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My Choice, My Fraternity, and My Engagement: Experiences of White Men in Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLO)

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MY CHOICE, MY FRATERNITY, AND MY ENGAGEMENT: EXPERIENCES OF WHITE MEN IN BLACK GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATIONS (BGLO)

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by
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This dissertation is dedicated to my number one cheerleader and advocate, Constance P. Colin (MOM). THANK YOU.

In addition, this work is done in the memory of my Grandpa, Ibervel Perry; grandmothers Evelyn Martin Perry and Zelma Perry; my brother Prentice Theodore Gray, Sr.; nephew Prentice Theodore Gray, Jr., and Aunt Lettie.

Lastly, this dissertation is dedicated to all young people across in world with a dream… Do not let anyone put out your light. Onward and Upward.

have really kept me from making bad professional and personal decisions. You are more that a mentor!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study grounded in the theoretical framework and research of Alexander Astin's Student Involvment Theory, with support from Critical Race Theory and Terrell Strayhorn's work on Sense of Student Belonging, utilizes a methodological case-study approach with multiple units of analysis. In an effort to understand the choice, ownership, and engagement of White men who hold membership in Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLO), this study utilized the counter-narrative tenant presented and supported by Critical Race Theory to examine the racial identity and engagement of fraternity men from a pluralistic experience. Additionally, the researcher hypothesized that there is a special experience of White men who belong to the historical racially segregated fraternal organizations in America. What was learned was the sense of self-awareness participants had of their own racial identity, how it was portrayed as members of their respective fraternity. Additionally, this study highlighted the experiences of each man who from a point of privilege and majority as a White man and how that was translated when they became the minority population in and minority group. For all of the participants there was a sense of ownership and pride by each of their respective fraternity, a connection and commitment to the fraternity's mission, purpose, values, and commitment to the community and members the fraternity supported.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Higher educational opportunities and offerings in the United States are increasing in scope and size; additionally college student demographics is becoming more diverse in terms of race, sex, class, and internationally (Otten, 2003). As some institutional missions, degree offerings, and programs promote the development of training students for a global society, the need to have an understanding of multi-cultural experiences and offerings are steadily increasing and at the forefront of educational experiences.

Recently in an interview, the director of *Dear White People* stated, "because Barack Obama is president, and because everyone loves Beyoncé, people believe we are in a post racial society (Goodman, 2014), posited here by the new movie director, is an interesting statement and question, if American society is/was/has truly moving/moved to a post-racial identity. Additionally, questions centered on student engagement/involvement are researched and included in the assessment of the student experience on college campuses in the United States and evaluated as a piece of college and university accreditations-- both which assist in the creation and implementation of services for students on different college campuses.

During the spring semester of 2002, I made a conscious decision to join a fraternity on the campus of Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The fraternity which I chose was one that I saw in the community I belonged and identified with; racially and culturally, held and espoused similar values, where the members looked like me, and engaged in activities, programs, and services of which I was also engaged in on my college campus. Later, that same semester I met a gentleman who also chose to join the very same fraternity I sought membership in, but at another campus. The difference is he was White, and every other member of the fraternity I met was a Black man. During the fall semester of 2010, as I served as the campus advisor to a

fraternity on the campus of Indiana University, two young White men sought membership into the fraternity of which I advised and was a member. Throughout their membership intake process, they posed multiple questions about what they were learning, why they were learning specific historical information, how it related to their development, and how they could apply it to their growth as Indiana University students. In these two specific instances I found myself questioning these gentlemen's fraternal choice.

In 1946 Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity Inc., the first African-American inter-collegiate fraternity initiated its first white member in Chicago, Illinois (Hughey, 2007, 2009; Wesley, 2008), and in 1964 civil rights laws and legislation in the United States made it illegal to ban or with hold membership or admission of individuals based on race, creed, color (Hughey, 2007). In 2012 the University of Alabama's NPC (National PanHellenic Council) sororities made national news because of the lack of bids extended to Black women to join the predominately White sororities on its campus (Brown, 2013; Grasgreen, 2013). Today, conversations are still centered around the inclusion of students in specific areas on the college campus, the experiences they look to have, and be involved in with various campus offerings as members of their college community.

In three separate generational times in US history, Greek letter organizations, and its members have made national headlines, not for service efforts, but practices related to race. The conversation as to why this is still relevant today drives this research. As a burgeoning student affairs scholar-practitioner, interactions and relationships I have/had with students involved in Greek letter organizations, in 2010 and 2011 respectively, I was approached with questions, and inquired myself, about the experiences of non-Black members of historically Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs), and how I felt their memberships reflected the BGLO system and

2

network. Additionally, as a scholar-practitioner assessment and evaluation relating to student affairs and practice is of great importance, and student involvement is one aspect of assessment theory and approach to utilize in the field of student affairs assessment and evaluation.

Problem Statement

Student Involvement

In 1984, researcher Alexander Astin published a theory of student development, 'student involvement' (Astin, 1984,1993; Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) that defines student involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin 1984, p. 518; Evans et al., 2010, p. 31). The academic experience is observed in the curricular (classroom instruction and interaction), and co-curricular (activities out side of the classroom). For the purpose of this research project the area of 'student involvement' that will guide this research is fraternity involvement related to choice and experience, and specifically Astin's fourth postulate of student involvement "the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student development of student involvement in that program" (Astin, 1984 p. 519, Evans et al., 2010, p. 31). Astin (1984) asserts that the fourth postulate (previously introduced) is of high importance as it is the strongest in regards to education, and the fourth postulate is also effective for creating educational programs. The study of student development is important, and as Evans et al. (2010) write "several conditions found (or not found) in the college environment can have a major impact on students' growth and development (p. 30), the impact of student involvement and development can have lasting affects on a students well-being, and their contributions to their college or university community, and there after as transition in to larger societal roles.

Additionally, Astin (1985) investigates student involvement in multiple areas as a concept to understand student persistence and satisfaction, and creates multiple areas of involvement sub categories, which include "place of residence" (social fraternities are included in this category) (p. 524).

Previously introduced, the researcher identified the need for students to be engaged in purposeful experiences as an aspect of student involvement (Astin, 1984,1985,1993; Evans et al., 2010; and Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), additionally included, Astin (1984) identified fraternities and sororities as one aspect of involvement collegiate students can participate which can have lasting affects on their collegiate experiences. Nonetheless, Strayhorn (2012) published recent scholarship on 'belonging', and that a sense of belonging is a basic human need (as cited by Maslow, 1943). Strayhorn (2012) presents that belonging is essential to student development because "belonging generally refers to a feeling of connectedness, that one is important or matters to others (Strayhorn, 2012, p.1).   Additionally, Strayhorn adds that a students sense of belonging is of great importance to the academic and social development of the students college experience and development (Strayhorn, 2012), additionally, examples of when students "socialize with peers whose backgrounds may differ from their own," (Strayhorn, 2012, p. 2) strengthens the goal of supporting educational environments that support the notion of student belonging and development, a key component to this research project, and supports the need of multicultural engagement, experiences, and relationships in the student development process, as supported by a mix method experiment and results published in a 2012 book written by Dr. Strayhorn. Furthermore, Strayhorn presents two examples on the importance of student belonging and involvement in education-- is intersection, and how intersection plays an important role in students lives. Intersection for the purpose of this research project is identified

as curricular, co-curricular, personal development, student development, and experiences of college students and their matriculation. First, Strayhorn (2012) writes "students who were involved in campus clubs, organizations, and committees tended to have a greater sense of belonging in college than their peers who were not involved in clubs or were involved less frequently" (p. 111). Also, in Strayhorn's (2012) second example the researcher presents "students who were involved in fraternities and sororities, as well athletic teams, tended to have a greater sense of belonging in college than their peers who were not involved in such activities or were involved less frequently" (p. 115).   The previous examples of belonging, and its relationship to college involvement are recent scholarship that supports this research.

The study of Greek letter fraternities and sororities in the United States has evolved, and the evolution of Greek letter organizations on college campuses, and in communities, new and compelling topics have been explored. Originally founded as literary societies, Greek letter organizations began as develop on college campuses (Hughey, 2010; Torbenson, 2010; Thelin, 2004). The first such organization in the United States was Phi Beta Kappa which was founded at the College of William and Mary in Virginia in 1776 (Hughey, 2007, 2010; Thelin, 2004; Torbenson, 2010;Kimbrough, 2003). The study of separate factions, governing councils, of Greek life in the United States has also been included in the previous literature, but will not be addressed in this study.

The study of Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs) has been studied with important works by Ross (2000) 'The Divine Nine: History of African American Fraternities and Sororities'; Kimbrough (2003) 'Black Greek 101: The Culture, Customs, and Challenges of Black Fraternities and Sororities; and Parks (2008) 'Black Greek Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun' to introduce a few authors. Some authors present that Alpha

Kappa Nu formed in 1903 (Kimbrough, 2003) was the first Black fraternity in the United States.

Also presented is Sigma Pi Phi in 1904 (Hughey, 2008) as the first Black fraternity, but for much

of the current scholarship centered on BGLOs are focused on nine historically Black Greek

Letter Organizations (Ross, 2000).

The issue pertinent to this project is the establishment and subsequent integration of

Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLO), with close attention to BGLO fraternities in the

United States. Hughey (2007, 2008, 2010); Kimbrough (2003); Thelin (2004); Torbenson

(2010); and Ross (2000) write extensively about BGLOs in the United States. Specifically on

the topic of non-Black members of BGLOs, author Hughey (2007, 2008, 2010) wrote in great

length about this subject, but not in direct regard to White men and their specific experiences as

members of BGLOs. The issue that Hughey presents in much of his scholarship is Greek letter

fraternities in the United States have historically been racially segregated, and the continued

segregationist practices of these fraternities in the United States had been supported for a number

of years until two pivotal times in history. First, as Hughey (2007) writes:

> while there has been significant, strides in racial 'progress' that are manifested in
> contemporary US jurisprudence that prohibits de jure membership bias and exclusion
> based upon race, US college fraternities and sororities simultaneously enact a harsh de
> facto racial separation that prevails through custom and preference (p. 56).

And as early as 1952, at a National Interfraternity Council (NIC) (umbrella organization to

traditionally White fraternities) meeting, campus administrators from a university in the state of

New York suggested that the discriminatory policies regarding race should be removed from

practices of its fraternities, the policies failed to be supported by the specific organizations

(Hughey, 2007). Also, 1964 civil rights legislation would force traditionally White fraternities

and sororities to remove racially exclusionary language from its constitutions and by-laws to stay

compliant with the civil rights law, and university regulations (Hughey, 2007, 2008).

6

Critical Race Theory

The concept of a post-racial American societal ideology introduced previously is important to frame for the purposes of this study as this project will focus on race, identify, and racially integrated groups. Critical Race Theory (CRT) explores the idea that societal norms, the United States legal system, and institutions of higher education are fundamentally lined with racist practices (Teddlie & Freeman, 2002; Matias, 2013; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Lynn & Dixon, 2013; Tate, 1997; Mills, 1997). Nonetheless, CRT explores racial dominance and oppression, and looks at the effects race had on underrepresented minority groups in the United States originally from a legal point of view through Critical Legal Studies, but is also utilized in an educational lens (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Tate, 1997; Lynn & Dixon, 2013). Additionally, CRT explores 'heteronormative' dominance, a being, belief, or actions that support a cultural belief that relationships are male, and heterosexually centered (Vaughn, 2014) in the United States (West, 1993; Harris, 1993; Bell, 1995). Moreover, CRT when used as a theoretical framework aids in research and the expansion of literature, but in education has not be used as an independent theoretical framework. CRT utilizes several tenants to support scholarly research practices, particularly chronicling, storytelling and counter narratives (Brown & Jackson, 2013). Counter narratives are "used to make visible the racial biases that are deeply embedded in the unstated norms of American law and culture" (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 19). Moreover, the inclusion of racial identity, perceived stereotyping of cross-cultural or inter-racial fraternity involvement adds to the intersection of CRT and fraternity choice of White men who hold membership in a Black fraternity in the United States.

Purpose of Study

This study employed a qualitative research approach, specifically a single-case design study with multiple (seven) embedded units of analysis (Yin, 1994). The purpose of this study was to explore the fraternal choices of White men in the United States who have opted to join historically Black fraternities in the United States, and what their experiences in the fraternity related to student involvement, race and culture have been since their joining the organization. Utilizing semi-structured interviews conducted by videoconferences, this project will investigate the participant's ideas of race, multi-cultural experiences, and fraternal experiences as White men in a majority Black fraternity.

Research Questions

In an effort to understand more the multiple experiences of Greek members in the United States from varied backgrounds and experiences, this study will explore the experiences of White men who hold membership in a BGLO. Additionally, this study will be guided by one (2) research question that explores the choice and experiences of White men in BGLOs related to race and culture. A single-case design with multiple units of analysis will be utilized to answer the research questions. The case study context will be White men who belong to BGLO fraternities in the United States. There will be seven (9) embedded units of analysis; each participant is from a different area in the United States-, California, Indiana, Louisiana, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia.

The research questions that follow have been developed to understand an experience of a specific subset of people who participate in a sector of the college and community experience.

<u>(RQ1):</u> Why do White men choose to join Black Greek letter organizations (BGLOs)?

How are the experiences of White men who join BGLOs related to the

intersections involvement/engagement, race, and culture?

Study Procedures and Objectives

In the scholarly education research process, multiple steps are taken to produce active and procedural research acceptable in the eyes of the academy. As I have identified, and my experience with this project, I have identified a problem that sets a basis to be studied, identified the purpose of this study, and the presented two research questions that drives this project. My next steps are to outline the research/study procedures and objectives for this project.

As identified previously, the theoretical framework of student involvement by Astin (1984, 1985, 1993) supports a need for students to be engaged in purposeful experiences as an aspect of student involvement, and a supportive theory of Critical Race Theory (Lynn & Dixon, 2013) that "examines a range of educational issues and the way they are informed and impacted by race and racism" (p. 2), this qualitative study will explore the Greek fraternal choice of White men in BGLO, and what their experiences are as related to student involvement, race and culture. Also introduced previously, researcher Hughey (2007, 2009) has argued that the choice and experience of cross-racial Greek letter affiliation is varied across individual experiences, and this group of individuals present a story rich in context and experience. As far as research is concerned this topic has limited research and scholarship as it pertains to experiences of one group through experience and involvement; White, Asian, Latino, etc. in BGLO. Moreover, cultural and racial experiences of individuals in traditionally racially homogeneous groups (i.e. fraternities and sororities), particularly in the United States present an interesting question of navigation and satisfaction.

9

Procedurally, as the researcher, this study will present relevant literature related to Greek letter organizations, BGLO, student involvement/engagement, student belonging, and Critical Race Theory. Next, I will outline a methodology and interview protocol asked to participants, and identify themes and concepts from the responses of my participants and finally synthesis the themes to report the findings. The interviews will focus on the participant's familial and educational background, experiences, and choices, their decision to join a Greek letter fraternity, particularly why participants chose a BGLO and not an IFC fraternity (traditionally White council of fraternities), and what has their experiences related to race, culture and student involvement been as it shapes in their own identities. This study and its interviews will follow standard protocol and be supervised and approved by the processes outlined by Louisiana State University IRB. All interviews will be conducted in person or by videoconference; recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for understanding by the researcher. In following this presented procedure, I pursue to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze relevant literature regarding student involvement theory, critical race theory, and fraternity life in the Unites States;

- To apply critical race theory to the context of education through student involvement;

- To understand the founding, development, and expansion of BGLOs in the United States, and its inclusiveness on college campuses;

- To identify the decision making process of a sample of participants on their choice to join a BGLO;

- To identify intersections between student involvement, fraternities, race, and culture;

- To expand literature in the areas or Greek life, student involvement, multicultural education, and CRT;

- To understand the experiences of White men who, from a societal point of view, are positioned as a majority in the United States, and what their experiences are as a small group in a minority group; and

- To explore if the participant's involvement in their respective fraternity has positively or negatively shaped their development or identity culturally or racially.

Significance of Study

Scholarly research is positioned to hypothesize/ present a question to be investigated, and procedurally answer the proposed question through a set of steps and rules; technical and conceptual. The significance of this study will contribute to lack of research on White men in BGLO, existing literature in three intersectional areas; student involvement/engagement, multicultural competency and experiences, and Greek life related research. This study is important because it identifies a purposeful research agenda and question and is unique in itself that it identifies a gap in the literature. Also, higher education and student affairs research can assist university administrators by connecting theory to practice in the areas of student involvement, student engagement, multicultural education multicultural competency, diversity, and Greek life. And, add to higher education and student affairs researchers interested in applying an understanding, and utilizing theories such as student involvement and critical race theory in continued scholarly research.

Moreover, the forthcoming chapters in this study will assist in understanding and application of Astin's theory of student involvement that states "the amount of physical and

psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin 1984, p. 518)

with emphasis on his fourth postulate of student involvement—" the amount of student learning

and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the

quality and quantity of student development of student involvement in that program" (Astin,

1984 p. 519). The importance of Astin's theory of student involvement supports the need of

intentional and meaningful experiences of collegiate students. Also, Astin's theory intersects

and supports the work of Strayhorn (2012) centered on student belonging, and the need for

diverse multicultural experiences at the time of students personal and identity development.

Also, this study will give voice from a specific group of fraternity men, and allow them to

tell their story first hand. The insight to follow will assist fraternity advisors and Greek life

administrators on college campuses to provide a resource to future administrator and students

who will identify with the men involved in this research, and are looking for a resource to assist

in cross-racial fraternity involvement. Because each story is individualized, the information will

give multiple perspectives of White men in BGLOs, and not pigeon hole the overall Greek life

experience and narrative the American college campus.

Additionally, this work can assist in the deconstruction of perceived stereotypes of

fraternity men, and White men in BGLOs. Additionally, this work can help in creating

conversations on subjects of multiculturalism, diversity, and Greek life in the United States.

Finally, this study can assist in debunking a historical narrative that NPHC, along with NPC, and

IFC organizations are self segregated non-inclusive groups on American college campuses, and

the opportunities of cross-racial Greek membership is not a taboo topic or experience.

By investigating the choice to join and the experiences of White men in BGLO, this study

will highlight similarities, rather than differences of collegiate and community Greek

experiences, and remove the perceived stereotypical narrative that these men want to be 'Black', are traders to their race, are only in the fraternity because they are attracted to Black women, or come from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Definitions of Terms

1. African American fraternity: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. (Henry, 2012)

2. Black: Black – Individuals or groups in the African diaspora—inclusive of African Americans (Dancy, 2012)

3. Black Greek letter Organizations: The nine international African American Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. (Henry, 2012)

4. Critical Race Theory: Originally work centered on Critical Legal Studies in legal education an studies, CRT is used "to examine a range of educational issues and the way they are informed and impacted by race and racism" (Lynn & Dixon, 2013, p.2).

5. Heteronormative: A being, belief, or actions that support the cultural belief or norms that relationships are male dominated and heterosexually centered. (Vaughn, 2014)

6. Intersectionality: "Belief that individuals and classes have often shared or overlapped interests or traits" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 165).

7. National Pan-Hellenic Council: Coordinating body for the nine international African American Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities (Henry, 2012)

8. North-American Interfraternity Council (NIC/IFC): Founded in 1909, the North-American Interfraternity Conference is the trade association representing 74 international and National Men's Fraternities. Through Advocacy, Collaboration, and education, the NIC works to ensure that fraternities can operate in an environment conducive to their success. (North-American Interfraternity Council, Inc., 2014)

9. Student Involvement: **"**The amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin 1984, p. 518; Evans et al., 2010, p. 31)**.**

10. Whiteness: Quality pertaining to Euro-American or Caucasian people or traditions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 174).

Conclusion

In chapter one of this study, I have presented information and literature based on my research agenda, past professional experiences that has shaped my desire to conduct scholarly research, and hopes for impacting the field of higher education with this research. In this chapter I have presented a problem statement related to student involvement and critical race theory. I next presented the purpose of this study which will, qualitatively, through a single case study design explore the fraternal choices of White men in the United States who have opted to join historically Black fraternities in the United States, with emphasis on their individual lived experiences in the fraternity related to student involvement, race and culture. Procedurally, I presented two (2) research question and the theoretical framework—Astin's student involvement theory supported by Critical Race Theory's counter narrative/counter story telling that I will use to examine the proposed problem.

After the presentation of my research questions, I presented a list of study procedures and objectives in which I will implement and achieve that will aid in directing this study and to

answer my research questions. The purpose of the objectives in this study will guide the researcher, and hold accountable this study, guide the research agenda, and support the researcher in the creation of an interview protocol, and lastly to guide the study in its search for research participants. Next, I presented the significance of my study, and how this study will impact the field of higher education; theoretically, and practically. The field of higher education administration and student affairs is grounded in the intersections of student interaction and development. The need to expand research in higher education and student affairs is ever evolving, and new research will aid practitioners in the growing student populations, and the multiple identities and experiences of students on American college campuses.

Nonetheless, to assist readers of this research, project and to shape this study I presented a list of terms in which I defined from published academic work. Many of the definitions are used frequently as acronyms, and the explanation of the acronyms and terms anchor the understanding of this study, participants, and objectives of this study.

In the forthcoming chapter, two, I will present literature relevant to my study. The literature will focus on student involvement theory, Critical Race Theory, Black Greek letter organizations, intersectionality, race, culture, and multicultural engagement. Chapter three will explore the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research, why this study will best suited for one method than another, outline the methodological study approach; addressing the epistemology, sampling strategies, and data analysis I will utilize to guide this research and the research questions. Lastly, I will explore pragmatic limitations in the conduction of this study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

To respond qualitatively to the research questions and theoretical framework presented in chapter one, this chapter introduces relevant literature that addresses both the problem and the theories that guided the research study. To understand the fraternal choices of White men who hold membership in BGLO, this literature review presents information on Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, Critical Race Theory, and their intersection on culture and race. Also, this chapter presents literature on the history of Greek letter organization and Black Greek letter organizations in the United States, in preparation for research of White men in BGLOs. Lastly, the researcher pulled from Creswell (2009) who offered the following guidelines for selecting relevant literature:

- Start with a broad syntheses of the literature;

- Turn to journal articles in respected, national journals;

- Turn to books related to the topic;

- Follow this search by recent research conference papers;

- Scan the entries of dissertation abstracts; and

- Utilize the 'web' for helpful materials (p. 32-33).

This process guided my findings and synthesizing relevant literature for my research study. The literature begins with the theoretical frameworks guided this study, Astin's Theory of Student Involvement and Critical Race Theory.

Astin's Theory of Student Involvement

Student engagement is researched and evaluated on multiple levels, particularly on the American college campus. Engagement is categorized academically, socially, and culturally

through a system of interaction and involvement (Astin, 1993). Astin (1993) found that the more students are engaged, the better they perform academically. Greek life on the college campus is an opportunity for social and cultural engagement and is centered on inter- and intrapersonal development, and leadership opportunities through service and programs on respective campuses.

Astin's (1984) Theory of Student Development was utilized in the creation and delivery of programs and service on college campuses, or 'student involvement' (Astin, 1984,1993; Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), which was defined as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin 1984, p. 518; Evans et al., 2010, p. 31). Astin (1993) also presented an engagement theory to support students' place of residence, and that "living in a dormitory is positively associated with several other forms of involvement" (p. 525). Historically, Greek life in the United States began as living groups for collegiate men (Kimbrough, 2003; Parks, 2008), thus was one example of involvement that Astin described as opportunities for student involvement and engagement, and the basis of this research study. Moreover, Astin's (1985) work on student involvement researched multiple areas of co-curricular involvement as a concept to understanding student persistence and satisfaction and creating multiple areas of involvement sub categories, including "place of residence" (p. 524), a category in which social fraternities are included.

Astin's (1984) research posited that different postulate's apply to student involvement theory. His fourth postulate aligns with education and this study, and also is effective for creating and assessing educational programs. The fourth postulate stated, "The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly

proportional to the quality and quantity of student development of student involvement in that program" (Astin, 1984 p. 519, Evans et al., 2010, p. 31). There is difference between 'involvement' and 'engagement' as Quaye and Harper (2015) noted, "…a key qualitative difference between involvement and engagement: it is entirely possible to be involved in something without being engaged" (p. 4). Studying student development is important, as Evans et al. (2010) indicated: "Several conditions found (or not found) in the college environment can have a major impact on students' growth and development (p. 30); the impact of student involvement and development can have lasting affects on students' being and their contributions to their college or university community, and thereafter as they transition into societal roles.

Theoretically, higher education should engage student in intentional experiences. Thus, Astin (1984,1985,1993) identified the need for students to be engaged in purposeful experiences as an aspect of student involvement. Additionally, Astin (1984) identified fraternities and sororities as one aspect of collegiate involvement in which students participate that has lasting affects on their collegiate experiences. According to Schlossberg (1989), research on student involvement is important to understanding student experience and development:

> Involvement creates connections between students, faculty, and staff that allow individuals to believe in their own personal worth…creates an awareness of our mutual relatedness and the fact that the condition of community is not desirable but essential to human survival (p. 5).

Thus the understanding of what student involvement is and how it fits within in the educational experience is important when creating new services and experiences for students.

The relationships and correlations between fraternity membership, intentional activities, and students' involvement are continually researched (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009). Fraternity members were found to engage more while on their college campuses and after graduation, which adds to alumni engagement and support (Asel, Seifert & Pascarella, 2009).

Moreover Quaye and Harper (2015) cite Kuh (2001), "The more engaged its students are in educationally purposefully activities, the better the institution" (as cited by Quaye & Harper 2015, p. 5). Additionally, Quaye and Harper (2015) cited, "Creating optimal learning environments in which all students feel connected is difficult, but none the less important" (p. 7). Fraternities are private entities and campus environments that support an involvement and engagement of multiculturalism through affiliations of fraternal engagement align with Quaye and Harper. Because of the high level of fraternity involvement on college campuses and beyond, "Fraternity and sorority members reported being less open to interacting with diverse peers or being challenged by diverse perspective than their peers" (Asel, Serifert & Pascarella, 2009, p. 2). This information guided the exploration of other perspectives of White men who joined a BGLO. Astin (1984) indicated, "If affiliated students [students associated with a fraternity or sorority] were more engaged in their educational experience they should report greater learning outcomes as a consequence of their greater involvement" (as cited by Asel, Serifert & Pascarella, 2009, p. 2). This research questioned whether White men who join BGLOs also shared these experiences. And, because of their fraternal affiliations, did this expand their diverse, cultural, or racial engagement as fraternity men?

This project will assist in expanding perspectives and connecting theory to practice. Quaye and Harper (2015) wrote, "One of the primary premises of student engagement in higher education is that educators make informed decisions when they utilize relevant theories to guide practice. As such, theories related to identity development, racial/ethnic awareness, stereotypes, and deconstructing Whiteness…" (p. 9).

The researcher approached engagement of White students in culturally and multi-culturally rich spaces without knowing how the intended receivers of culturally rich engagement

and programs would perceive it. Culturally rich programming and engagement are highlighted through many of the experiences of students who attend our various campuses. As Broido (2004) explained, "Students beginning college after the turn of the millennium are understood to be the most diverse group of students to ever enroll" (as cited by Reason, 2015, p. 75). Thus questions arise about the need for this research if the experiences and demographics of college students are so diverse, and why there still are many racially segregated spaces on college campuses.

Of White student engagement, and my intent to unpack the experiences of White men in BGLOs, Reason (2015) wrote, "…the understanding of Whiteness as part of a coherent whole, a dimension of their identities that intersected and overlapped with other dimensions, like gender, sexuality, an social class" (p. 79).

Sense of Student Belonging

Fraternity involvement is extra-curricular/co-curricular and it is a choice which one makes to participate. Students desire to belong to groups, be in relationships, and the like. Student belonging is similar to student engagement and parallels identity. Strayhorn (2012) explored students' sense of belonging, and how it aligned with their persistence on the college campus. Maslow conducted research on the human sense of belonging in the 1960s and Strayhorn (2012) cites Maslow (1962) that "belongingness is a basic human motivation and all people share a need to belong (as cited Strayhorn, 2012, p. 1). Belonging is posited as a measure of connectedness, and that the individual matters to others (Strayhorn, 2012). Baxter Magolda (2004) contended the idea of self-authorship and the way self-authorship gives students understanding of themselves. In her research, self-authorship was defined as "taking responsibility to explore what one does not understand, working to see the 'big picture,' realizing

that knowledge evolves, and viewing learning as a lifelong process" (Baxter Magolda, 2004, p.1). A fraternity membership is self-selected and indicates the strong desire to belong. No time frame is associated with the desire to belong to the fraternity, nor is there a guarantee that sense of belonging will be there after members leave, but membership supports the need to connect with other members.

Similar to Astin's student involvement theory, Strayhorn (2012) added that a sense of belonging is of great importance to the academic and social development of college students; examples of students who "socialize with peers whose backgrounds may differ from their own" (Strayhorn, 2012, p. 2) adds to the strength of their belonging and development, a component key to this project that supports the need to explore the experiences of cross-racial fraternity involvement and relationships in the student development process. Strayhorn (2012) defined belonging more clearly as a "sense of belonging refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group" (p. 3). Moreover, sense of belonging is important and produces noteworthy influence on learning and student development; it is measurable by the number of interactions and is utilized in creating learning outcomes for the purposes of student services and programs (Strayhorn, 2012). Even more, sense of belonging adds to multicultural competence, and "racial identity affirmation and expression" (Strayhorn, 2012, p. 107).

Critical Race Theory

The theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) also guided this study. CRT is utilized frequently in qualitative research and as Creswell (2013) cited, " CRT focuses theoretical attention on race and how racism is deeply embed within the framework of American Society (p.

31). Fraternities in the United States are viewed as racially exclusive, homogenous groups that are not receptive to members who do not look like the other members or the founders of the fraternity (Hughey, 2007, 2009). Creswell (2013) wrote that the perspectives of critical theory are "concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender" (p. 30); the end goal of a study that utilizes CRT should be transformative in systems, cultures, and society.

Critical Race Theory is positioned in a premise that Whiteness holds property and privilege in the United States and that the legal system is inherently racist; thus Critical Race Theory evolved from the pre-cursor, critical legal studies developed in the 1970s (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Lynn & Dixon, 2013). CRT questions the very foundations of the liberal order that exists within our country (Delgado & Stefancic, (2012). CRT was first introduced by lawyers post civil rights movement and post 1964 civil rights law enactment to bring light to the issues that laws systematically oppressed people of color (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). To accurately incorporate CRT into this proposed study the researcher utilized the tenet of 'chronicles, storytelling, and counter-narratives' (Lynn & Dixon, 2013; Tyson, 2006). The use of the storytelling and counter- narratives allowed White fraternity members to tell of their experiences, and allowed the researcher to formulate a unique and creative study. CRT also allowed for the emergence and creation of new knowledge for student affairs administrators. Although this theory is utilized to explore topics related to people of color, this study of White men is counter to the purpose of CRT and allowed for ta discussion of race from the majority experiences, experiences not frequently encountered in the stories of White men. This study used the intersections of White male experiences in Black male dominated spaces.

CRT scholar Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced the use of CRT in education. This study aligned with Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) propositions that "race continues to be significant in the United States; U.S society is based on property rights rather than human rights, and the intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity" (p. 47). The application of CRT to topics of education highlights the racist systems of education in the United States, and applies research to bring attention to racist practices. Race is not biological, and racial classifications are not warranted, and were purely socially constructed (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT is cited in education works to expose the "socio-structural and cultural significance placed on race" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 59) and is application to educational systems and experiences. Mills (1997) suggested that biological racism has been disproven, and he postulates the idea of "cultural racism" (p. 61). In this context, racism in its original implication is no longer, but rather is presented by racist ideas to culture and cultural identity.

Although CRT is an evolved sociological concept of DuBois' work on the double consciousness of Black people in the United States (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), I iterate a previously presented question, 'Do White men in BGLOs share the same 'two-ness' in which Black men and women operate in their daily sociological framework of fraternal interactions and relationships?" Because CRT assertS that Whiteness is property, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) wrote, "Whiteness is both performative and pleasurable" (p. 59), thus returning us to question the experiences of White men in a space where they no longer are the 'dominant member' and whether their property still held the same value in this space.

The application of CRT to education is a new phenomenon, and for the purpose of this study, student affairs theory and development researched since the 1970s (Patton, McEwen,

Rendon, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007). The application of CRT to education is an evolved

theoretical approach, and like all theory is "reductionistic, as it focuses on specific dimensions of

a set of phenomena and how these dimensions fit together" (Patton et al., 2007, p. 40). In all

theory, although not always applied, Brown, Hinton, and Howard-Hamilton (2007) wrote that the

roles of race and racism, as well as power and privilege, within theory should be considered (as

cited in Patton et al, 2007, p. 42). Moreover, the importance of applying CRT to student affairs

suggested, "Critical race perspective entails recognition that racism is a normal and common

aspect that shapes society. Race is deeply embedded in social, cultural, and political structures,

thus making it difficult to recognize and address (Patton et al., 2007, p. 41). This questions

whether fraternities know they are inherently racist and are not interested in changing their

membership practices.

   CRT proposes that race and Whiteness are property, and that they are positioned in

power. Fraternities in the United States are known for the ownership of large and historic homes

on many college campuses or near to colleges. Unlike their Black counterparts, White fraternities

hold significant amounts of property in this country and thus have a position of power and

presence in their college communities, giving White fraternities agency to their peers and college

community.

History of Greek Letter Organizations

   Greek letter fraternities began in the United States in 1776 with the establishment of the

collegiate fraternity of Phi Beta Kappa (Kimbrough, 2003; Parks; 2008, Ross, 2000), which is

now an international honor society. By the mid 1800s, Greek organizations on college campuses

in the United States had grown significantly, and also became organizations that reinforced

power and privilege (Kimbrough, 2003). Societies of educated men in major cities started Black

Greek letter fraternities with the formation of Sigma Pi Phi in 1904 (Kimbrough, 2003; Parks, 2008; Ross 2001). Sigma Pi Phi was not founded as a collegiate group, unlike Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the first intercollegiate fraternity founded on the campus of Cornell University in 1906 (Ross 2001; Parks, 2008).

Greek letter organizations on the American college campus have historically been viewed as homogeneous groups of people comprised of males or females, and Black or White members. Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs) are "typically depicted as racially 'closed' and 'exclusive,'" (Hughey, 2007, p. 55). Participation in Greek fraternities is self-selected; in this case individuals opted to engage in Greek life on their respective campus or thereafter in alumni chapters, composed primarily of individuals who had matriculated from a college or university. Nonetheless, "US college fraternities and sororities simultaneously enact a harsh de facto racial separation that prevails through custom and preference" (Hughey, 2007, p. 56). Also, fraternities in the United States portray an image of homogeneity through unwelcoming racial and conservative values (Hughey, 2007). This research project explored not only the fraternal choice of White men in BGLOs, but intersecting student engagement, race, and culture.

Historically White fraternities and sororities practiced open methods of segregation, and until the civil rights movement most of the constitutions of these groups had language that bared the membership of non Whites (Whipple, Baier & Grady, 1997); a similar practice was the motivation for this proposed study. Though these fraternities have removed the barriers set by their constitutions and by-laws, many of the fraternities and sororities in the United States, both Black and White, still subconsciously practice membership parameters. In 1946, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity Inc., the first African American inter-collegiate fraternity, initiated its first White member in Chicago, Illinois (Hughey, 2007, 2009; Wesley, 2008) The initiation of this

White man is speculated to be the first example of cross-racial fraternal involvement in the United States (Hughey, 2007, 2009).

It is important to note that as recently as 2012, fraternities and sororities in the United States still are part of national conversations on their membership practices. In 2012, the University of Alabama's National PanHellenic Council (NPC) sororities made national news because of the lack of bids extended to Black women to join the predominately White sororities on their campuses (Brown, 2013; Grasgreen, 2013). Since 1963, fraternities have been required legally to abstain from discriminatory practices, but fraternities that are historically White or Black still follow in a large majority with this trend (Whipple, Baier, & Grady, 1997).

The presence of Black and White fraternities, specifically on PWI campuses, highlights the differences of how these groups practice segregationist philosophies. Researchers Whipple, Baier, and Grady(1997) outlined many of the differences, including:

- Minimal to very little interactions between the groups;

- Separate governing structures;

- Minimal interaction by Blacks in rush or 'Greek Week' activities;

- Black organizations have larger numbers of alumni still engaged with their collegiate chapters;

- Black fraternities and sororities provide much of the social activities for the Black student body;

- White fraternities provide social activities catered to their membership, and selected guests;

- Black organizations are more socially and service oriented and provide many community service event geared to causes that affect the Black community (p. 141).

This list begs this question: if these groups are focused and provide services to their communities, White or Black, how and why do White students decide to join BGLOs, and vice versa, how do Black students choose membership in White Greek letter organizations?

Tatum's (1997) book *Why Are all The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* created conversation on race in educational systems, and exposed questions of why groups of students are sometimes viewed as practicing self-segregation in their academic journey. This "biculturalism" explored the issues Black students navigate relative to topics and experiences of assimilation, withdrawal, and marginalization (Tatum, 1997). This is also identified as an experience of other students in American educational systems, and can be applied to the children of immigrants, English as a Second Language students, and students of religious beliefs who do not fit the 'heteronormative' identity of majority students in the United States (Tatum, 1997).

Nonetheless, members of fraternities and sororities, and outside observers question the narrative of cross-racial fraternal involvement and the conversation about race and culture continues to develop. Yancy (2007) investigated the idea of multiracial social networks, interracial contact, and interracial friendship groups and wrote that many close association in colleges, residential settings, and even churches are continual, sociological experiments. Much of the work presented explores how groups from different racial groups navigate the systems and contexts within which they interact (Yancy, 2007). Yancy (2007) asked questions and presented scenarios that looked at the historical development of racial interaction, and that interracial contact can benefit society and shift many of the cultural norms that limit the growth of American society.

History of Black Greek Letter Organizations

The research on BGLOs and majority White Greek letter organizations frequently is historical in nature but intersections of research on both BGLO and White Greek letter organizations are limited. However, the history of BGLOs is rich in history, experience, tradition, and culture.

The Black fraternity movement in the United States began in the midst of 'Jim Crow' laws in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century (Parks, 2008), as many Black students who sought opportunities of higher education experienced alienation, prejudice, and intolerance from their peers at White colleges and universities. The first intercollegiate African American fraternities were founded at majority White institutions, Cornell University and Indiana University respectively. Moreover, these fraternities were formed out of a need to survive academically, physically, and socially on PWI college campuses (Kimbrough, 2003; Parks, 2008). Also, they were support groups and opportunities to provide housing for Black students who otherwise were not able to live in university owned facilities (Parks, 2008). Subsequently, the founding of Alpha Phi Alpha and Kappa Alpha Psi on White campuses began a trend in the United States, and Omega Psi Phi and Phi Beta Sigma were founded soon after, not at a PWI but at Howard University, a historically Black college in Washington, D.C. (Kimbrough, 2003; Parks, 2008; Ross, 2000).

Like other social and service organization, fraternities were founded and served to "provide a social outlet in the form of Greek college life and to promote community awareness and action through educational, economic, and cultural service activities" (Henry, 2012). As a response to racist practices in the United States, and on many college campuses where racial tension were high, fraternities such as Alpha Phi Alpha and Kappa Alpha Psi banded together on

their respective campuses to support and survive academically and personally (Parks, 2008; Kimbrough, 2003; Ross, 2000, Hughey, 2007). Not only were these Black fraternities and sororities founded by missions and agendas to alleviate the negative social climate and change for Black collegians across the country, but their advocacy, philanthropy, lobby, and legislative practices today continue a focus on people of color in the United States and around the world.

Conclusion

The goal of this review of literature was to highlight literature relevant to this research study and its questions. I outlined pertinent historical information that framed the group to be studied, explained student engagement, and defined Greek letter organizations in the United States. Additionally, I presented literature that introduced the theoretical frameworks that guided this study, Astin's Theory of Student Involvement and Critical Race Theory. Relevant literature that highlighted gaps in literature on White men in Black Greek letter fraternities was also presented as well as the need to expand said research literature. I connected how this literature is also applied to higher education and student affairs literature and professionals.

In the following chapter, I present information that guided the proposed method of investigating and carrying out this study, the philosophical underpinnings of this study, and why qualitative rather than quantitative research was chosen to not only answer the research questions, but to investigate this topic and its implications to higher education.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The process of scholarly, education research requires the completion of multiple steps and checks so that peers and colleagues understand and accept the research. The strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research are outlined in this chapter. I also outline a methodological approach that guided this study, address the epistemological approach of this research study, explain the study/research design, and identify limits of my study. Finally, I examine practical concerns and challenges related to the conduction of this study.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research

Noted researcher Creswell wrote and published extensively on general research methods and research method applications to different disciplines and identified three types of approaches that guide research: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Each approach has variations for conducting research. Creswell (2009) introduced the three forms of research designs and stated, "The three approaches are not discrete as they first appear" (p. 3). In addition, Creswell presented the work of Benz and Newman (1998) that "Qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as polar opposites or dichotomies; instead, they represent different ends on a continuum" (as cited by Creswell, 2009, p. 3). The process to understand qualitative research is "framed in the terms of using words" (Creswell, 2009, p. 3). The experiences of participants relative to the research question(s), and quantitative research are "framed using numbers" (Creswell, 2009, p. 3), whereas data is not separate, but indicates different ways to conduct scholarly research, present findings, and the creation of a research study designs. Interview protocol or open-ended questions are further examples of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, Creswell wrote that research interested in

human interactions, humanities, social science, and educational research would find a familiar home when conducting qualitative research. Daly (2008) supported the use of certain disciplines to utilize qualitative research. The aim of qualitative research is to understand a past point of a specific question and investigates 'why' or 'when' something has or is going to happen.

Quantitative research is the other side of the research coin. Quantitative research works with researchers in solving a problem and producing a result to 'if this, then that', or to numerically answer a question in an experiment or survey with concrete data. A researcher in hard sciences, mathematics, and the like would utilize a quantitative research approach (Creswell 2009; Daly 2008). These examples highlight differences in qualitative and quantitative research. In the next section I present some strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Philosophical, application, and mundane aspects of scholarly research frame the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research.

Philosophical. Collaboration in any scholarly journey is essential for meaningful and successful scholarship, thus the insight from other scholars is priceless and allows for future researchers to develop new research or continue previous research. This researcher conducted qualitative research, but sought to understand more deeply both qualitative and quantitative research in deciding which method was better to effectively answer the research questions. In this process the research asked himself if the desired results needed to work to understanding truth with a capital 'T' (quantitative), or a lower case 't' (qualitative) (Marks, personal communication, May 28, 2014). Each truth journey required a specific approach.

31

The researcher reviewed some of the philosophical underpinnings of research and inquiry, and how to make sense of how they align with quantitative or qualitative research.

From a philosophical approach, the researcher explored concepts of research beginning with 'Human Agency', a qualitative philosophical underpinning, and 'Determinism', a quantitative philosophical underpinning. In each, the research applied the research questions to understand if the proposed research questions could be researched and answered. This process helped to determine whether a qualitative or a quantitative approach was better for this study.

 In understanding human agency, researchers explore and explain how participants can make their own decisions, relating the findings to their research question(s); participants do not have to have a reason for what they are doing or in what they are engaged, and also the researcher digs deeper into what happened in his past and looks to understand what it is and why (Slife & Williams, 1995). The opposite end of the human agency spectrum is determinism, which explores cause and effect (Slife & Williams, 1995). Determinism guides research that explores questions of 'because this, then that', and searches for what has caused something and reports the findings as "Because this has occurred, then this has caused the result" (Slife & Williams, 1995). This philosophical approach is quantitative because it searches for truth with a capital "T".

Because of the research of Slife and Williams, the philosophical underpinning 'human agency' answered research questions similar to the ones presented in this research. Human agency explores to understand the "how" of a research question, rather than because this, than that.

Another qualitative philosophical underpinning of research is 'multiple constructed realities' and its quantitative counterpart 'objective reality'. Multiple constructed realities are

subjective and reflexive (Daly, 2008). They work for research that has responses to research questions that are searching for understanding from research participants who respond to questions with "I and me" statements, and search for "understanding and interpretations" (Daly, 2008). Moreover, 'objective reality' explores research that produces results with one way of understanding and thinking and conducting research that asks direct questions and arrives at one way of knowing (Slife & Williams, 1995). Also, research with objective reality underpinnings has responses that have "right or wrong" answers and results (Slife & Williams, 1995).

My exploration of philosophical underpinnings research focused on understanding how qualitative research works on questions that search for truth with a little 't' and quantitative research searching for the truth the big 'T'. The little 't' is not absolute and is socially constructed (Davis, 2004) and ever evolving.

Application. The first steps in research are to understand the philosophical approach, the research process, why things are as they are, and how the research will be supported. The next steps are the application of the research project and how the research is applied to the world around it. Through the application process of philosophical underpinnings of research, an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research become clearer. In continued exploration of each, and applying philosophy to research, Daly (2008) stated the research is unique, and the project will not be apples to apples with another research project, but the research is fruit. In addition the research supports that portions, but not all of a methodology research section, are replicable, but will differ because the populations are different, and have a different (N). Idiosyncratic has a counterpart, 'replicability', a quantitative application approach that research can be replicated step by step (Daly, 2008). Here the goal is

to conduct a research project's methods section through test or survey that can yield similar results depending upon the population being tested.

Lastly, when understanding how to apply research, an investigator must contemplate whether the study is guided by quantitative or qualitative research methods; the researcher should ask what is the better way to conduct the study, and how participants will be recruited. A quantitative study utilizes larger number (N), and the population is representative of the population, and is random. A qualitative study looks for specific participants and explores purposive samples (Daly 2008). Moreover, qualitative research studies include the research participants as active contributors and co-participants to the study, and include them as the study evolves. This supports the belief that the research questions of this study were better investigated through a qualitative methical approach.

Mundane. The scholarly research process is an arduous and time-consuming process, and, as such, researchers should complete projects that will have an impact to the specific field of study. Throughout this research study, the researcher learned about mundane aspects of research, the real world costs (Marks, personal communication, May 28, 2014). The real world costs assist scholars in knowing upon what they are embarking and how the study will develop. Two comparative interpretations are 'rich/contextual' or 'efficient'. Each philosophical mundane approach works with either qualitative—rich/ contextual in data, findings, and analysis- or quantitative—efficient in data and analysis.

Lastly, this study explores what the research would do with the outliers, qualitatively or quantitatively involved in the study. A research drawn to qualitative study recruits and attracts outliers to the interview population; outliers are participant(s) who do not fit the exact profile or the other participants; while this could be helpful, it is not necessary to produce a quality study.

This would allow the researcher to investigate the participants and their experiences in more depth. A quantitative researcher would eliminate the outliers so the results were not skewed.

Summary

Completing research is arduous but rewarding. A developing researcher must ask what motivates him/her to complete a study, and where the passion is rooted. Additionally, quantitative and qualitative research can work in similar contexts, but what needs to be determined is how this study adds to existing scholarship, supports it, or presents something new.

Considering my research, I recognized that a quantitative study could aid in the subject matter, but my theoretical approaches, Astin's Theory of Student Involvement and Critical Race Theory, warranted a qualitative study that utilizes 'free will', searching for truth with a little 't', and understanding 'multiple constructed realities'. All of these are 'idiosyncratic', 'unique', and work with participants who are found through 'purposive sampling'; they also support research that is 'rich' in data and analysis, and does not get rid of the outliers, but instead recruits them and embraces them.

Methods

Qualitative and quantitative are two umbrella approaches to research, and each approach carries different philosophical underpinnings. In this section I introduce my methodological approach of a single-case study design with multiple embedded units of analysis, a qualitative research method, and I explain why this methodological design was best suited for this study. Also, I introduce and support the epistemological approach of post-structuralism that guided this study, and how it supported and aligned with Astin's Student Involvement Theory, Critical Race Theory, and this specific research study. I also outline a study design that included steps for participant and site selection, data selection, and data analysis.

In support of a qualitative study design, Creswell (2007, 2013) noted that qualitative research and design is developed from assumptions, the introduction of a possible theoretical lens, and the presentation of a research problem that investigates the meaning or experience of a human social problem. For this study the assumption was the choice of White men and their fraternal affiliation in a BGLO, and that this was not a typical choice for White men in the U.S. Moreover, this study allowed the researcher to "understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue" (Creswell, 2007, p. 40), and "a qualitative design allowed for the experiences to be told from the perspective of the participants for which little research exists, and whose voices are often unheard or relegated to generalizations based on stereotypes" (Jackson, 2011, p. 47).

Moreover, the use of a case study design was applicable for this study as case studies are best used when a contemporary topic or phenomenon is the base of study (Yin, 2009), such as White men who join BGLOs. Case study is also applicable when a study is based on in a real-life context or environment where the behavior or experiences are being studied as well (Yin, 2009), such as fraternal choice and engagement. This preferred method of the researcher allowed the participants to tell their stories with little influence from an instrument other than the researcher, and allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of the participants' movements (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Lastly, Yin (2009) wrote,

Case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data point, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (p. 18).

Because this study explored a contemporary phenomenon, a survey would not have allowed an understanding of the experience or story or the participants. Although some aspects of this study had a historical component, the historical base of BGLO was not the subject of major study and did not warrant a historical or archival research or analysis.

Chapters one and two presented a problem statement, theoretical framework, the purpose of this study, study objectives, significance of study, and a research question based on the premise of this study; What are the process and experiences surrounding the choice of White men who join BGLOs, and explorations and intersections on race, culture, and involvement?

Epistemology

The foundation of academic research is grounded in the creation of knowledge. Epistemology is the study of how we come to know something or how knowledge is gained (Davis, 2004; Crotty, 1998). Epistemology allows human beings to understand their belief systems and understand the world around them, for example, relationships, how to process events, and to learn existing knowledge and information. Davis (2004) wrote that learning evolved particularly from a Western worldview. Davis presented this idea in the likeness of a living breathing organic tree, and that there are two ways- the Metaphysical and the Physical- that we create and understand knowledge. Davis (2004) described this as bifurcation as "a branching into two parts, rather than a breaking into two pieces" (p. 8). Davis utilized bifurcation to assert that knowledge is all connected, and the Metaphysical limb explores and supports big "T" (quantitative) research. As for the Physical, Davis (2004) described "discourses that do not rely on notions of ideal or supernatural to address questions of emergence and existence" (p. 195). Additionally, Davis dissected the Latin history of the Physical which originated from meanings of " 'growth, nature, 'to bring forth'" (p. 195). For the purposes of

this study I utilized and worked from the Physical side of the 'Davis worldview tree' to advance the epistemological argument of this study that takes me to post-structuralism.

In the review of literature in chapter two, BGLOs were found to have a common historical founding. Of the nine BGLOs in the United States, eight were established during the Jim Crow era, and were a response to a terrible racial climate for Blacks in the United States (Kimbrough, 2003; Ross, 2001). Even through similar development, the experiences of its member are all different, as each member brings a unique set of experiences to their fraternity or sorority.

The epistemological world-view of this study worked in the Physical side of the Davis (2004) tree, and more specifically utilized 'intersubjectivity and/or interobjectivity'. This study utilized an intersubjectivity epistemological framework, which is described as "the notion that all human knowledge is a matter of social accord—usually enabled and constrained by the associations that are already established within language" (Davis, 2004, p. 208). The understanding of language and association through social accord framed the understanding of the potential participants and their fraternal, cultural, and racial identity. These intersections of being drove my previous ideals and cultural norms. Subsequently, qualitative research supported the continual development of knowledge through shared experience, and culture was a representation of a qualitative research approach.

On the Physical side of the Western worldview tree is the bifurcation branch of structuralism and post-structuralism. This study utilized post-structuralism which is defined as "a reference to any discourse that involves critical interrogation of exclusionary procedures and/or mechanisms by which ideological, political social, cultural, and/or personal standpoints or positions are established" (Davis 2004, p. 208). A post-structural paradigm supported the

intersections of language, knowledge, and power. Moreover, Schwandt (2001) wrote that post-structuralism is "anti-metaphysical, and accepts the fact that language plays a central role in the constitution of subjectivity and social reality" (p. 203). White men in the Unites States are positioned as beings of majority, power, and privilege; the counter-story/narrative positioned White men in places, environments, and experiences where they were not the majority, and the question of their power, their presence, and being followed them to these new spaces which are rarely frequented by White men. Also, language shaped the research group's identity, being, knowledge acquisition, and experiences. How these men saw themselves, and ultimately presented themselves to their shared groups shaped how they were engaged in their respective fraternities.

Research Design

This research study utilized a qualitative methodology. Creswell (2009) wrote that qualitative research "is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). Unlike quantitative research, which adds a layer between the research and the participant with an instrument or survey and could affect this research as it aspired to a closer look and an understanding of the researched, a qualitative design allowed for the experiences of those researched to emerge and form.

Additionally, a qualitative study allowed for the engagement and inclusion of future participants that will be intentional, and will utilize open-ended interview questions so that the researcher can explore and understand the intersection between culture, race, and student involvement. Also, this qualitative study allowed for the participants to make meaning of their experiences, and permitted the researched to interpret those experiences for the purposes of this study (Creswell, 2009, 2013; Merriam, 2002). Moreover, the qualitative research approach

39

supports language and discourse as important pieces of research guided by qualitative method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

To study the proposed research question, this study was designed as a single case study with embedded units of analysis. Yin (2009) wrote, "case study research involves the study of a case in a real-life contemporary context or setting (as cited by Creswell, 2013, p. 97). The research study design was based on the premise that the experiences of White men in BGLOs varied from their Black male counterparts, that their experiences of student involvement were based on culture, racial growth and multicultural competence, and that this experience is rare given the historical context and development of BGLOs in the United States.

A single case study design was based on the idea and notion that the study of White males was relevant; Merriam (2002) suggested interviews based on research studies are best utilized for researchers seeking to understand the way in which people construct their being, and make meaning of this experiences. This study sought to describe the individual experience of White men BGLOs and the intersections of their fraternal choice and engagement. As researcher Henry (2012) noted, "The researcher understood that although these students [men] share similar ethnic backgrounds and similar interests as indicated by organizational membership, their experience cannot be assumed to be monolithic" (p. 48). Harper and Nichols (2008) wrote, "underscored that 'within-group heterogeneity' is often ignored and broad generalization become as normal" (as cited by Henry, 2012, p. 48).

Moreover, Creswell (2009, 2013; Merriam, 2002) suggested research guided by an interview protocol is best utilized to construct a study aimed at understanding how people construct, interpret, and make meaning of their experiences.

Participant Selection

Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling was utilized as the sampling strategy for this study. Unlike quantitative methods that enlist larger numbers and populations of participants, this study was better suited for smaller numbers and a more intentional participant base. The intentional selection allowed this study to systematically work with willing participants, and the researcher hoped that the participants provided authentic responses to the interview questions. Creswell (2013) suggested, "When choosing a case to study multiple 'purposeful sampling' is available" (p. 100). Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to be intentional in how and who will be selected as participants for a research study. Moreover, because of the options for access to participants were who identified as White, male, and holding membership in a BGLO, access was limited to numbers; the national and international headquarters of BGLOs did not have demographic information of its members based on race.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Snowball or chain sampling as presented by Miles and Huberman (1994) "identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what the cases are information-rich" (as cited by Creswell, 2013, p. 158). Snowball or chain sampling was utilized because the small and readily accessible participants that fit the profile were interviewed.

As for locations, no specific sites were designated; schools, institutions, or geographical areas were selected because of the limited access of study participants who met the criteria, but attention was given to recruiting members from different parts of the country. BGLO/NPHC fraternities do not code members by race, thus utilizing networking opportunities such as Facebook, student affairs list serves, university Greek life administrators, and personal contacts

was the best approach to gain participants for this study. The purpose of the study was shared with multiple outlets to recruit participants and contact information for the researcher was included for willing participants. Also, the researcher utilized referrals from colleagues to recruit research participants. When potential participants were connected, the researcher asked if the participant was knowledgeable of other participants who fit the study parameters, thus continuing the snowball method of recruitment.

Lastly, the criteria for participation in this study were people who identified as:

- White;

- Male;

- Hold/held membership in BGLO fraternity; and

- Resident of the United States.

As participants were identified they received an overview of the study, a confidentiality statement that aligned with the LSU IRB statement, information on who was supervising this study, and an opportunity to select a time and method in which to participate in the study interview.

Data Collection

An interview design was proposed for the collection of data for this study. The goal of the interview was to obtain responses that would be genuine, individual, and authentic of the participants' experiences. This limited the researcher's perspective and experience. In any data collection method there are challenges, as Creswell (2013) stated, "in qualitative interviewing often focus is on the mechanics of conducting the interview" (p. 172). Emphasis was guided by an interview protocol, but as qualitative inquiry is emergent (Creswell 2009; 2013),

consideration was made for impromptu questions that allowed for more rich responses and individualized experiences of the participants.

Each interview was semi-structured and guided by interview protocol and a list of questions. The semi-structured interview approach "ensures the process and data being collected aligns with the research questions, and provide consistency" (Jackson, 2011, p. 57). All interviews utilized technology that allowed the participants to communicate and interact with the researcher via tele-presence: Skype™, Google Hangout™, or FaceTime™. This method created a comfortable environment for both the participant and the researcher, allowed for easier flows of communication, and put a face to the researcher and the participant. This medium also allowed the researcher to develop a level of trust with the participant and vice versa.

The interviews were scheduled to last forty-five minutes to an hour, and each participant was asked the same questions; an opportunity for emerging questions depended upon participants' responses. The questions addressed personal and familial background, education level and acquisition, college engagement and co-curricular involvement, fraternal choice, racial identity, and views on contemporary issues.

Moreover, Creswell (2013) wrote that in qualitative research involving an interview protocol and data gathering, the questions should be relevant to the study, the participant, and research question. Extensive case study researcher Yin (1994) asserted interviews should be "guided conversations rather than structured queries" (as cited by Henry, 2012, p. 53).

Interview Design

To better understand and gain knowledge of an experience, interviewing is a stronger method of practice (Merriam, 1998; 2002). Also, interviewing is strongly connected to people and their ability to make meaning of language, power, and culture, which is indicative of post-

structural epistemologies (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2001; Davis 2004). Interviewing also allowed for the researcher to "gain in-depth knowledge of a phenomenon" (Henry, 2012, p. 53). Interviewing should be guided by interaction, and conversation, rather than rigid and structured like a survey (Creswell, 2013; Schwandt, 2001; Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Qualitative research identifies interviewing as self-reflective in relation to research, and highlights the connected relationship of the researcher and participant(s), and the role each plays: researcher, the interpreter of the data, and the participant, who owns the lived experience (Creswell, 2013); interviews allows for the researcher, participant(s), and possible readers of this study to create, reflect, learn, and apply knowledge from this researched experience. Additionally, interviews allow the researcher to develop a level of trust with the participant(s) that the stories and experiences shared are utilized in an ethical, responsible, and accurate manner. Notwithstanding, the purpose of this study was to explore the fraternal choices of White men in BGLO, and incorporate the intersections of Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, and Critical Race Theory, and the intersections of race, culture, and student involvement.

Moreover, an interview design fits for this study for eight reasons:

1. Interviews capture the voice of the proposed researched group/participants;

2. Interviews give a rich and substantive insight of an experience;

3. Interviews allow for exploration of language, culture and power to evolve;

4. Interviews allow for the researcher to have first hand opportunity to hear the authentic voice of the researched;

5. Interviews allow the researcher to make few assumptions about the participants lived experience(s);

6. Interviews allow for the removal of the potential barriers of an instrument;

7. Interviews allow for more ideas to emerge and evolve; and

8. Interviews align with the post-structural epistemology of this research study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998, 2002.

Interview Protocol

1) Tell me about some of your life experiences: where did you grow up, attend college, kind of family you grew up with, and experiences and involvement in college?

2) What fraternity do you belong to? And when did you join the fraternity?

3) What was the impetus or interest that led you to Greek life?

4) Why did you choose this specific fraternity?

5) Are any of you family or friends in a fraternity or sorority?

6) Did you consider any other fraternity?

7) Who are notable members of your fraternity?

8) Do you identify as a White Man?

    a. If not, why?

    b. If so, why

9) What led you to decide to join a historically Black Greek Lettered Fraternity?

10) How, if any, has your membership in your fraternity impacted your relationships with other White people? Students, family, friends?

11) How, if any, has your membership in your fraternity impacted your relationships with Black people? Students, friends, family?

12) Have you ever needed to defend your Greek Fraternal Affiliation?

13) How has your perspective, if any about community/global issues been changed since you have joined your fraternity? Please explain.

14) Has your community service activity increased/decreased/stayed stagnate since your initiation in your fraternity? Please explain.

15) What type of service activities are you passionate about?

16) Do you have aspirations to serve in leadership roles in your fraternity on the state, region, or national level?

17) Were you concerned with the feedback of your peers? Family members? After joining your fraternity?

18) How have/did other Greek members treat you on your campus/community?

19) What were, if any were some of your concerns of being accepted by your fraternity?

20) Do you know who is the first White member of your fraternity?

*Follow-up or clarifying questions will be asked based on participant responses.

Interview Logistics

Interviews for this study were scheduled on a one-month time frame to recruit, screen, interview, and transcribe interviews. The purpose of keeping this part of the project to a quick time frame was to conduct and transcribe interview information while it was fresh for the researcher and the participants in case any follow-up was needed. The researcher had the attention of the participants and prolonged or extended the study if necessary.

Participants were pre-screened by phone or email. The purpose of pre-screening was to communicate the purpose of the research to the participants, confirm their interest participating, and present the consent form in advance; also, pre-screening gave the researcher an opportunity to secure a private location for the interview to take place. If the interview was not conducted in person, a one-hour interview time was scheduled.

To conform to research procedure, the interviews were guided by a research protocol but opportunities were given for evolving questions or conversations. Interviews were transcribed, and the participants were assigned a pseudonym or picked one for themselves. Lastly, interviews were conducted either in person or videoconference, via Skype, Google hangout, or Apple Face Time. This option was available because of the limited number of participants who fit the criteria for this study. Participant did not receive any form of compensation for their time and participation in this research project.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process in research is a procedural step that needs an identified plan of action. Creswell (2009) presented that qualitative or quantitative data analysis is systematic. Daly (2007) and Creswell (2013) posited that data analysis in qualitative methods is different and emergent than the quantitative approach. Moreover, "data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding, and finally representing the data" (Creswell, 2013, p. 180). Given the proposed methodological approach that included interviews, this approach to data analysis was best suited for this study.

The data analysis strategy for this study followed Creswell's (2013) procedure:

- Sketching ideas

- Taking notes

- Working with words

- Identifying codes

- Reducing codes to themes

- Relating categories

- Creating a point of view; and

- Displaying data (p. 181).

To stay true to the qualitative research approach, it is important that 'data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather it is custom built, revised, and 'choreographed' (Creswell, 2013, p. 182). This means that unlike statistical analysis, this approach required some flexibility in reduction and presentation, and was open for emerging ideas and themes to evolve.

Interviews are rich in information and ideas, and it should be respected as such. All research participants dedicate their time, but participants who agree to interviews have a longer investment of time and buy into the process. The goal of this study was to understand the fraternal choices of particular human beings. Choice is a human cognition that involves higher level processing. The intersections of a group of men who held strong interactions and relationships, and applying student involvement theory and Critical Race Theory to their experiences, could not be understood in-depth with just a survey. Understanding choice and experience allowed for a voice to be heard and also allowed for a contextualization and opportunity that told a story that at times was not shared.

Procedurally, coding "involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code" (Creswell, 2013, p. 184). Themes are "broad units of information that consist of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). Codes and themes bring procedure and consistency to the data obtained in qualitative inquiry. Interviews are large, substantive, and rich piece of data, and must be broken down to make meaning of the shared or individual experience. Moreover, as a post-structural lens was applied to this study, the interpretation applied to the aspects of power,

language, and culture. The next step after coding and creating themes for the collected data was

interpretation. Interpretation in

> qualitative research involves abstracting out beyond the codes and themes to larger
> meaning of the data. It is a process that begins with the development of codes, the
> formation of themes from the codes, and then the organization of themes into larger
> unites of abstraction to make sense of the data (Creswell, 2013, p. 187).

The purpose of abstracting the data was to put all the pieces of the puzzle together to make

meaning of the collected data. The abstraction process contained codes and themes, and direct

quotes from interview participants to connect to the themes of the study. Additionally, all parts

of the data highlight the applied themes, previously introduced key terms, application of theory,

and the epistemological underpinning.

To support the data analysis and interpretation approach, Creswell's (2013) case study

steps were followed.

- Create and organize files for data;

- Read through text, make margin and notes, form initial codes;

- Describe the case and its context;

- Use categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns;

- Use direct interpretation;

- Develop naturalistic generalization of what was "learned"; and

- Present in-depth picture of the case using narrative, tables, or figures (pp 190-191).

Subjectivity Statement/ Research Bias

Research requires the researcher to hypothesize, design, interpret, and present data in a

formalized process (Creswell, 2009); also qualitative research calls for the researcher to

construct meaning of the study, thus an inter-subjective approach is applied (Creswell, 2013;

Davis, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, (1989). Specifically, "inter-subjectivity is at the heart of all social relations, whether in research context or anywhere else" (Gillham, 2005, p. 6).

As introduced in chapter one, I presented my experience as a member of a BGLO, and what I know through my experiences. Also, the premise to my research question came from previous conversations, work experience, advising fraternity men on college campuses, and my experience with student development. Moreover, as a Black man in the United States, I only have understanding of my being and experiences, and could infer or generalize other Black men's experiences relating to Black Greek fraternity life. Because this study was the exploration of White men's experiences, I acknowledge my lack of understanding of what it means to be a White man. Additionally, because there are five NPHC fraternities, I was only privy to the inner workings Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., because I was a member; I took the responses of potential participants as truth if they were members of one of the other four NPHC fraternities. Little literature is available on Black Greek life in the United States and on cross-racial membership and involvement. The lack of readily accessible participants for this study produce scholarship that is unique and creative.

The researcher's first experience with a White member of an NPHC organization, and specifically a BGLO fraternity, was through a connection in 2002, when I met a member of my fraternity who joined the same semester that I did but at another school. It was not until my professional student affairs role some 10 years later that I questioned the development of White men who join BGLO fraternities in the Unites States. As researcher Hughey (2007) indicated, these members are few and far between because of the perceived self segregated identity of fraternities and sororities in the United States, and the narratives of the members who choose to cross these color lines are said to be not true or one with their race or culture. This study does

not to advocate for NPHC organizations to change the founding purpose, mission, or identity of their organizations; rather it offers an opportunity for a limited population of these fraternities to share and reflect on their experience, and to add to literature that can assist faculty, administrators, the NPHC fraternities and sororities, and members to consider another narrative that is part of this community.

Lastly, Creswell (2009, 2013) stated that researchers should identify their own biases in the research study. Particularly in qualitative research bias can be interpreted from the analysis and presentation of the data, unlike the quantitative realm where descriptive or inferential statistics are produced. The goal was to situate this study from a case-study approach that allows future readers to know that this 'phenomena', a term used loosely, is important to the research and literature of student involvement, Critical Race Theory, race, and culture.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research is interpreted by the researcher and reader (Creswell, 2009, 2013). Kvale (1992) wrote that the growing nature of qualitative research in social sciences and that "qualitative research tends to evoke rather standardized objections from mainstream social science" (p. 1). Though qualitative inquiry follows standard procedures, the need to validate the research and findings is great. Thus, it is imperative that research that includes interviews is conducted and reported accurately. Additionally, the findings are generalizable even if there are limited participants or subjects (Kvale, 1992). Kvale (1992) and Creswell (2009) encouraged researchers to conduct ethical research, and provided tips in which ethical research can occur. Creswell (2009) advanced that researchers should present themselves in the truest fashion possible, that the participants should know what the research study is about, the researcher should be guided by a set of ethical standards and procedures, the participant(s) should not be

placed in harm, danger, or risk, and the study should approved by an IRB (institutional review board). In addition, the participants should be made aware of how the data and analysis will take place, and that they will have an opportunity to view the interview and study once its completed.

Given the research question for this study, there were no anticipated risks to interview participants. Additionally, the interview protocol did not include questions regarding sexual practices or items related to their and well-being. Because BGLOs often function in an ideal of organizational secrecy (Kimbrough, 2003), no questions were created or asked that required the participants to respond or divulge that information.

Lastly, participant's identities were confidential, and any personal identifying descriptions were removed from this study; information was kept in a secure location only accessible by the researcher and his major advisor.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter presented the strengths and weakness for qualitative and quantitative inquiry, and how each can be applied to philosophical, application, and mundane aspects of research. Also, I presented why a qualitative approach was the best method for this study, and how a case study design shaped the goals of this research project.

I presented and defended the epistemological framework of post-structuralism that served as the philosophical underpinning to the research question and study. A proposed study design was introduced and supported with relevant literature. Also identified were the participant sampling, criteria, recruitment, and selection. Data collection methods were identified: interview protocol, why a qualitative case study design process was appropriate for this study, and how the data was analyzed. Lastly, I explored researcher subjectivity, bias, and the ethical considerations related to this proposed study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the fraternal choices of White men who joined Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLO). This researchers' goal was to investigate each study participant's choice, engagement, and ownership relative to the self-selection of American fraternalism. As noted previously, the history, various missions, and goals of American fraternalism, specifically BGLO, were rooted in a call to action during a time in the United States referred to as 'Jim Crow' (Ross, 2000; Kimbrough, 2003). Based on the BGLO historical references, I explored the choices of White men who belonged to five different fraternities; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.

The research questions for this study were: (RQ1): Why do White men choose to join Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLO)? (RQ2): How are the experiences of White men who join BGLO related to the intersections of involvement/engagement, race, and culture? The research questions were investigated using a single case study for the project design; multiple-units of analysis were engaged with the research participants to understand through narratives their lived experiences as White men in minority population groups of predominately Black men.

This chapter includes the finding of the semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. Also, the researcher introduces each participant through his background, and presents the themes that emerged from the participants' interviews. The themes of this study present emergent experiences of each participant, some similar and some shared, but all individual.

Research Finding Process and Themes

The analysis of the research findings was a process outlined by Marks (2015). The author used a pragmatic approach to analyze qualitative data, particularly for individual researchers "monk in a cell" (Marks, 2015). The four steps of Marks' (2015) process (Appendix 5) were used in this analysis:

1. Reviews the literature, develops the questions, and determines the sample;

2. Conducts the interviews, does the transcriptions, and performs coding;

3. Compiles the core themes and determines what data to present (or conceal); and

4. Tells the composite story of the sample (p. 4).

Additionally, the researcher utilized information from the participants in this section and referred to them as 'gems'. The term 'gems' is a connection to the importance of the participants' responses to the interview protocol and experience with the researcher. Gems were also being pulled from the individual responses because they were the true lived experience and words of the participants.

Themes and Sub-Themes

Each interview in this study was conducted and analyzed by the primary researcher. Through the transcribing and then analysis of each interview, the researcher compared notes and highlighted responses that aligned with the research questions of this study. Each 45-60 minute interview was individual but revealed similar themes through each participant's lived experiences as they related to the study and research questions. The emergent themes the researcher identified are: My Choice, My Fraternity, and My Engagement.

The three themes contained sub themes but not codes. Codes were not useful to this study as codes would not allow for the emergent experiences of the participants to be presented

in this study. The theme *My Choice* aligned with responses that conveyed the choice of the

participants to join a BGLO, and the influence of their membership. Each participant's choice

was individual, and many connected to sub-themes of the study. Some of the sub-themes that

emerged that shaped the *My Choice* section of this study were, but were not limited to topics on

similar interests with fraternity members, positive image of the fraternity members, positive

image of the fraternity, mentors/friends in the fraternity, and experiences in their lives i.e.

previous schools attended, neighborhoods in which they were raised. The *My Fraternity* theme

was shaped by the idea of 'ownership' in the fraternity, and responses connected to the idea that

the fraternity was indeed part of participants' identities. Some sub-themes of *My Fraternity* were

social impact, fit, mentor/friends/family, network, personal goals, and ownership.

Finally, *My Engagement/Experiences* was many of the richest aspects of the interviews.

Here many of the responses lent to experiences before, during, and after joining the fraternity,

and how each participant interacted within and as a member of the fraternity. Some sub themes

of My Engagement/Experiences were, *cultural competence, social impact/engagement, self-*

perceptions and perceptions from members/friends/family, and communities in which they

belong.

The identification of themes and sub themes for this study was an effort to present

research that was true to the process of academic research, but also true to the the lived

experience of each participant.

Meet the Participants

The participants for this study were recruited by a reaching out to contacts through

personal email and social media. This process was related to a snowball sampling approach.

Nine participants (N=9) were willing participants in this research project. Jeff, Ronald, AJ, Phil,

Eric, Colin, Chris, Bernard, and Alex were White men, and each held a membership in one of the five NPHC fraternities.

Jeff. Jeff was from the southern region of the United States. When asked to describe himself, Jeff identified himself as being between the ages of 35-44. Jeff described his family unit as a two-parent household. When asked about his family's educational background, Jeff responded that his mother did not finish high school, and his father completed high school. Jeff stated that he completed his Doctorate in Education. When asked to which fraternity he belonged, Jeff responded, "I'm a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and the spring of 2004 is when I crossed". Jeff also stated that he joined his fraternity as an Alumni member, after he had completed his bachelor's degree. Lastly, when asked, "Do you identify as a White man? If not, why? If so, why?" Jeff's response was,

> I do. And I think the ... the simplest way to put it, I think, is because, you know, society labels me as a White man, you know. And I know I'm White. And culturally, you know, like that's my ... that's my culture, my ethnicity in the sense of, you know, my background is ... is from one of the ... the European descents. I haven't done my family lineage or anything yet but ... but from a racial perspective, you know, I do and, like I said, it's because of the social constructs and the labels, you know, that are out there. I identify as White and ... and just as much as that it's because society identifies me ... labels me as White.

Ronald. Ronald was from the southern United States. When asked to describe himself, he identified that he was between the ages of 45-54. Ronald described this family unit growing up as other; not single, two parent, divorced, or separated. Ronald referenced that he was married and has one daughter. Moreover, when asked about the educational background of his family, Ronald stated, " My mother and father have associate's degrees, and I have completed my bachelor's degree. When asked in what fraternity he held membership, Ronald stated, "I'm a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. I joined in the spring of 1996, actually March 16th of 1996". Ronald also stated that he joined his fraternity as a college student. Lastly, when

asked if he identified as a White man, and why or why not, Ronald's responded, "I'm White. I'm Irish. I'm Ronald."

AJ. AJ was from the northeast region of the United States. When asked to describe himself, he identified that he was between the ages 25-34. AJ also stated that he was raised in a two-parent home, in which his mother held a bachelor's degree, and his father competed high school; AJ, however, had completed his Master's degree. AJ stated that his fraternity membership was "Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. I crossed spring 2012 in Little Rock, Arkansas". He also identified his chapter of membership, but for research purposes I identify it as an alumni chapter. Lastly, when asked if he identified as a White man, and if so, why? If not, why? AJ stated,

> I ...Ya, absolutely. I mean, I ...Yes. Yes, I do…I ...Ya, absolutely. I mean, I ... Yes. Yes, I do… I mean, I mean, cause that's the race that I grew up being associated with. It's not like ...I mean, if given the ... the choice, you know, I don't think I ... I would have, you know, have chosen ... chosen that but, again, if it were something like I could disown, like I think I would but, you know, I don't think the world works like that so...

Phil. Phil was from a southern region of the United States. Phil described his self as between the ages of 25-34, and the family in which he was raised was a two-parent household. Phil also stated that his mother had a high school diploma, and his father and he hold bachelor's degrees. Phil identified his fraternity membership as, " I am a member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., and I joined in the fall of 2007". When asked about his racial background, Phil stated,

> That's funny. That's really funny. Ya, absolutely. I'm Caucasian. I don't think there's any way to get around that. I don't know if I would want to get around it. There's ... I'm White…One thing that did always offend me like oh, man, you're really not really even that White man, you're like Black. I'm like I don't know what you mean by that. I ... The last time I checked, I woke up this morning, I looked in the mirror, it was the same Phil that was there last night. I don't necessarily follow it with racial identity though… I've always said if you can act Black or White, then show me how to act turquoise.

Colin. Colin was from the southern region of the United States. Colin identified his self as between the ages of 25-34 years of age. Colin stated his family unit as a child as a two-parent household, and educationally, his parents and he hold master's degrees. Colin also was completing his PhD. When asked of his fraternal affiliation Colin replied, "I belong to Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. And I became a member in fall of 2010". Lastly, in reply to the question of his racial identity, and if he identified himself as a White man, and why or why not, Colin stated,

> Ya, I do. I definitely do identify as a White man. I think it's irresponsible to consider myself otherwise. I think that because race is so important in our daily lives, I think it's important that I acknowledge my Whiteness and the privileges and power that comes along with that.

Chris. Chris was from the geographic southern region of the United States, and identified himself as between the ages of 45-54. Chris stated that he was raised in a two-parent household, where his mother received an associate's degree, and his father had a JD. Chris had an EdD, and was the father to one son. When asked about his fraternal membership, Chris stated, "So Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. I became a member in the spring of 2011 so did that through the alumni chapter, but when I was in college, I had no interest in fraternities and I thought they were sort of these elitist institutions". When asked if he identified as a White man, Chris stated,

> On multiple levels, I'd answer that question. One, clearly in terms of social races, like I said, I clearly know the White benefits of a White skinned privilege. I recognize in terms of how that operates with us in a society, and that's critical for me to acknowledge.

Bernard. Bernard was from the geographic southern region of the United States. He stated that he was raised two-parent home. His parents and he received their bachelor's degrees. Bernard also identified that his was between the ages of 18-23. When asked to what fraternity he

belonged, Bernard stated, " I am a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. In fall 2014 I initiated… I came through the Rho Psi Lambda Chapter".   In response to the question whether Bernard viewed himself as a White man and why or why not, Bernard's stated,

> Ya, I do. I mean, that's who I am. Like I'm not, definitely not, you know, running from who I am or anything like that. It's just kind of just have interests that led me to where I am… view race as ... it's a pretty divisive issue in America, it's something a lot of people aren't comfortable talking about, and it's something that people try to brush under the rug a lot and not acknowledge the differences that are there that cause tension in many different ways in society… Regardless, I think that America has a lot more integrating to do and a lot ... a lot more conversations that need to be had that people are hesitant about having. And it's kind of something that people, you know, are just afraid to talk about in general.

Alex. Alex was from the Midwestern region of the United States. Alex identified himself between he ages of 18-23 years of age. In response to descriptions of his family and the household in which he was raised, Alex stated that he is from a two-parent home, and both his parents received their high school diplomas; Alex completed his bachelor's degree. When asked about his fraternal membership Alex stated, "I'm a Kappa. I joined Kappa Alpha Psi my junior year… Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. I joined my junior year, which was spring 2013, I believe March 30th". Additionally, when asked if Alex identified as a White man, he stated,

> Ya, I guess I do. But I consider myself an open-minded one. Cause sometimes like, not just White man or Black man, like whatever race you are, people kind of ... kind of keep their mind closed and there's a lot of race barriers cause people put race barriers on their self cause like even I can even say I'm guilty of this sometimes…I still say I would consider myself, like say myself as White but I'm just very open minded and really enjoy learning about other cultures.

Eric. The last participant in this study was Eric. Eric was from the geographic Midwestern region of the United States, was between the ages of 18-23 years old, and was raised in a two-parent home. Eric completed his bachelor's degree, as did his mother. His father completed some college, but did not have a degree. When asked in what fraternity he was a member, Eric stated, "I'm a part of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and I joined in the fall of

2012". Finally, in response to the question if he identified as a White man, and if so, why or

why not, Eric replied,

> Oh, ya. Of course. Ya…Why do I ... I mean, I am White. My parents are Caucasian, I'm
> Caucasian. Although I'm in a Black fraternity, people tell me ... people tell me I'm...
> I'm... like you're Black, Eric, like you're damned near Black. But like I'm not. I mean,
> just because I'm in an organization that's predominately and historically African
> American, doesn't make me African American just because I joined that and I don't think
> it changes my identity at all, to the point where I couldn't be considered a White man
> anymore.

Demographic Summary

The following list of figures present information on the participants background. Topics

such as age, education, parental education, and region of the United States are presented.

Additionally, the figures attempt to show a numerical landscape of the participants and the

diversity they display as individuals, though they share the common experience of being White

men in Black Greek letter organizations (BGLO).

				Associates	**0**	*0%*
18-23	**3**	*33.3%*		Bachelor's	**5**	*55.6%*
25-34	**3**	*33.3%*		Master's	**2**	*22.2%*
35-44	**1**	*11.1%*		MBA	**0**	*0%*
45-54	**2**	*22.2%*		JD	**0**	*0%*
55 +	**0**	*0%*		MD/DDS	**0**	*0%*
N/A	**0**	*0%*		EdD/PhD	**2**	*22.2%*
				N/A	**0**	*0%*

Figure 4.1 Participants Age Range.

Figure 4.2 Highest Level of
Education Attained by Research
Participant.

Some High School	0	0%
High School	2	22.2%
Associates	2	22.2%
Bachelor's	3	33.3%
Master's	1	11.1%
MBA	0	0%
JD	0	0%
MD/DDS	0	0%
EdD/PhD	0	0%
N/A	1	11.1%

Figure 4.3 Indicates the Highest Level of Education Attained By the Participant's Mother.

Some High School	0	0%
High School	4	44.4%
Associates	1	11.1%
Bachelor's	2	22.2%
Master's	1	11.1%
MBA	0	0%
JD	1	11.1%
MD/DDS	0	0%
EdD/PhD	0	0%
N/A	0	0%

Figure 4.4 Indicates the Highest Level of Education Attained by the Participant's Father.

Northeast—	1	11.1%
Midwest-	2	22.2%
South—	5	55.6%
West—	1	11.1%
International	0	0%
N/A	0	0%

Figure 4.5 Shows the United States Geographic Region in Which the Participants Currently Live.

College	4	44.4%
Alumni	5	55.6%
Honorary	0	0%
N/A	0	0%

Figure 4.6 Shows the Type of Chapter the Participants Were Initiated in: Alumni (after the completion of their bachelor's degrees, or College (while completing their bachelor's degrees).

My Choice

The choice of a Greek fraternal affiliation is a decision made after much thought. The responses of the nine participants were prefixed with 'I am or I'm a member' of X, Y, or Z fraternity. Each participant stated his affiliation affirmatively and in the present tense, and with pride and love. In this section I present some *gems* that explain their fraternity decisions, and also explain why they chose to join a BGLO. Albeit, the option to join a fraternity is individual, the researcher presents from the participants' words the reasons why they chose to join their respective fraternities.

Jeff stated,

> I would say, that Greek life and, specifically the Sigmas were ... and the Zetas were really some of the most important factors that, you know, got me on track and kept me going. And from there, it kind of just grew. I didn't actually join Sigma until I had graduated. I went to the grad chapter but it was very much a part of my undergrad experiences. You know, they became my family long before they were officially a part and I was a part of the family.

Jeff's initial response to choosing to join Phi Beta Sigma (PBS) indicated that he found a support group in his educational pursuit that reinforced realignment and his dedication to his studies. It is also important to point out that Jeff was a first generation college student, and his knowledge about Greek letter organizations on his campus was minimal. Jeff stated,

> I didn't know anything about Greek life. And like no one in my family ... I'm the first person to graduate with a four-year degree or attend a university so, I was seeing all these people walking around campus with these different letters and things on their shirts. I didn't know what it meant or anything but I just knew there was a lot of them. And actually, the Sigmas weren't on campus when I got there.

Additionally, Jeff specified the presence and image that PBS had on his campus and in his circle of being on his campus. Jeff said,

> The Sigmas came on the yard that spring semester, at the end of the spring so then I saw them really coming back in the fall. And there was only four of them on the yard but, I mean, I thought there was 20 or 30 of them cause everywhere I went, I saw them. And what I started to realize is like that's what, like what they represented was what I wanted

to ... to represent. They had the highest GPA of the NPHC of organizations, they were in the top, you know, five or six of all Greeks, IFC, NPC, NPHC, across campus, they gave away scholarships to students every year. You know, just a program every month. They were real involved with community service events and they were just real cool, laid back, laid back cats, you know.

Lastly, delving deeper into why he chose PBS, Jeff shared,

So I mean, I ended hanging out with them for, on a regular basis, whether study sessions, parties, you know, playing ball, whatever the case was, just hanging out for ... for at least a year before there was even a conversation about me joining. And even how that came up was ... But I knew I wanted to be member. I just, honestly, I didn't know I could be because I was White. But I knew that that's where I felt most comfortable, I knew that, you know, they were truly my friends.

The relationships that Jeff established with members of PBS were nourished for over a year before there was any conversation about him joining the fraternity. It is important to note that Jeff said he felt most comfortable with these men, but was unsure if he could even join because he was White.

Many of the participants shared similar stories similar to Jeff about the relationships they developed with members of the fraternity, and being unsure if they could actually be members because they are White.   Phil stated,

The way I was introduced to Iota is very interesting because... His name is John Smith. John Smith is one of the most philosophically minded, amazing human beings I've ever met in my life and now he happens to be my brother. I met him in Black history class… So I asked him, I was like, 'What is that on your shirt?' And he was like, 'Look, man, this is what I'll do. I will give you a website. If you look at the website and you like what you see, give me a call. But if you don't like what you see, we won't talk about it anymore.' And I was like that's fair, cool with me, you know? And that's actually how I got involved with John… And I was like ... And I saw him and he was like so what's up, man. I was like, 'How do I become one of these?' I think his face lit up. He was like, 'Are you serious?' And I was like, Ya, man, I'm super interested.

Eric told of his choice:

I chose this specific fraternity because I made a friend who was in it and he sort of urged me to consider if I was interested at all. And I didn't, at the time... I was sort of interested but I didn't think that I could because, you know, it was a primarily African American

organization. But I kept seeing the letters around campus at events, at the library, in positive settings and I also saw Ben and Evan who had just become Alphas and I saw them wearing the letters around campus and that sort of made me reconsider my... my previous thoughts about not being able to join because I'm White. And then, after that, I started looking into what the fraternity was actually about and the history behind it and just the aims and the mission of... of the fraternity attracted me to... attracted me to... to Alpha.

Additionally, Eric stated that initially he never considered fraternity life.

When I was a senior in high school, I came down for a visit and we ended up at an IFC fraternity house and, after that, I actually told myself that ... that I would never be Greek because it was just a crazy experience, outlandish experience and that was my first impression of Greek life. But, when I found out that Alpha didn't have the house, I thought that maybe that would be a more positive situation because I think a lot of the negative things about Greek life happen at a frat house.

Eric's response about his negative experience the first time he interacted with a fraternity on his

college campus was enough for him to initially say he would never join one; through the positive

relationship he developed with a member, however, and the idea that the removal of a fraternity

house could change the nature of the group, swayed Jeff's perception of the Greek system. This

was further conveyed by Jeff's statement,

Well, when I was a freshman, especially, I didn't... I didn't hear anything positive about things that happened at frat houses. And I... I don't know. I just thought that, you know, like the drugs and alcohol and… It just isn't a positive environment, the frat house scene.   And so I thought that maybe if that was eliminated then, a fraternity could actually be what it was intentionally designed to be which is a brotherhood and people who are actually keeping each other accountable for academics and... and other things that are necessary. Ya, and service, service as well.

Colin's story was interesting because Colin received his bachelor's degree from a

Historically Black College/University (HBCU). When asked why he chose his fraternity Colin

responded,

I was actually influenced initially by people who were closer in contact to me like my dean of the College of Ed was an Alpha, some of my professors were Alphas, and those were initially the notable members that I became familiar with and then, once I researched more and found out some of the other famous members, I became more

familiar with some of those individuals. But my first point of contact was the people who were some of my personal mentors.

Colin continued his story, and why he was interested, and eventually chose Alpha Phi Alpha

Fraternity, Inc. (APA).

I had no interest in Greek life, probably until my senior year of college. I had preconceived notions of what it meant to be a member of a Greek lettered organization, which were mostly formed, around my knowledge of predominately White fraternities. So however they were portrayed in the media, was basically what I thought it meant to be in a fraternity. So I just thought that all fraternities were about drinking and socializing and, to me, especially when I was playing football, you know, I had enough guys around me, and camaraderie. I wasn't really desirous of being in any other organization that focused on fraternal involvement. So the impetus really was being at Florida A&M University, becoming exposed to people who were members of Black Greek Lettered Organizations, and, particularly my professors, and realizing that really what I thought Greek life was about was a very narrowly tailored definition that wasn't actually true in all cases. So I was really close with my dean at the College of Ed and some of my professors who were Alphas and, you know, I recognized that when I would go to their office, I would see a little Alpha, you know, paraphernalia somewhere or ... but I would see it in all of their offices so, ultimately, I was wondering what, why or what do all of these men have in common and why are they all taking an interest in me, you know, why have I developed these relationships with these men. And so, you know, I decided to ask one of them what it was. You know, I'd seen a probate show at one point on campus and so certain things intrigued me but, I'd never really seriously looked into it until I decided to ask my dean of the College of Ed, you know, what Alpha was about. And, once he encouraged me to kind of go online, you know, look at the website, you know, see what... what it says on the Alphas about paper. As soon as I read like the mission statement and once I became familiar with some of the more notable members of the organization, I realized that really what Alpha was about was what I was about. So that was kind of the impetus for pursuing Greek life.

Colin's story showed that he connected with members of the fraternity that mentored him as an

undergraduate. Colin also stated that he connected with the mission of the fraternity.

Ronald's story continued the discussion.

Actually I did a lot of research on the fraternities. You look at the predominately White fraternities and the brown and Black fraternities, most of my friends that were in the predominately Black like Alpha, the ones that I was introduced to, some would be 80 years old and they're still Alphas. You'd hear the guys in the predominately White fraternities, oh, I was a member of Sigma Chi, I was a member of TKE and so, they always had that I was a member and I was like you were a member but you joined… Then I looked at every single social movement and sociology, obviously, my major, if

you look at every single social movement, it was led by Alphas from Thurgood Marshall to Andrew Young to, obviously, Martin Luther King, Jr.

In his choice to join APA, Ronald saw a historical impact the fraternity had on the larger society. He also stated that he saw a longevity of involvement from its members and that they were still involved with the fraternity and the community, and that was a since of pride for Ronald, and with what he was interested in being associated. Lastly, Ronald stated that his interest in involvement on his campus was important.

> And when I was looking at the fraternities, I said what fraternity actually does help. It wasn't all about partying. And you look at all our campus; it's a campus of almost 40,000 White students and 2,000 minority students. And you look at the leadership though, within the campus from student government, wow, you would think that was the most diverse campus in the world. And a lot of them were Alphas. When I was there, it was predominately Alphas leading every aspect of student government and then social movements on our campus so... That's what led me to Alpha.

It was important to Ronald that he was part of a group that was making an impact on his campus. In his experience he saw a large campus that was predominately White, but saw the great leadership impact Black students had, especially member of APA.

Chris, whose his interview analysis indicated that he came from a privileged background, stated he chose Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. (KAP) because,

> A number of my students, I was teaching in community college, and a number of students ended up going off to colleges and come back to visit, or call, to stay in touch in terms of mentor relationships and several of them joined fraternities and almost all of them ended up Kappa and so, to sit back and say, you know, you got to think about this, we know you and it'd be great.

Additionally, Chris shared a story of his opportunity to advise a KAP chapter on a campus before he was a member, even though there were other KAP members on the campus who were capable of serving in that role. That experience helped shape his desire and choice to join KAP. Chris said,

I had a chance to see the young men at that chapter really blossom and take great pride in their organization, see them develop their leadership skills, see them become more committed to their educational work because of it. That was the moment that I think transformed me into saying that this really is an organization that has done and will continue to do amazing things for individuals and for the community and that that record of achievement and that legacy of great achievement was something that ... that I thought would be especially a part of.

The intentional interactions Chris had with former students, and the students he mentored expose him to KAP, and what KAP meant to these young men. Through these many interactions, Chris was proud of his choice, and continues to be engaged in the brotherhood of which he is a part.

Bernard, a member of APA, stated that he chose his fraternity because,
I'd been interested in it for a while. I really wanted to do it in college but we didn't have a chapter at UMBC at the time, acting chapter. But I first got really interested; I did a summer program at the University of Baltimore called the Charles Hamilton Houston Scholars Program so I learned about the legacy of him, the fact that he was an Alpha man as well as the legacy of Thurgood Marshall. So both of those were really inspiring. I thought it said a lot that both of them, even with all their accomplishments and what they went on to do, they both had that common thread of Alpha. That was something that was very important to them. And so that as well as just growing up with different people in my community back home were Alphas, made my interested.

Additionally, Bernard stated that through his college experience, he had many friends who were members as well. Bernard shared that he was raised in Prince George County, Maryland, and it was known for having one of the largest affluent African-American districts in the country, and many of his shared experiences growing up were in African-American schools and programs. When the researcher asked was this also a catalyst for his desire to join APA, Bernard stated,

They didn't even overtly get me interested. It wasn't like oh, you know, I think you should join, blah, blah, blah. It was more just me realizing that they were members and then seeing how active they were, and looking at their accomplishments and, you know, looking at the traits amongst members of the fraternity that made me interested.

Alex, a member of KAP, shared his interesting choice of KAP. Alex shared,

One day, I was working and this dude came up to me with a huge 3 on his chest which is a tiki with his line number when he crossed and I was like, 'What is that? Why're you wearing a big 3?' I had no idea really what Greek life was, that was, except for [strolling] at parties. And so from there, I kind of talked to him more about Greek life

and what really got me like attracted to it was all the people, especially him, his name's Michael. He was really future minded. Like he was at JMU but he had a 3.7 GPA out of business school, has a business degree... He had a CS degree which is in the business school and he had a 3.7 but he still had a good time and was social with us like he did both.

What Alex saw in Michael was a student with whom he shared a challenging major and who was academically successful. Also, Alex saw in Michael that he had a "futuristic outlook"; in my assessment Alex admired that in Michael. Moreover, through more dialogue Alex shared more about his choice in KAP.

The main thing was like after talking to so many people here at JMU that were Kappas was like they weren't like... they weren't saying Greek life is everything. They were just saying Greek life is a tool that you can use to make connections, become a better person, get leadership skills, get better at public speaking, and gain confidence. One big thing... There was two things that were really cool was one, the objective to unite men of... on college men of ... it basically said of culture, unite college men of culture… That, and there was also never another Caucasian male here in our chapter at JMU.

Alex connected with the mission, and how he could benefit from the fraternity to better himself as an individual with a group of like mined men.

The last participant, AJ shared his decision to join APA. Alex stated,

When I was in undergrad, I was taking, my freshman year, a course called American slavery and the Holocaust and, which was like a senior seminar course… Anyway, the president of the Alpha Phi Alpha chapter was in my class and he and I, you know, quickly built up a rapport. And he was talking to me about what, at that time, was called pledging… And then kind of just assumed like after I graduated from college that like that was like that my, you know, opportunity to be a part of a group like that was, no, that door was closed until I found out from a classmate in grad school who had gone through the intake processes, through a graduate chapter, you know, and kind of like started thinking about that again.

Alex went on,

And then I knew just from like learning about, you know, different members of the Divine 9 that like were I to ever, you know, think about joining a fraternity, it was going to be Alpha because of this just legacy of service and this incredible, you know, history with regards to leadership and promoting education in communities and just like when I viewed it as this profound group that just had this, you know, tremendous history and presence.

Also, Alex spoke of his strained relationship with his father, and how the mentors played an important role in his development. Many of the mentors were Black men, and he saw some of the same characteristics his mentors shared in many of the members of Alpha. AJ stated,

> You know, because of my lack of relationship with my father, I always kind of like sought out, you know, strong male figures, one of which was a guy that co-owned a basketball camp that I went to for years and years and years and he and I got to be close and we still keep in touch. And, I mean, it was a very strong, you know, male figure in my life and also was Black. And so in my life, some of the most formative experiences that I had, some of the most supportive people that I had, some of the first times where I felt, you know, a sense of family, of belonging, of acceptance were found, you know, with, you know, my Black friends or with like this particular mentor figure.

Alex's experiences in his development, and what he aligned with, personally attracted him to APA. He was also drawn to the relationships and the characteristics that member of APA held that were truly supportive of him.

Each of the participants' rationales for joining their respective fraternities was individual: opportunity to be successful academically, self-development, mentorship, male camaraderie, etc. It is important to note that although they admired the fraternities prior to joining, many of the participants shared the doubt whether they could join because they were White. From analysis, the decisions these men made to join their fraternities were nothing that they took lightly or for granted.

My Fraternity

The concept of the fraternal movement in the United States began with Phi Beta Kappa in 1776, the same year the Declaration of Independence was signed (Hughey, 2007; Ross, 2000). Originally they were a social group for men at the College of William & Mary, but now maintain the identity as the premier honor society for university and colleges in the United States and abroad (Ross, 2000; Kimbrough, 2003). What is also important to note is that, although the Phi Beta Kappa has morphed into a premier honor society, it is also the foundation for college

fraternalism in the United States. Social and service-based fraternities evolved from this original blueprint. As researchers Astin and Strayhorn wrote of the theories of student involvement and belonging; this study specifically explored how those the concepts play out in fraternities, and why many fraternities and sororities function now as modern institutions that are still self-selected and self segregated groups.

Moreover, Strayhorn (2012) introduced the idea of belonging as a human need, in part, to shape identity and support of an individual. Additionally, when interviewing the participants in this study the thread of fraternity ownership and belonging was consistent. Forthwith, the researcher presents examples of the participants' senses of ownership in their fraternities and of their members.

Jeff, a member of PBS, stated, "Even though I wasn't officially a member of any of the organizations, the role that Greek life played in it was huge." Jeff was adamant in his interview that his relationship with the members of PBS was very important, even before he was a member. Also, he thought that they were part of his family before he joined. All of the participants consistently cited examples of this relationship connection in the interviews. Jeff said,

> Like I said earlier, also, it's, you know, since I was young, I mean, it's always kind of been that thing where I just felt more comfortable within the African American culture. I just felt like, you know, I was able to be me.

This idea of comfort for Jeff was a cultural connection as well. In addition, Jeff spoke about his view of the members and PBS as a whole.

> But, at the same time, there was still that connection with the culture that I felt very comfortable in and very relaxed in and it just resonated with me. And I think from that, that's where ... that's how the relationships really started to grow and build. Like I said, they were just ... They were really about action, you know, in everything that they ... that they said they were going to do, they did and that was just something that I aspired to be like and be a part of.

Conversely, Phil talked about his experience as a member of a Divine 9 organization and

the pride he experienced being a member. When asked if he needed to defend his membership or

the work of his fraternity, Phil stated,

> Ya, on the regular. On the absolute regular… I was the only one for a long time. A brother came later who was a graduate brother… and so then there was two but, when it was just me, it was like what is that. Well, it's a predominately Black Greek Lettered Organization. But you're White. Yes, and that is true. You have the power of observation. But who else is in it? Well, you know we have a chapter at Southern but, when they only saw me, it was weird because yes, it's a Black fraternity but I'm the only member here and I am clearly White.

Phil continued,

> But ya, I defend it all the time cause it was why did you join that. Well, cause I wanted to do something different and I didn't want to do what you all do, I don't want to be like you all, I don't want to be you all, I'm not a carbon copy. And that was always my answer. The question of why came up a lot.

The sense of identity that Phil and Jeff held for themselves, and the connection and pride they

had for their fraternities, was clear. What was important was that Phil and Jeff felt comfortable

with the members and the culture that was associated with the fraternities and the men whom

they saw were members.

For Eric and Colin, some of their connections with their fraternities were different at

times as people who knew about Greek letter organizations were bewildered and did not

understand their choices, associations, and joining BGLOs. Colin stated,

> Other times, like wow, you know, like you're a member of a Black Greek Lettered Organization, what's it like. And you know, then I get all the twenty questions from White folks who want to know, you know, what it's really like… And then there are people like in my family who really just don't understand, they don't understand why I'm a member of a Black Greek Lettered Organization.

And Eric's expressed his point of view of his membership as

> Being accepted by my fraternity. Well, even still, I know that there are a lot of people in my fraternity that... that sort of want to keep it African American. They want to... They want to make it so that it's serving the purpose it was originally founded for and, a lot of

people think that any other race other than African Americans don't really have any part in that. And I'm not really too concerned about it because I'm in the fraternity so they can't really do much about it.   But I think a lot of ... a lot of people probably maybe ... probably maybe don't ... don't want me in the frat or maybe ... maybe not ... Maybe it's not that they don't want me in the frat but they just don't want to see a trend happening where there's a lot of White Alphas.

Even when questioned about their membership, or their being in this space, they both are still aware of their White being. They have engaged with people who had questions or questioned their choice, and being unable to convey the pride they shared in their individual interviews, Colin and Eric held a strong since of self and connection to their fraternal institutions.

Participants Ronald, Chris, Bernard, Alex, and AJ commented about their connections to their fraternity and their pride as members. Chris stated,

And a lot times, I would get the question versus the statement and it's something that I mentioned to my friends who are Black and Kappa. I say it's interesting that I would get oh, so you're a Kappa? And someone else would get oh, you're a Kappa. And they would get the statement form; I get the question form… I think that I always have to tell the story. I have to explain it, not necessarily justify it but explain it.

Chris continued addressing the identity of White members in BGLO,

But I don't believe we need to train Divine 9 organizations to sort of be more White open. I find that problematic to feel like that needs to happen. The organizations are open. If you want to join, you can. There's other members who, of all races, who have been members of the organization. And then I think that it is another... It can feel like another appropriation of Black cultural spaces if that takes place.

Chris' pointed out that Blacks and Whites questioned him, and frequently he needed to explain, not defensively, but, in his words, he had to "tell the story". Chris stated that he is not frustrated that he needed to tell the story at times, but he used it as tool to educate people.

Bernard talked about his sense of connection to the brotherhood and the bonds that he shared and has nurtured. Bernard stated,

I mean, I think that anybody, you know, the majority of people that go through these organizations I think just having a shared bond with going through... going through the process and joining the organization, you know, they all kind of have a mutual respect

and brotherhood about it, you know, just because you do wear the same letters. And so, ya. I was never really worried about it after I joined, you know. What will people say or what will people think because, you know, once you're a brother and everything else is kind of checked at the door and, you know, everybody's on good terms and brotherly.

One of the newer fraternity members of this interviewed group, Bernard had positive things to say about his connection to his fraternity. Of his having received some social media response about his membership, Bernard said,

> So ya, I mean, we pretty much, you know, we're pretty much received with open arms everywhere cause, you know, we ... we pretty much know all the college chapters in Maryland. I mean, I'm getting a little bit of buzz. I had a video, you know, that went pretty viral for a minute.

Alex, a member of KAP, stated,

> It's kind of a... It could be a respecting. Like I feel like it's not just my fraternity. There's a lot of ... Just being Greek sometimes, people treat you with more respect than like they don't really ... cause, especially if they're not Greek like they kind of come up to you in a different way at first. Because like I had an experience of both ways before I was Greek and after. And sometimes, I got treated like oh, you're a White dude in a Black fraternity, what like why, it's always the same like why, how did it happen, when, who influenced you.

Alex continued,

> I just ... You know, I don't really like mention to them any ... I don't really like ... You can just see someone's face when they first, you're a Kappa, like what. But after you start talking to them and, you know, me personally, I've been a Greek for almost two years now so I don't even want to really talk about that stuff so I just, you know, I change the subject.

Alex talked about just being a member of a Greek fraternity, but more so, his connection in KAP was deeper. He stated that he was questioned about his membership sometimes, but he said he reflected many times on his decision, and was sure that he was among the right group of men. Alex also spoke about a fraternity conference he attended. He was speaking with older brother of KAP at the conference and the older brothers encouraged Alex to introduce himself to another younger White brother who was attending the conference. Alex stated,

It was a younger guy so he joined after me and I seen him and like his first conference or something, all the old heads that I didn't even know them. They're like go talk to him, make him like more comfortable. I'm like so he chose to join a Black Greek fraternity, like he knows it, he's not uncomfortable right now. Like he's fine. So we had... Every interaction I had with like people that were White, we didn't really talk about being White in a Black fraternity. We just acted like it was normal. It was nothing... nothing new.

Alex continued,

Ya, I guess you could say that cause we both had to... We were White but we like Black people. And like we're comfortable with Black people, like we're comfortable being around other races basically or ethnicities.

AJ spoke of his pride in his fraternity, and how the history, and more importantly, the

members whose paths he crossed, inspired him. AJ said,

Like I have been so inspired by like just most of the Alphas that I've met. You know, it doesn't have to be people who have like, you know, who are historical figures or people who are like public figures now or anything like that. You know, even like just the guys on my line, one of them is in the Peace Corps right now doing incredible work in Malawi. You know, two of them are married. One has a number of sons that he's raising and just recently had a daughter and, I mean, those guys inspire me every day.

The inspiration of which AJ spoke was an avenue for him to connect and identify with the group

of men.

The men in this study were excited to speak of their experiences in their respective

chapters and fraternities. AJ was excited to start new projects with his fraternity brothers as he

had recently relocated to a different area of the county. AJ stated,

And so now that I'm in place where I'm really like going to be settled, invested in a community and in a city, like I'm really looking forward to seeing, you know, what I can be a part of with that. Cause I think it just like fits so well into what I care about anyway in terms of like, you know, with like a good high school, a good college, work with the homeless people or hopeless people, you know, I've did a lot of work in, you know, politics previously. I've done a lot of work in like educational stuff previously and it's just like ... But I mean, it takes an added meaning for me when it's affiliated with the brotherhood.

In the conversations about their membership there was always a sense of pride, but some

of the frustrations voiced about their fraternity membership stemmed from interactions with

other White people. Some participants thought that other White people were ignorant about their

fraternities, and did not care or need to educate themselves about things outside of their comfort

zone. Bernard talked about some of the conversations that he has had with White family and

friends.

> I mean, it hasn't really impacted relationships but, I mean, it's not really something that's easy to talk about, only it probably wouldn't have been easy talking about it anyways but particularly because I've joined a graduate chapter. White people don't know that graduate chapters are a thing. White people are largely oblivious to Black fraternities, in general. It was always really frustrating like sometimes I'd be talking to like people in White Greek orgs at UMBC like I don't really expect them to know Alpha cause it's not there but like they would to like butcher the names of like AKAs.

Eric had a similar experience and he painted his family as being pretty "conservative" because of

his family's interaction, or lack there of, to discuss his membership with people like his

grandparents. Eric stated that he discussed some parts of his fraternity membership with his

family, but he at times did not because of past experiences he had with particular members of his

family. Eric commented,

> Ya, ya. Not my family so much because I'd sort of discussed it with them beforehand just to make sure it was cool cause, actually, like that's where the money was coming from so I couldn't have really paid for a fraternity without my family. I was... I was concerned though. My... my grandparents are very conservative and I don't think like... I don't think they'd grew up around much closer at all and I think... I think they... I still don't... I'm still not very sure if they know what my fraternity really is just cause I've never really talked to them about it. I think it's probably going to be... or it would probably be a touchy subject just because like that's, you know, how they were raised. I don't know. But as far as my peers and stuff like that, I didn't really care what anybody thought because I have my reasons for joining the fraternity and, whether they agree with them or not, is ... is on them.

Jeff had some "positive and negative" experiences in his fraternity. He stated that with

some White people, he had the opportunity to also expose them to something that they may not

have otherwise experienced. Jeff stated of his experience with other White people since he

joined PBS,

You know, I think at first, it's had positive, I mean, in a sense of, I don't know if that's the word for it or not, positive/negative. Some people, you know, really embrace it in a sense of, you know, hey, it kind of just makes sense but I've definitely had some challenges along the way. I ... My family, not really knowing anything about, you know, Greek life or anything like, I remember when I went home and for the first time and my dad saw my brands and he about flipped out. You know, he didn't get it, you know?

Jeff did say that White people are sometimes guarded in their conversations with him when the

find out he is a member or PBS a NPHC fraternity. He shared,

So, ya, for the most part, I mean, people, that, like I said, I've cared about their opinion or people that know me, there's never really been anything in terms of, you know, backlash to it. I would say there's probably people that are kind of guarded. I think that, well I think that's ... I know that's part of it. People get ... get guarded in their conversations a lot of times, I think, and they kind of bite their tongue. They're not as free with some of the things that they would say around, you know, maybe some other White people where they know, you know, that I'm a part of an NPHC organization.

Jeff also spoke how the fraternity had impacted him in his personal pursuits since he joined PBS.

Well I know that being a... being a part of it expanded my views on so many things because, you know, even... even as close as I was with the... with the guys before I was a member, once... once that membership took place and you officially became a part of the family, you got to see even more and you got to see the ins and outs of a lot of things, the good and the bad... here's what we talked about before but now here's how it relates to, you know, our brotherhood, our family. You were able to make all those connections between why they were doing what they were doing, you know, why they were serving, who we serve, you know, and things of that nature. So everything definitely expanded. And it made me just get a sense of... It increased my confidence in a lot of ways and, you know, just let me know that hey, like if I did this, then I can do... I can do a lot more than what I maybe had thought about in the past. And it's really been one of the driving forces behind going to grad school and then finishing my doctorate.

Coming full circle in ownership in his fraternity, Jeff stated that he had run into members who

were not totally accepting of his membership. He was clear that brothers like that are very few

and far between. Jeff shared a story that he said was a great learning experience for him and

another brother. Jeff stated,

Yes, actually. I say... I say I had to defend it, yes and no. I remember when I first moved, I moved to a different state and before I moved, you know, I reached out to the... I reached out to the Sigmas, letting them know I was moving, and, you know, I was being interested in getting involved with some grad chapters and getting to know people…

Then it actually happened within my own chapter. Because it was... It was an older... It was an older gentleman, you know he crossed in like the early to mid-70s and his take on it was that it's okay to have White people in the fraternity, just not in his chapter, was kind of his whole premise behind it. And, you know, I didn't say anything about it for a while but then he needed me for something one time, for a program. So he called me up and I said, "Can we have a conversation?" So I brought it up and we talked a little bit about it and I think people thought I'd be mad about it but, you know, what I tried to explain to... to the people we were talking about it, I mean, even to him. I mean, I respect where he's coming from, because if he was in college in the 70s, you know, his life was totally different… On the flip side of it, you know, times are different in some ways. You know, in some ways they're very similar to the way they were then and, you know, I'm a member of the organization and, you know, when you look at our principles and our motto, everything that we say we stand for, you know, he can't ... You know, his mentality is, you know, it's flawed in some ways, you know, for me.

Jeff's experience with a brother made him feel uncomfortable, but Jeff noted that he did not instantly react to the specific brother's beliefs; rather he waited for another opportunity to have a true conversation with him. Additionally, Jeff pointed out that the opinion of that one person did not affect his belief in his fraternity.

Regarding this presentation of ownership, the researcher asked about the legacies of the fraternities. Legacy in the fraternal movement is important and is evident in BGLO, IFC, and NPC organizations. The researcher asked of the participants if they had children, whether biological, adopted, or otherwise, would they support them joining their fraternity, another fraternity, or an IFC fraternity of their child's choice. The responses were consistent, with Eric an outlier, although his point of view was centered on the time commitment needed to be an active member. AJ stated,

I would love it if they... I mean, I wouldn't like push it on them cause, I think, with these things, like unless you like come to wanting to do it on your own, like it's not going to have the same, you know, I don't know how to describe it. Like if you come to do it on your own, it has so much power for you, like it means so much.

If they wanted to join another fraternity that was not APA, or even an IFC fraternity, AJ stated,

I mean, I would I think ... I mean, obviously, it's hard to know, not having kids but, I certainly feel like I would love my kids unconditionally and, if they decided that they

wanted to do that, then I would come to peace with it… I mean, I certainly have my feelings as to like why I would love them to be in Alpha willing to, you know, join one but, you know, ya, and I understand that like, that family legacy thing… I wouldn't be happy about it and that's because I think that I've seen like the ... So I've seen what the lack of what White fraternities stand for and the prevalence of sexual assault and like the dangerous environments they can create, like the fact that like the culture seems to center so much around, you know, drinking and partying and taking what they want as opposed to giving back and investing in the community and doing the types of things that like, of why I joined Alpha. So I would ... You know, again, like try and come to terms with whatever it was that my kid wanted to do but I would have a lot harder time.

Chris, Alex, and Bernard had similar responses. All three would want their son to join their fraternity, and would not be pleased if they chose another BGLO, but would accept such decision. What was consistent, however, was the men were not in favor of their sons joining IFC fraternities. They responded respectively,

I saw the stereotypical kind of animal house party scenes and I went to a couple parties and everybody was getting drunk and it just didn't meet my own personal needs. I didn't hear anything or much about real community service and real engagement and things that mattered to me personally.

And,

I really never wanted to join those. I mean, I listened to my cousin for like five minutes. He was telling me about his fraternity, that they have at UMBC but no, that never really appealed to me… you know, I'm sure they have their own opinions about it but, I mean, the brotherhood amongst White fraternities doesn't seem to be as strong to me. And then, you know, it's pretty much just a college commitment for them so it's kind of a temporary thing. As well as the fact that White orgs weren't founded in the same way and they weren't, you know, founded to kind of serve the good of society, be servants of all. So that was... That's a key difference, I think, between NPHC orgs and everything else.

Also,

Like I was never drawn to like any of the, for lack of a better word, White Greek life in undergrad. Like I'm not, you know, I don't drink, I am not like a crazy partier, I don't join things just to ... Like I mean, so many of the repetitions that the kind of White Greek lettered organizations, at least of fraternities, at my school were so negative in terms of being all about partying, being all about really like the terrible way that they treated women, I mean, all of this like negative stuff.

Statements and perceptions such as these, that at times place blinders on people, are counter-narrative to the identity of many BGLOs for non-Black observers. Because of their experiences with White Greek letter fraternities, and their own value systems, they would not be supportive of their sons joining an IFC fraternity. The ownership each man held, and the pride and passion that they displayed, was relative to their individual fraternities. What was shared was the desire and drive to stay connected and working to fulfill the mission and values of the fraternity.

My Engagement

The concept and theoretical framework of engagement was introduced in chapter one of this study. Using Astin's theory of engagement, the researcher introduced research on student belonging to explore the experiences of White men in BGLOs. For this study, engagement was "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984, 1985, 1993). Additionally, I focused on Astin's (1984) fourth postulate of student involvement, "the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student development of student involvement in that program" (Astin, 1984, p. 519; Evans et al., 2010, p. 31). Fraternal involvement, college or alumni, requires engagement and energy, which affect a person's experience. The experiences of the men in this study and the choices that lead them to join BGLOs indicated their connections and the ownership they had for their fraternities. In this section, the researcher identifies examples of the participants' engagement with their respective fraternities, how they engaged others because of their membership, and the dynamics of being a White man in a BGLO.

It is important to understand some of the conversations about engagement that resulted from the interviews. Questions included but were not limited to: About what types of projects or

initiatives are you passionate?; Has your perception on local or global issues changed since you joined your fraternity?; Has your level of service increased or stayed stagnant since your joined your fraternity?; Such questions framed the conversations with the participants and responses included, "It taught me a lot, like just watching them, you know, put on programs", or as Jeff stated,

> Well I know that being a... being a part of it expanded my views on so many things because, you know, even ... even as close as I was with the ... with the guys before I was a member, once ... once that membership took place and you officially became a part of the family, you got to see even more and you got to see the ins and outs of a lot of things, the good and the bad… here's what we talked about before but now here's how it relates to, you know, our brotherhood, our family.

Phil reiterated,

> I was very, very involved with like community structure rebuilding, helping children cause I was a somewhat misled youth so I figured maybe somebody... maybe I could lend a hand to help another and share my story with them and show them that things could be done. Now, I'm still ... I still, very much so, love to help with kids but I also love to help with veterans. I'm in the Army. I am a soldier and I see a lot of veterans, very much so, mistreated and it kills me.

He said that he would still be interested in the issues as IPT provided him not only a support group, but a system to take real action and tackle the concerns he saw, and provided a voice for sometimes overlooked populations that needed assistance in their lives.

Eric, however, stated,

> They've, pretty much, stayed the same. I've... Since joining my fraternity, I've definitely become more aware of social issues around the world. As far as... You know, one of the missions of Alpha is just to make sure everybody sort of has a chance, you know. And... and, you know, that's definitely been on my mind more since I've been an Alpha but I ... I don't think my... my perspective on local issues or like local social justice issues has changed very much.

Eric said that he had become more aware of social justice issues on a deeper level because of the mission and service his fraternity provided. Eric stated that his commitment to service was important, and he continued,

Well, I don't want to talk about like national programs or anything. But ya, I mean, just anything that gives back to the community I think ... I think any ... anybody ... anybody can give back in ... in some way, whether it be through community service or, you know, donating money to people in need or to organizations in need.

Philanthropically, Eric thought that service always could be completed. Other examples of service engagement from the participants highlighted their commitment to society as a whole.

Colin commented,

I really got deep into my English education major and I started to become exposed to some of the inequalities in the education system and starting to experience them first hand when I was in Tallahassee and, you know, doing my school site visits and doing my clinical hours and things like that, I started to become more passionate about social issues and advocating for equity in education and things like that. So when I started to become more passionate about that and then started to know more about Alpha, I think it started to become a natural fit for me, in my head anyway. You know, I started to see the similarities and the values that I held and how aligned they were with the values that Alpha espoused, you know, through their mission and vision statements and stuff like that. Then, you now, when I see what it says on paper and then take a look at the men who are in my life, even though I kind of saw the correlation between the values that Alpha said they were about and then what the men were actually doing, and that matched to me.

For Colin, the fraternity was aligned with his academic pursuits, and he continued,

I think my... my service has... My activity in service projects has increased and shifted. So I think prior to joining, my service activities were mostly academically focused and really within the context of the college experience. Now I think that my service has provided to include, you know, younger folks, different types of service, whether it's, you know, going to elementary schools and mentoring young kids or raising money for different organizations, being involved with different types of organizations, serving on, you know, an advisory board for the March of Dimes. I think it's definitely increased and I would definitely attribute that directly to my involvement in Alpha.

Colin concluded,

Ya. I would say that I'm most passionate about supporting college men. So I think that's why I ... That's probably why I became the advisor… A lot of the time that I spend serving really is serving the college guys… I had a really good experience advising the chapter… they really embraced me. They accepted ... I think I did have to do some groundwork in establishing some credibility. I don't think I had to establish credibility as the White man advising them. I didn't feel that way anyway. You know, I may have had to overcome some of that, in their minds, but I didn't necessarily perceive that to be one of the barriers. I think that what they wanted to know was that I cared about them, that I

really was there for them when it came to their academic development, their personal development, and that I wasn't a punitive figure, you know, that I wasn't just there to get them in trouble.

Colin's engagement highlighted a desire to educate, advocate, and serve various groups. He ended with a passionate example of combining all those things as an advisor for a college chapter of his fraternity, the experience he gained, and the relationship he developed with the men in that chapter.

Ronald spoke about his interaction and engagement as a White member of his fraternity, and with White and Black people. Ronald said,

> Most White people probably don't even really understand that they're... I mean, they see the movies like *Stomp the Yard* or something like that or one of those movies, *School Dayz*, and they just have a general image of what predominately Black fraternities are all about. Well, I'm able to introduce them to what we actually are all about and that's service and scholarship, mainly deeds and being good stewards within our community. I know when they find out, then it changes their perspective on how they talk to me… Well, like at first, they talk to me like ... One way they'll talk just like very small. And the next thing, you know, they think oh, he's cool, he's all right, I can talk to him.

Aside from the interaction Ronald had with White and Black people because of his membership in APA, Ronald stated that one of the things that took him to APA was the leadership and service he saw them display as a group of men, and he was desirous to join APA. Examples of his commitment were evident in his words,

> Well, just by the fact, I mean, doing the *A Voteless people is a Hopeless people*, I mean, that was one of our big pushes. And then being in men against violence the way we were able to sit there and go out through the community on both those aspects that we really got to be involved on campus and off campus… So it's just being involved and be able to show the impact that hey, you know what, not all fraternities are about partying, we actually care about the community as well.

And,

> It opened doors to different ... different groups. But I've always been involved in community stuff so it's not like it's something that's ever going to stop from Habitat to Humanity to just doing walks for JDRF or doing the March of Dimes. Me and my wife, we were actually the ambassador family up here, two years ago so... We've always been involved. We like helping out.

Ronald has continued this engagement as he leads his own family and works in his local

community well after his college years.

Chris began his story by stating,

I grew up in Rochester, New York, or actually the suburb of Wright. And it was a fairly middle to upper middle class, fairly, pretty much predominately White, I mean, some diversity but not particularly a diverse community.

Chris also shaped the development of his experience as,

And to be honest, I guess another piece of this would be that I'd never had, prior to that in my life, a really strong, sort of complete male bonding experience. I mean, I played sports growing up and so I played on teams and that was cool. But I didn't do that in college and, so when these sort of like formative years of adult identities, while I had plenty of male friends, while, you know, I've had lots of [inaudible] I hung with, I didn't have that thing that I sort of made ... that felt to me like added something really particularly meaningful to me in terms of my own male development.

Thus, Chris' engagement and desire were a natural fit for him and so was KAP. Chris stated,

The feeling of wanting to be part of sort of this male organization, and also, again, all those students that I worked with had strong, prior to that, who had really taken such great pride in their organization and really had benefitted and grown so much and I said well, if it benefitted them and benefitted these other friends of mine, then it could clearly have been a benefit to me. And so really, there was no other consideration. It was that organization cause I knew the individuals and it's sort of been always steered in that direction and then when I did the research, it sort of confirmed for me that, again, so much the achievement and what it stood for, was something that I really thought was aligned with the values that I espoused.

Chris discussed that, outside of his connection and his desire to join KAP, he engaged through

his experience as a White man in this organization and that being in that particular space shaped

more of his being, and his racial identity. Chris claimed,

And I think that that was a particularly powerful experience in terms of racial identity for me or the performance or the acknowledgement of my racial identity. I don't think that it impacted how I saw myself as a White person. But it impacted the way in which I think I realize and, as much of, as I've been aware of privilege, as much as I've been aware of ... of certainly micro aggressions and all the kinds of things that I know others encounter and talked about and friends who shared with me, I think that moment of just the subtle questioning, that continual reminder that you don't quite fit in is something that hit me at a different level that I didn't fully appreciate, that others encountered.

In terms of his work in community issues, Chris stated he did not see a significant change, but rather saw that he worked in a different way on some of the community and social issues in which he had previously participated.

> I would say that not a great deal has changed in terms of my commitment and understanding these issues. This is, you know, part of what makes sense in my journey in the sense that I think that I'm fairly much committed and have demonstrated that in my work, in my life, that this is who I am and the kind of commitment that I have to these issues. And so it didn't sort of make the light bulb go off that oh, my gosh, I need to now be more aware, more committed to it. I think it's given me a slightly different platform, certainly, you know, to not only be affiliated with an organization that's engaged in lots of this work so that I can be a part of that, I think helps to have a different kind of platform and audience. I think in some ways and do acknowledge, as I mentioned before that, you know, when you are not what people expect, you get a little bit of that extra, you know, pat on the back. In terms of my understanding to commitment, I'd like to believe that that's, you know, sort of who I am and what I've always been doing.

Chris' reflections connected with the study and his own work as he was a diversity lecturer and trainer; in his words, this was an opportunity for him to reflect on his work and how it brings information to others and to his being in different spaces.

> Bernard introduced himself by how he was raised.
> Bowie, Maryland, Prince George County… It's actually the richest majority African American jurisdiction in the country so growing up in, pretty much through all of my public school when I went to a majority of African American schools, so that was kind of the environment that I grew up in and so it made the progression into an NPHC organization kind of natural for me.

Bernard's engagement was different from the other participants as he was one of he newest members of the participant group, having just joined his fraternity and the Greek community less than six months previous to the study. Bernard discussed how membership impacted his engagement with White people.

> I mean, it hasn't really impacted relationships but, I mean, it's not really something that's easy to talk about, only it probably wouldn't have been easy talking about it anyways but particularly because I've joined a graduate chapter. White people don't know that graduate chapters are a thing. White people are largely oblivious to Black fraternities, in general. It was always really frustrating like sometimes I'd be talking to like people in White Greek orgs at UMBC like I don't really expect them to know Alpha cause it's not

there but like they would to like butcher the names of like AKAs. But see, I joined the graduate chapter, which just leads to like tons of awkward encounters because people thought oh, that's great but didn't you graduate, like I did hear you graduated.   I'm like, ya, I did graduate, it's a graduate chapter and so then I have to explain all that and it's kind of a pain.

Of his conversations with Black people and his reception in the fraternity and outside, Bernard

stated,

> I mean, I think that anybody, you know, the majority of people that go through these organizations I think just having a shared bond with going through... going through the process and joining the organization, you know, they all kind of have a mutual respect and brotherhood about it, you know, just because you do wear the same letters. And so, ya. I was never really worried about it after I joined, you know. What will people say or what will people think because, you know, once you're a brother and everything else is kind of checked at the door and, you know, everybody's on good terms and brotherly.

And,

> So ya, I mean, I pretty much, you know, I've pretty much been received with open arms everywhere cause, you know, we ... we pretty much know all the college chapters in Maryland. I mean, I'm getting a little bit of buzz. I had a video, you know, that went pretty viral for a minute.

Bernard's two viewpoints on his interactions with Black and White people regarding his

membership in APA were evident in his response to the question of how he thought White

people viewed BGLOs, aside from the perception that he thought that even his experience with

other Greek members was "brotherly". Regarding community involvement, Bernard

commented,

> Not really any global issues. I mean, I was already aware but definitely aware, if you know, of the need for organizations like BGLOs to be active in their communities, you know, and places like Baltimore have a lot of poverty, have a lot of needs and definitely need people willing to, you know, donate their time and money to help uplift others. I mean that's a core tenet of Alpha and so it was definitely something you can only get a heightened awareness about, you know, after joining an organization because they definitely do go out of their way to be of service to others, you know, particularly the most needy.

Bernard concluded,

> I'm really interested in education, always have been, particularly in minority communities. Also political ... political issues and, you know, making sure that different communities are representative ... are represented and have, you know, representation, it does a good job for them.

Bernard joined his fraternity as an alumni member and had a different experience, especially different from someone like Alex. Alex joined as an undergraduate student and explained,

> I want to learn about different cultures and stuff like that… I started going to more Greek life events and then, after I got more comfortable with like hanging around with mostly African American people that were here…which is only like a 1,000 people, it was like a big family though. That's what really drew me to it. Like I remember the first event I went to. I met everyone. I went to the second event, everyone hugged me and we were just all like ... It was all love there. It was no really negativity that I really felt being there.

Alex's story was about his desire to learn and to be around people who were not part of his past narrative. He also stated that he hoped that his roommate or suitemates in college would not be White so that he would have a different experience. Alex said that his membership in KAP was confusing for some White people, even his family, as he commented,

> My family doesn't really... like they don't really understand it that well, or what's going on. But ya, it hasn't really changed like my relationship with White people. Sometimes though, like friends from high school when I went back to high school like to a football game or a basketball game, they like why you always got Black people in your pictures. Why are you always hanging out with Black people or you're always hanging out with like ... So it kind of was interesting, the aspect, cause you don't really realize it while you're doing it cause you know you are but just because like you're coupled with those people, your friends so it was kind of interesting to go back home and people were just like why do you always have that, what is this fraternity you're in, why do you have events.

Alex mentioned that the reception from Black people was more positive, laced with awe and questioning, but held with respect for his associations with KAP. Through his membership Alex engaged more in his community and service initiatives. He said,

> So one thing that I really like change is I started being a mentor for someone at the Big Brother Program and just, you know, trying to get another individual to... he's young now

but he's going to grow up and he needs to be future minded when he gets this age cause my parents... I love my parents but they just... they just weren't ... they're not in the professional world so you can't really teach someone professionalism and stuff if you're not really a part of the professional world.

Alex's involvement as a mentor was two-fold; he wanted to inspire and influence a younger man in his community, but also he believed that he did not receive that same development from his own parents, and this was his opportunity to help grow a future leader in his eyes; KAP was the vessel through which he could accomplish this goal.

AJ, an older professional who had been a member for a number of years, viewed his engagement on several levels. AJ responded that one of the first things he did when he arrived at the campus on which he worked was to reach out to his younger fraternity brothers on campus so that they would know he was there and could serve as a resource for them and their collegiate journey. AJ, however, stated that some of the things that shaped his development were interactions growing up when he was allowed to be himself with Black classmates, and his intelligence was supported. In his own words, AJ proclaimed,

> The guys that I played basketball with, one of them, we were in there, all Black, one of them invited me to sit with them in the cafeteria and I don't know if you're familiar with the like ... There's a fantastic book by Dr. Beverly Tatum called *Why do all the Black Kids sitting together in the cafeteria*, That was very much my school except for me. It was the Black kids from my school and me sitting together in the ... in the cafeteria. And it was the first time ever where I was just, kind of just fully accepted for who I was… you know, this group of people were the first people who, you know, kind of like encouraged the fact that I was like really intelligent and performing incredibly well in school, like they were really proud of that and proud of like that I was like a part of like their group and was doing that, you know, was the first group of people of like would really stand up for me.

AJ's initial experiences were with a group of people who allowed him to be himself and supported his being, and he was coupled with the Black male mentor when he was younger. These first examples of AJ's development related to his engagement as he connected to his fraternity.

There are identities that we ... that we opt into and then there are identities that are kind of put upon us by society and you look at race and the history of privilege and races and things like that, it's very much that society has prescribed, you know, different identities to different groups and has invested a lot in perpetuating that. And ya, I'm feeling ... I'm not … I want to be around this.

AJ's previous experience led him to bond with this group of men. Framing his engagement as a member of APA, AJ stated that when White people earn he is a member of APA,

It's confused a lot of White people… Well, I mean, for plenty people, plenty of White people that I have met like just don't even know that that's possible… I mean, I don't get like a lot of like open questions from White people as to like why would you want to do that… I think, for me, now being part of Alpha, and it's not something that I like bring up in conversation for the sake of bringing it up in conversation but when it comes up and when it's ... and when people find out, it's very much like a oh, like okay, like, you know, like you're like okay, we can like trust you on this so like okay, like you really are like committed to this.

As for service and activity in his fraternity, AJ indicated that his experience has not changed, but rather has evolved. AJ went on to say,

I wouldn't say it's changed so much as it's evolved. Like things I care about now are very similar to the things I cared about before. But I mean, I've evolved a lot as a person on a number of like issues that I work on and that's not just ... like I said, it's not just that I've evolved on racial issues and my thinking around them because of Alpha but, Alpha was such like a transformative experience and continues to be for me and it's like hard not to like put it like among everything else. It's like a really central part of like my evolution as a person. Ya, and certainly, I also joined at a time when I was learning more about the world and, you know, learning more, I don't want to say nuance perspectives, just like constantly learning, like just trying to constantly learn and ... But I mean, it definitely like ... It brought home to me even more, you know, things that I had looked at previously around like, you know, my lived experience versus like my friends' lived experience growing up and like why I ended up on a certain trajectory and a couple of them ended up in jail… But like, you know, Alpha brought it home for me in different ways. I mean, just from watching my line brothers advance in their careers and like the amount of work that they've had to put in to like take incremental steps forward, you know, whereas like I would not have to ... like I don't have the same barriers for me.

Finally, AJ stated that he was excited for the next chapter in his life, and how APA will play a role in his journey.

And so now that I'm in place where I'm really like going to be settled, invested in a community and in a city, like I'm really looking forward to seeing, you know, what I can be a part of with that. Cause I think it just like fits so well into what I care about anyway

in terms of like, you know, with like a good high school, a good college, work with the homeless people or hopeless people, you know, I've did a lot of work in, you know, politics previously. I've done a lot of work in like educational stuff previously and it's just like ... But I mean, it takes an added meaning for me when it's affiliated with the brotherhood.

The multiple perspectives of engagement of each participant's experience and narrative were rich. Each response was a highlight and small look into their journey. What was seen through examples of micro-aggressions from family, friends, and strangers alike, was a point of pride that each man held for his fraternity. Examples of commitment to their community and social issues were strong, and identified in the responses of the participants.

Summary of Findings/Conclusion

The interviews with the participants of this study highlighted a narrative rarely always found when people discuss race and engagement in intimate groups and relationships. Each gentleman's experience varied, and each person shared examples of his experiences, those in the same fraternity and across fraternal lines. The choice, ownership, and engagement of the members of these groups provided a counter narrative that they indeed held their fraternal bonds close to their hearts.

Often society places individuals in racial roles within which many are uncomfortable engaging in discussion. Each of these men recognized his privilege as a White man in the United States, and his existence as a small number in a minority group was clear. What was also clear was that each man did not let that affect his desire to engage and add to the rich culture and history of his fraternity.

Final statements about their overall experiences brought full circle the experience and identity of each man. When asked to provide a final statement that described his feeling and experience as it related to his fraternity the participants said,

Phil: Acceptance and family knows no color. Build traditions not rest upon them OW-

OW.

Bernard:

I have a lot of pride being a member of the fraternity and am really thankful to have had the opportunity. I appreciate the strength of the bond between brothers especially those within my state and my chapter. I have had a great experience so far, though I've only been a member for 3 months. It's always fun spending time with the brothers and visiting different college campuses.

Colin: The experience in my fraternity has been life changing. Membership in my fraternity provides purpose in my life and truly stimulates my ambitions and aspirations. The support and friendship of my brothers is second to none and essential pieces to my holistic wellbeing.

Jeff:

Being a member of the fraternity was, and continues to be, a lifelong commitment that provides a foundation for my social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual growth. More than an organization, the fraternity is a true family, steeped in a prideful set of values and expectations of excellence in all that we do.

AJ:

My experience with Alpha Phi Alpha has been overwhelming positive. I have found tremendous acceptance among the brothers in the chapter I crossed with. My line brothers are some of the people I'm closest to in the world. I'm incredibly thankful to be a part of an organization that has such a tremendous legacy of leadership and scholarship.

Chris:

It is indeed an honor to be a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Being a part of an historic organization founded as a positive response to oppression and grounded in achievement feels special. As a White man, I have experienced a welcoming environment and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about myself and others.

Ronald:

My feelings about Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity is simple, proud! I feel it an honor to be a part of such a great Fraternity. Seeing what has become of the organization as a whole but really seeing the growth of our chapter over the years. We have doctors, judges, city council members, and a senator that have come out of my chapter… While those are great things, the greatest thing is that while I didn't have any birth brothers growing up in a house of sisters. I have several I am honored to call my brothers. Dr. Ken Martin is someone I would say is not just a brother he is family and our bond is greater than even

the brotherhood. He is my baby girl, Sarah's, God Daddy, and she is only 2 but knows his face and voice!

Alex:

My fraternity experience has been great. I've been able to network with brothers across the nation and perform in stroll competitions. I've been to leadership conferences and led many events. I've been able to gain public speaking experience and develop life long friendships.
Since moving to Wisconsin, the brothers here have been nothing short of welcoming. They have invited me to events and asked if I needed anything during my first weeks. They also invited me to the group meeting for the area. It has further expanded my network and understanding of how great the bond is we have.

Although, the opinions expressed in this chapter are a blended narrative of the participants' experiences, the impact and connection each participant had/has as member of his respective organization is evident and clear.

This study centered on two research questions: (RQ1): Why do White men choose to join Black Greek letter organizations (BGLOs)? And (RQ2): How are the experiences of White men who join BGLOs related to the intersections involvement/engagement, race, and culture? The researcher sought to tell an untold story, and to add to the literature on Greek life experiences in the United States.

This research shows that the perceptions of perceived power and privileged dynamics from a societal point of view, i.e. White men in a status of privilege, are but perceived barriers for cross racial fraternal membership. The study was framed in the theoretical works of Astin's engagement and involvement, CRT's counter narrative, and Strayhorn's student belonging. These theories explore experience and shape this study qualitatively and through narrative.

Moreover, the literature and findings presented that the participants' foundations were supported by their idea comfort, culture, and meaning making through experiences. Historically, the Greek system presented a story of inclusiveness, but only if one was identified with the

majority of that specific group. Examples of exclusionary practices and forced integration policy

were not well received by White institutions, but BGLO were the first to openly integrate and

have no racial requirements in their constitutions, thus diminishing a trend of excluding people

for whom those the organization were not originally intended.   All participants had a sense that

they could be members, or was it ok for them to have such desires; they built relationships with

members, and the openness of each of the organizations accepted them as brothers, and for who

they were.

In exploring this topic, it was evident that race was still a salient and difficult topic to

discuss, but something of which the participants were well aware as White men in BGLO; this

was evidenced in responses as, "It would be irresponsible for me to not identify as a White man,

or understand my own privileges as a White man and the role that plays as a member of a

BGLO." Moreover, what emerged from this research was a genuine group of men who found

support and close bonds, and brotherhood in a space that 1) was not created for them, and 2) that

society continues to question.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Study Summary

This study explored, highlighted, and framed the fraternal experiences of White men in BGLOs. As the researcher I was most interested in why White men established close relationships with organizations that were created because Black men were not accepted in White fraternal organizations in the United States. Aside from brotherly bonds, I investigated why and how these White men connected with the purpose, mission, and values of organizations whose work was to uplift the Black community and experience in the United States and abroad.

As a higher education and student affairs scholar-practitioner, I look for engagement of students, how they apply their being to an environment, and the meaning made from their college and post-college experiences. Black men and women have not had easy access to the pursuit of education and higher education in the United States, much less fraternal organizations. Greek letter fraternities in the United States have been institutions on college campuses in the United States for over 200 years and were created when the system of slavery still existed. This study highlighted the long and rich history of fraternities in the United States, and also, the resilience of Black men who started similar institutions in the United States. By numbers, Black fraternities in the United States are not as large as White fraternities, but the impact of members in the short century of their existence is evident.

Finally, this study's intent was not show the difference of Black and White Greek letter organizations, but to present the accepting space that non-Black members, specifically White men, have made in this sacred space. Notwithstanding, this study was not an attempt to highlight a trend, or to say that the purpose of these racially homogenous groups is to stay as such; rather it was to show that the counter narrative of racialized experiences in the United States in specific

systems are not the same as they are presented history. Additionally, the research of this study showed that these men were fully aware of their being, knowledgeable of the world around them, but not interested in continuing with the status quo.

Interpretations of the Findings

Although not hypothesized by the researcher, the research findings inferred that the men who participated in this study would have a deeper commitment and knowledge of social justice issues, and that their fraternities were vessels that they saw combat many of the inequities to which they were exposed in their development. Additionally, the mentor relationships each participant referenced were with Black men and friends in their past who allowed them to move into their authentic selves. All of the participants referenced a connection to culture, a culture that resonated with BGLOs and their members in terms of personality traits and life trajectory. Kaleb mentioned that he was drawn to the professionalism of his fraternity and how the members carried themselves on his campus, and those were attributes for which he searched and needed but did not find in White fraternities.

Finally, with an N=9 for this study, it is also important to highlight that seven of the nine participants currently lived, attended schools, or joined their fraternities in the southern region of the United States. In the call for participants, the researcher believed that, because of his network and the perceived racial divide in the South and deep South, the participants would primarily be found in he geographic north/midwest and northeast regions of the United States.

Moreover, the researcher interpreted the experiences of the study and the participants as an opportunity to engage in cross-racial associations and relationships. The researcher inferred from many of the participants' responses that this study and the individual experiences were

opportunities to challenge the traditions society imposes upon us so that we may cultivate relationships with greater understanding.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of this study were observed from multiple viewpoints. First, the data collected and analyzed was from the vantage point of each person's lived experiences. Also, the responses were from a point of recollection and memory. Because no rubric was used to understand the participants' experiences, the participants might have interpreted the questions differently. Additionally, the interviews were conducted in different locations for each participant. The researcher scheduled individual times for the participants to participate in the interview via video conference software, thus none of the participants was in a controlled environment. Because of the nature of the study, and the snowball method of recruitment, participants may have prepped other participants on the purpose, scope, and possibly the interview protocol for the study.

One BGLO fraternity, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., was not included in this study because the researcher was not able to contact and confirm a member to participate. The researcher had a number of leads and contacts, but was not able to confirm an interested participant.

Finally, though the data of this study shared common themes and experiences of the participants, it cannot be inferred that all non-Black members of BGLOs or other White members of BGLOs share the same experiences.

Connection to Theory (Astin, CRT, Student Belonging)

Astin's (1984) Theory of Student Involvement, and Strayhorn's Theory of Student Belonging were the theoretical frameworks for this study. Astin's Theory of Student

Involvement defined involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984, p. 518; Evans et al., 2010, p. 31). The fourth postulate of Astin's theory, "the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student development of student involvement in that program" (Astin, 1984, p. 519; Evans et al., 2010, p. 31), aligned with this study of fraternal involvement and engagement. Strayhorn's Theory of Student Belonging explored students' sense of belonging, and how it aligned with their persistence on the college campus. The sense of belonging stemmed from Maslow's research of the 1960s. Strayhorn (2012) cite Maslow (1962) that "belongingness is a basic human motivation and all people share a need to belong (as cited by Strayhorn, 2012, p. 1). Each theoretical framework was seminal work associated with higher education and student affairs, and the investigation of student engagement, satisfaction, and involvement.

Astin (1984,1985,1993) identified the need for students to be engaged in purposeful experiences as an aspect of student involvement (Evans et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) Astin (1984) identified fraternities and sororities as one aspect of collegiate students' involvement that has lasting affects on their collegiate experiences. Thus these participants' narratives provided an additional interpretation of Astin and Strayhorn's theories. The lived experience is important, particularly for qualitative research that is not investigative, and for a quantitative question regarding the emergent being of the individual.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was positioned in this research as the participants discussed race in their counter-narratives of their BGLO experiences. Counter-narrative is important as it allows the researcher and reader to understand this study, experience, and ultimately a phenomenon from the point of a White minority.

Implication for Practice

The field of higher education and student affairs is an interdisciplinary endeavor. There is not one experience or educational pathway by which to receive training in this discipline. Researchers in this field typically have questions about the populations who are engaged in the system of higher education. Practitioners and scholars who are part of the higher education and student affairs systems desire work about humans and their experiences. The implications for this research are to better understand the experiences of a sub-population engaged in the Greek life communities on many college campuses and communities in the United States.

In addition, the goal of this study was to illuminate how we view the journeys of students and how they engage on their campuses. Often those in higher education and student affairs refer to the concept of cognitive dissonance and stages of learning. I believe that this study highlighted how we create and present services to all of our students. Additionally, this work will engage scholars and practitioners in meaningful dialogue about shared experiences, and will build on the work of higher education and student affairs theorists to continue knowledge in the field. Moreover, this work is aimed to add to the literature on topics such as multicultural education, cultural competence, Greek life, student engagement, student belonging, qualitative research and methodology, diversity, and topic on inclusion.

It is important that all participants in this study and I do not view that the purpose and scope of this study and the experiences of the participants was aimed at changing the way in which these century old organization function and the communities they serve. In fact, the purpose and scope were to highlight the counter-experience/narrative of members of the organizations from the previously presented norm of Black collegiate and Greek affiliated men.

Implication for Future Research

This study is a groundwork and an opportunity to ask additional questions. Other topics might include the exploration of White women in Greek letter organizations, White members of Black community social clubs, and the experiences of White athletes at HBCUs. This research allowed me to examine how our systems are established and maintained, how we support the historic narratives of the shared experiences of populations of people not historically represented in these communities, and why they are either satisfied or dissatisfied with their involvement and engagement.

Conclusions

The shared experiences of White men in BGLO are a specific experience. Concurrent themes connected these men: they were members of different organizations, at different times, and in different geographical regions of the United States; their connection to the mission and values of the Black Greek system was solid; each man emphasized the importance of the male friendships and mentorships that were established because of their interest and common values to be of service to certain communities; and they all desired to uplift their fellow man through service.

What can also be concluded from this study and findings is the perception of how all of the participants viewed their positions in their separate systems and organizations. Each man held a strong sense of self and racial identity, but also was fully aware of his privileges as a White man in the United States, and how that identity played in his experiences inside and outside of his fraternity.

As the researcher, I conclude that it is indeed important to push the conversation of racial understanding and dialogue. Also, it is important to develop and to maintain strong relationships and mentorships between all men, as evidenced in the responses of the men in this study.

Closing

The goal of this study was the completion of my doctoral process journey. Along the way I was indeed challenged in my understanding of the research process. I set out to research a specific question, but was enlightened by the experiences of a population of men who are truly inspiring and specific.

My desire to grow as a researcher has expanded, and I respect the entire research process and idea of shared learning and experiences. It is my hope that this study is not only received as an exercise in my journey to receive my PhD, but an opportunity for anyone that reads this work to be challenged and enlightened in how they view cultural norms. I also hope that it pushes the understanding of others.

In closing, thank you for your support and for reading my dissertation, and learning the stories of each of these men. I encourage you to receive this work with a critical eye, and hopefully expand on it in your on philosophical, scholarly, and creative way, and continue to create and increase knowledge.

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APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Racial Identity Development of White Men Who Join Black Greek Lettered Organizations.

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I understand that the researchers will be conducting interviews and observations with me to explore my experiences and story as related to my membership in my fraternity. I understand that the researchers will maintain complete confidentiality at all times.

I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Matthews, Chairman, Institutional Review Board at (225) 578-8692. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

_____   _____
Participants Signature   Date

_____   _____
Investigator Signature   Date

Researcher Contact Information

Mr. Kourtney Gray, M.S.
310 LSU Student Union
773-412-5929
kgray26@lsu.edu

STUDY EXEMPTED BY:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
130 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 / www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: _2/26/2017_

APPENDIX 2: IRB STUDY PROPOSAL

Project Title: Racial Identity Development of White Men who join Black Greek Lettered Organizations—Pilot Study

Performance Sites: In person, Skype, Google hangout, phone

Investigators

Kourtney P. Gray
Kenneth Fasching-Varner, PhD

The following investigator is available for questions:
Mr. Kourtney P. Gray (Principal Investigator)
Title- White Identity Development of White Men Who Join Black Greek Lettered Organizations
Louisiana State University
School of Education
Office Number
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Phone Number: 773-412-5929

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine how men who identify as White in America have shaped their racial identity through their individual choices of Greek fraternal affiliations. Specifically, White men who have chosen to participate in the Greek life system and opted to join Black Greek Lettered Organizations on their respective college campuses. This study will interview white men who are still in college and those who have matriculated, and how these associations have helped them to identify, shape, and define their racial identity as White men, before and after their associations within ant through their fraternal associations. The work from this research will help to advance the literature associated to Black Greek Lettered Organizations, Greek life, multicultural education, Greek life advising, advising, racial identity development, and student affairs.

Inclusion Criteria: Participants who identify as White men, who are currently enrolled in a four-year college or university, have graduated from a four-year college or university, and have joined a Black Greek Lettered Organization belong to the National Pan-Hellenic Council; Alpha Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Phi Beta Sigma, and Iota Phi Theta.

Exclusion Criteria: There is not an exclusion criterion. The Co-PIs will conduct observations and interviews within the contexts of their field sites.

Number of Subjects:

Abstract (Project Description): During the Spring 2014 and Summer 2014 semesters, the investigators will conduct individual interviews with and observations of the subjects to inquire

into their understand of their racial identity development as White men who belong to BGLOs. This research will explore how their decision to join BGLOs, and how it has shaped their associations related to their racial identity as White men, and defined before and after their associations within and through their fraternal associations. The participants will be interviewed individually for approximately one half-hour at a mutually agreed upon time following a semi-structured interview protocol (see attached). In semi-structured interviews, the researcher develops a tentative list of interview questions that allows him to respond to the situation by adding, rewording, or eliminating questions.

All interviews will be conducted in person, by Skype, Google hangout, or by phone. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. All audiotapes will be kept in a secure location in each investigator's home and will be destroyed after transcription. Tapes will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator and his associates. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify participants as a subject. After transcribing the interviews, the investigators will determine if additional interviews are needed to provide more explanation, clarification, description or evaluation of statements or ideas. Interviews will continue until data saturation has been achieved.

Data analysis will consist of noting patterns and themes, moving toward comparisons and contrasts, and finally arriving at conceptual explanations. This process will include expanding, deleting, reorganizing, and renaming my rudimentary coding schemes to make certain that research questions have been addressed and that there are no overlapping categories. After this process is completed, the categories will be organized by code in separate files. The investigators will use this data to write their reports.

Sample Interview Questions: (Like 6-10)

What fraternity do you belong to?
What led you to decide to join a historically Black Greek Lettered Fraternity?
How, if any has your membership in your fraternity impacted your relationships with other white people? Students, family, friends?
How, if any has your membership in your fraternity impacted your relationships with black people? Students, friends, family?
Has your perspective about community/global issues been changed since you have joined your fraternity? If so explain
How have/did other Greeks treated you on your campus?
Were you concerned with the feedback of your peers? Family members?
Did you have concerns of being accepted by your fraternity?
Did you know who is the first white member of your fraternity?
*Follow up questions will be asked based on participant responses.

Benefits: Findings from these inquiries will enhance understanding of how participants learn in their personal and racial identity development as White men in BGLOs. What the experiences helped them to understand about their selves and their experiences in college, and was of including the stories of into Greek advising literature.

Risks: There are no known risks.

Right to Refuse: Participation is voluntary, and a participant will become part of the study only if they agree to continue with the study. At any time, either the participant may withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: Results of the study will be presented in the project reports, but no names or identifying information will be included in the same. Subject identity will remain strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

Financial Information: There is no cost for participation in the study, nor is there any compensation to the subjects for participation.

APPENDIX 3: IRB APPROVAL

Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/ projects using living humans as subjects, or samples, or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

— Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-F, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/ored/human-subjects-screening-committee-members/

— A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
- (A) A copy of this completed form and a copy of parts B thru F.
- (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1&2)
- (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
  - *If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
- (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
- (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB. Training link: (http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php)
- (F) IRB Security of Data Agreement: (https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/ored/files/2013/07/Security-of-Data-Agreement.pdf)

LSU

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

1) Principal Investigator: Kourtney P. Gray **Rank:** Doctoral Student- Higher Education Admin

Dept: School of Education   **Ph:** 773-412-5929   **E-mail:** kgray26@lsu.edu

2) Co Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each
*if student, please identify and name supervising professor in this space
Kenny Fasching-Varner, Assistant Professor-- Curriculm and Instruction, Supervising Professor
225-578-2918
varner@lsu.edu

IRB# **E8699** LSU Proposal #_____
- ☑ Complete Application
- ☑ Human Subjects Training
- ☑ IRB Security of Data Agreement

3) Project Title: Racial Idenity Development of White Men who Join Black Greek Lettered Organizations (BGLO)- Pilot Study

STUDY EXEMPTED BY:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
130 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 / www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: 2/26/2017

4) Proposal? (yes or no) No   **If Yes, LSU Proposal Number** _____

Also, if YES, either   ○ This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant
OR   ○ More IRB Applications will be filed later

5) Subject pool (e.g. Psychology students) College Students and Graduates
*Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the ages, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

6) PI Signature _[signature]_   **Date** 2/24/14   (no per signatures)

** I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changes, I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Screening Committee Action: Exempted ✓ Not Exempted ____ Category/Paragraph ____
Signed Consent Waived?: Yes /No
Kristin A. Gansle
Reviewer _[signature]_   **Signature** _[signature]_   **Date** 2/27/2014

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Risks: There are no known risks.

Right to Refuse: Participation is voluntary, and a participant will become part of the study only if they agree to continue with the study. At any time, either the participant may withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: Results of the study will be presented in the project reports, but no names or identifying information will be included in the same. Subject identity will remain strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

Financial Information: There is no cost for participation in the study, nor is there any compensation to the subjects for participation.

SCRIPT
The purpose of this study is to explore the racial identity development of White men who belong to Black Greek Letter Organizations. My name is Kourtney Gray; a doctoral student at Louisiana State University, and Dr. Kenny Fasching- Varner an Assistant Professor in the School of Education is supervising this project.

There will be no sensitive types of information collected (e.g. sexual orientation or behaviors, drug use, etc.), and no risks involved in participating in this study.

As a participant in this study you have a right to refuse. Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Because this interview is being conducted and recorded via Skype, Google hangout, phone, or in person, you have received a copy of the consent form in advance. For the record I will read the consent form and record your understanding and receive or not, your consent to participate in this study.

After this interview has been completed please sign and email/scan a copy of the consent form for record. As a review all interviews will be conducted in person, by Skype, Google hangout, or by phone. All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. All audiotapes will be kept in a secure location in each investigator's home and will be destroyed after transcription. Tapes will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator and his associates. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify participants as a subject. After transcribing the interviews, the investigators will determine if additional interviews are needed to

111

provide more explanation, clarification, description or evaluation of statements or ideas. Interviews will continue until data saturation has been achieved.

Lastly, the LSU IRB has approved this study. For questions concerning participant right, please contact the IRB Chair, Dr. Robert C. Matthews, (225) 578-8692, or irb@lsu.edu

Do you have any questions at this point?

I will now read the consent form.

Do you understand the consent for I have read to you?
Do you agree to the consent form?
Do you agree to participate in this study?
Please state your name and today's date.

Consent Form

APPENDIX 5: MARKS' METHOD FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The Quad-Squad Approach to Qualitative Research

Phase One: Developing the Interview Protocol and Defining the Sample
    1 - Select research topic.
    2 - Conduct an EXTENSIVE Review of Literature
    3 - From the Lit Review, notice not only what is known but what is NOT known
    4 - Formulate 1-3 fascinating WHY, HOW, or PROCESS related research questions
    5 - Develop your questionnaire with sensitivity to your review of literature, your
       research questions, and real people in the real world.
    6 - Submit project and questions to the Internal Review Board (IRB)
    7 - Subject your Interview Questionnaire to the scrutiny of peers AND laypersons
    8 - Make changes to Interview Questionnaire as needed (trim to 20 ?s or less)
    9 - Determine the purposive/prototypical sample for your study.

Phase Two: Data Collection and Coding
    1 - Conduct a couple of pilot interviews (Use two digital recorders). NOTE: *Select an*
       interviewer that participants will trust with their truth.
    2 - Make additional adjustments to the Interview Questionnaire, if needed
    3 - Begin interviewing your purposive/prototypical sample
    4 - Immediately following each interview, write field notes to yourself. Describe
       overall impressions, non-verbal communication, thoughts and connections that ran
       through your mind, follow-up questions, etc.
    5 – (In solo work) Transcribe the interviews yourself as soon as they have been
       conducted. Doing so gives you multiple exposure before you begin coding.
    6 - Begin Open Coding ASAP after first interview(s) (Intra-Interview Only).
    7 - Continue to conduct interviews. (Scrutinize interviewer probes and style on the
       audio and transcripts to help improve interviews as the project progresses.)
    8 - Do a Numeric Content Analysis of the Open Coding Concepts in each interview.
       Namely, what concepts occurred and how many times were they mentioned in
       each interview?... (Post-It notes recommended, with corresponding number or
       identification from interview)
    9 - Following the Numeric Content Analysis for each interview, scrutinize the Post-It
       to see if there is a concept that is inadequately represented by NCA alone (e.g.,
       they may only have mentioned a concept only one time but it was salient.)
    10 - After 4-6 interviews have been Open Coded, begin comparing codes and NCAs
       across interviews.
    11 - Place all NCAs (Post-Its) on a sheet or two of paper, photocopy, and return the
       NCAs to their native interview
    12 - Use the photocopied sheet as your "at-a-glance" across-interview coding tool
       allowing you to see the NCAs for all individual interviews. This sheet will present
       a picture of the project as a composite.
    13 - Narrow all presented concepts from interviews down to the top fifteen or so.
    14 - Examine remaining concepts and begin to eliminate pretenders from contenders.

15 - Consider combining two or more similar concepts to form a theme: (e.g., "coping," "loss," and "hard times" may = "Coping with Life's Challenges."
16 - Continue to conduct interviews, performing open coding as soon as possible.
17 - Using NCAs, systematically identify 4-6 core themes that emerge from the data.
18 - Confirm/Challenge these themes as you continue so that you have a high level of confidence that you are capturing the core themes. If the project is solo, have an additional coder or two double-check your work. If the project is using a team-based, Quad-Squad approach, all core themes should be identified by consensus.

Phase Three: Caching the Rocks and Gems for each Theme
1 - You now have your 4-6 "grounded" core themes that you have systematically derived through a process of open coding, numerical content analysis (NCA), across-interview coding, and combination/elimination of themes.
2 - In connection with each of the 4-6 themes (e.g., "Coping with Life's Challenges") you will revisit each of the interviews and cut and paste the excerpts ("rocks and gems") that represent each core theme (one file per core theme).
3 - Focus on one theme at a time, work your way through the interviews, glean all the related data for each theme, then move on to the next theme and repeat.
4 - After completing each theme's file, read through the file several times and **bold** the "gems" that seem to best capture the essence of that theme.
5 - Without deleting the comprehensive "rocks and gems" file for each theme, create an additional file ("cache") for each theme that contains the meaningful gems.
6 - At the conclusion of this step, you will have a gems-file (or "cache") for each core theme. Ideally, the cache should also include "Counterexamples" for depth.

Phase Four: Placing the Gems in the Qualitative Research Crown
1 - Read through the larger file (including "rocks" and "gems") for the first core, emergent theme several times asking yourself:
   a) What is the meaning of this?
   b) What whys, hows, and processes are taking place within and across gems?
   c) Are there any recurring patterns?
2 - Read through the compressed cache" (the smaller file including only gems) for each core, emergent theme, again asking yourself the questions in Step 1.
3 – Begin to arrange the gems in a way that sequentially or conceptually presents an authentic, valid, and coherent composite array of gems for each theme.
4 - Repeat the above steps of ordering and arranging gems for each theme until you have your composite array of gems for each of the core themes.
5 - "Cut" (trim/edit) the gems while preserving the participant's meaning.
6 - Now that you an array of gems for each of the core themes, consider the themes in an integrated way and ask:
   a) Do the themes interact or relate? If so, how?
   b) In what order should you present them? What kinds of transitional phrases/ideas seem to lead from one theme to the next in a way that flows?
   c) Do the themes work together to tell an important part of the composite story of the individuals and/or families you interviewed that seems true to their experience?
7 - After myriad drafts, it will be time to face Reviewers B and C. Good luck!

VITA

Kourtney Prentice Gray, a native of Chicago, Illinois, received his Bachelor of Science degree at Southern Illinois University Carbondale in Social Work with a minor in Black American Studies in 2004. Directly following he completed his Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Administration and Services also from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 2007. Though not directly utilizing his educational training in direct counseling and human services, he focused his attention on the experiences of college aged students and their experiences at collegians. He began work at Indiana University Bloomington, and it was here as the Program Coordinator for the Indiana Memorial Union his passion continued to grow for educating college students. After a number of years at Indiana University, he decided to return to the classroom and begin his doctoral work in Higher Education Administration at Louisiana State University. He is a candidate for his PhD in August 2015, and will continue his work as a scholar-practitioner in the field of higher education and student affairs.