take to develop a social justice program at UTEP? Hard and soft-data were analyzed in an attempt to locate a state university with the *event* of the SJP for case study comparison with the *non-event* university, UTEP. The results of this analysis were mixed: when all the data, both hard and soft, were considered together, there was not a comparative "twin" university for UTEP. But if one were to be selective, e.g., focusing strictly on soft-data, some "twin-ing" could be seen. In view of these difficulties in finding a comparative university and considering the results of the subsequent qualitative analysis, I argue that the best comparative sample would be one that most nearly approximates the ideological positioning of the university in question. And this argument suggests that this may have already been done herein; that the aforementioned common themes and salient issues have more merit than speculation and would be a valid guide for someone trying to develop a social justice program at UTEP. Also, the findings of Part I reveal that endowment figures are not a good predictor for a SJP; this was reconfirmed by a common theme in Part II: due to the extant curriculum, funding is not an initial requirement for a SJP.

Part II. In Part II of this research a similar question was addressed: Why do some universities have SJPs and others do not? Interviews obtained from twelve representatives from seven state universities across the USA were qualitatively analyzed. Various common, salient, and unspoken themes were revealed and are the central findings of this research. These themes ranged from a necessity of struggle and a "critical mass" of faculty to the realities of fundraising and

ideological positioning. Amongst other themes were possible dynamics of self-fulfilling prophecy, SJP “tensions” with the traditional disciplines and credentialing education, program misunderstandings, and the assertion that the leadership of UTEP would be ideologically resistant to a SJP. Also revealed was an academic “reluctance toward activism,” “pressures to be narrow, to be fairly conservative, [and] not to create controversy.” These findings reveal that the issues and themes of this research are numerous and intertwined. I argue in accord with a comment from a respondent, “It’s a stew, multi-factorial, . . . You need all the little bits and pieces to make it happen!” In order to initiate a SJP at a state university, amongst other things, one would need a critical mass of faculty, administrative acceptance, a public relations plan, and persistence amidst struggle.

The literature. For the most part, in accordance with the literature review, the SJP does find itself housed within a challenging environment. But the SJPs that were Majors and had foundations in criminology appeared to be dealing differently—less controversially—with both developmental and operational issues. This difference deserves deeper analysis. Also in accord with the literature, fundraising is a necessary endeavor, but due to the extant curriculum, funding is not an initial requirement. Though the findings confirm the university’s inclination toward credentialing education, bottom-line business thinking, and the existence of a military-industrial-academic complex (Giroux, 2007), these themes were not spoken of universally. This incongruence may be related to ideological positioning and a specific university’s status quo, but the reasons involved are not clearly known and further research is recommended. The findings also reveal that some respondents were reluctant to opine openly and requested anonymity concerning their interviews. This appears to confirm a caveat from the literature: that the very foundation of the profession—the ability to speak openly and freely—is damaged. But all the details regarding these specific requests for anonymity are unknown and also deserve further exploration. Note that the aforementioned parallels between the findings and the literature seem to be imbedded within a conversation of “what a university should be about” which may have been, appropriately enough, the original impetus of the literature: a call to review the mission of the university.

New findings. But besides these parallels with the literature, there have been “ground breaking” aspects to this research: 1) Though persistence and commitment amidst struggle could be

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expected, the requirement of a “critical mass” of faculty in founding a SJP is new. This implies that persons from different disciplines are somehow in dialogue and working toward a common goal. Interdisciplinary degrees are not new to the university, but they do require a cross-discipline commitment that is not “traditional.” And some form of interdisciplinary structure will need to be established. 2) Endowment not correlating with the existence of a SJP and funding not being an initial requirement for its founding are both new findings. 3) For some, there is controversy in the very name and supposed image of a “social justice program”; public relations will be required as there are people who do not know what “SJP” means, or will get nervous about its political/ideological implications. 4) The difference between programs that are Major degrees with criminology origins versus “from scratch” origins is a new discovery. And further research to analyze these differences in origin is recommended. 5) Perhaps the flipside of the requirement for a “critical mass” of faculty: interdisciplinary/interpersonal dynamics may play a role in the success of a SJP. What if the necessary personnel “just don’t get along?” To what degree have interpersonal relations affected interdisciplinary efforts? Further research is suggested. 6) And finally, the reality that a university administration may be against the SJP; that funding could be denied, and the program unwelcome. But this response seems similar to that experienced by early ethnic and gender studies programs. All these additions seem to have complimented the current SJP literature.

Amongst other things, the SJP advances the ideas of its origins—critical pedagogy, Marxist thought, and the intentions of the Frankfurt School. Perhaps, it could have been surmised that themes like struggle, public relations, and ideological controversy would be expected; that respondents would be asking themselves critical questions like “what a university should be about”; and that administrators were sometimes nervous or unfriendly towards these programs. Though the actual efficacy of a SJP was not addressed herein and is still unknown, perhaps, if anything, the tensions and controversies involved in its development have expanded the dialogue over the inequalities, discriminations, and injustices that continue to reproduce themselves within the USA.

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