Arrested Development: Understanding the Identity Construction of Queer Students of Color at a Small Liberal Arts University in the Midwest

Eric Paoli Infanzón
Illinois Wesleyan University

Venus Evans-Winters, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc


This is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.
College is often a critical time for the maturation of one’s identity; raising awareness of the influences of race, class, gender, and sexual identity. However, there is a persistent tension in the identity construction of queer students of color on campus that is related to the essentialization and politics of identity at IWU. This is present in the interaction of students of multiple marginalized identities with their peers and faculty who reject the students, multi-faceted identities in favor of a single essentialized identity. The campus climate pressures students to adopt an essentialized identity while discouraging the open construction of a more complex identity. The finding of this study suggest a need to address this rejection which is institutionalized via curriculum and University programs that promote and privilege normativity over the experiences of individuals of multiple marginalized identities.