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WHITE MALES IN BLACK FRATERNITIES: LIFE EXPERIENCES LEADING WHITE MALES TO JOIN A HISTORICALLY BLACK FRATERNITY

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Educational and Human Sciences
in the College of Education
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2012

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the phenomenon of White male membership in a historically Black fraternity. The researcher utilized a qualitative research methodology to investigate the pre-collegiate experiences of White males that influenced them to seek membership in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Due to the national pool of potential participants, interviews were conducted with White male members of this fraternity using video chat software. The researcher utilized social identity theory (SIT) as the framework for this study based on the premise that in-groups might prove to be significant. Examining the participants' pre-collegiate in-groups, diversity of family and family friends, and home environment provided insight into participants' reasoning for seeking membership. Additionally, exploring the participants' pre-membership perceptions of their eventual fraternity revealed further detail as to the extent to which individuals became members of the in-group associated with that fraternity. Findings for this study were that participants' comfort levels with diverse backgrounds and individuals allowed them to feel comfortable seeking membership in a Black fraternity. It was also found that shared traits of service and the opportunity for growth were reasons why White males sought membership in a Black fraternity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor and major professor, Dr. Cintron. You have inspired my desire for continuing to do research and your love for higher education is contagious. Thank you to Dr. Parks for your continued support of my pursuit of this degree. Over the past year, you have truly pushed me to do and be better. Lastly, I would like to thank my family for seeing me through this long journey of higher education. You have been by my side and have seen me from my first day in the classroom in 1995 to my last day in 2012. I told you I was not excited during my two previous graduations because I had a plan. Well, the plan is complete, and I thank you for supporting me. I'll be excited during this graduation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES viii

LIST OF TABLES ix

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 1
Background 1
Statement of the Problem 6
Definition of Terms 8
Research Questions 9
Significance of the Study 9
Conceptual Framework: Social Identity Theory 11
Groups 14
Prototypes, Categorizations, and Entitativity 15
Social Categorization and Depersonalization 16
Transparency of Researcher 17
Summary and Organization of the Study 19

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW 21
The Early Establishment of Fraternities 21
The National Pan-Hellenic Council 26
Challenges to Fraternal Organizations 28
The Benefits of Membership in Fraternal Organizations 30
White Privilege 31
The Impact of Increased Campus Diversity on Fraternal Organizations 33
Review of Research: Diversity within Social Fraternities 38
Summary 45

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY 46
Introduction 46
Research Design and Rationale 46
Phenomenology Theory 48
Research Questions 49
Site Description 50
Participant Selection 51
Purposive Sampling 52
Establishing Rapport 52
Instrumentation 53
The Interview Protocol 53
Interviews 56
Field Notes 58
Data Collection Procedures 59
Data Analysis 60

Trustworthiness....61
Originality Score....62
Summary....63

CHAPTER 4 METHOD TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE....64
Introduction....64
Research Questions....65
Population and Sample....65
Recruitment and Selection of Participants....66
Interviews....69
The Use of Skype to Capture Narratives....69
Field Notes Usage....70
Confidentiality, Sorting, and Coding....71
Reflection on Theoretical Framework....72
Participant Biographical Data....72
Participant 1 (DB)....73
Participant 2 (DT)....74
Participant 3 (RH)....75
Participant 4 (BB)....76
Participant 5 (MS)....77
Participant 6 (KR)....78
Participant 7 (JP)....80

CHAPTER 5 WHITE VOICES IN A BLACK FRATERNITY: LOVE FOR ALL MANKIND....82
Introduction....82
Summary of Research Design....82
Pre-Membership Background....84
Racially Diverse Neighborhood Environment and Schools....85
Friend Group....86
High School Athletics....87
Comfort in Socializing with People of Different Backgrounds....88
Interracial Dating....89
Summary....90
Pre-Membership Expectations....90
Brotherhood....91
Service....92
Summary....93
Prototype Behavioral Expectations....94
Outlook on White Fraternities....94
Recruitment Process....96
Shared Attitudes, Perceptions, Feelings, and Traits....100
Summary....101

Depersonalization in Fraternity Experience....102
Leadership....102
Personal Growth....104
Family Support....106
Summary....107
Emergent Major and Minor Themes....108
Life Experiences Influencing Membership Decisions....109
Expected Benefits....111
Identifying as a Member of the In-Group....113
Member Depersonalization Behaviors....114
Emergent Themes from Participants' Experiences Related to Social Identity Theory....115
Theme 1: Comfortableness....116
Theme 2: Community Service....117
Theme 3: Personal Growth....118

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS....119
Introduction....119
Purpose of the Study....119
Research Questions....120
Implications for Educators, Administrators and Fraternity Staff....120
Recruitment....121
Chapter Advisors....121
Research and Assessment....122
Recommendations for Future Research....122
Limitations of the Study....123
Closing Remarks and Reflections of a White Alpha....124

APPENDIX A NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES....126

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW PROTOCOL....128

APPENDIX C PARTICIPANT LETTER....131

APPENDIX D PARTICIPANT CONFIRMATION LETTER....133

APPENDIX E FIELD NOTES....135

REFERENCES....137

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Interview Cycle 57

Figure 2. Major Themes..... 109

Figure 3. Minor Themes 109

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 National Pan-Hellenic Council Organizations 27

Table 2 Relationship of Research Questions to Interview Protocol Areas 54

Table 3 Participants' Demographic Information 81

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Astin (1985) found it is important for students to become involved in college activities within and outside of the classroom in order for them to have rewarding college experiences. Fraternities and sororities, according to Kuh and Lyons (1990), have provided a practical option for such involvement in a supportive and caring sub-community. Kuh and Lyons expressed the ability of Greek organizations to help students develop their interpersonal and leadership skills. These organizations have assisted college students in expanding their personal network of friends, in creating balance during their college life, and in living and socializing in an environment where they can examine aspects of their identity. Involvement in Greek organizations has proved to be significant in the college experience of students and has been associated with positive educational outcomes (Chang, 1996; Kuh & Lyons).

Students who are members of Greek organizations have identified positive effects of membership, self-reporting gains in leadership ability (Astin, 1993). Pike and Askew (1990) observed that members of fraternities and sororities had increased interaction with peers, worked well in groups and were more likely to persist in college. Winston, Nettles and Opper (1987) had earlier indicated that membership in a Greek-letter organization was likely to permit students to have experiences that are character building and foster intellectual growth. The Greek experience, during the completion of a college degree, encouraged the development of relationships and social skills, promoted understanding

and respect for different ideas and thoughts, developed personal and professional goals. In their research, Hayek, Carini, O'Day and Kuh (2002) concluded that membership in fraternal organizations had many positive effects.

Tiller (1974) reported that "Students at universities have traditionally been afforded a certain amount of choice in selecting their social and extracurricular activities. The social fraternities are part of one activity in which students may choose to participate" (p. 207). He further observed that students often choose to become involved in social organizations that consist of other individuals with whom they can identify. In conducting his research, Tillar noted there was a limited amount of published literature on racial integration of social fraternities in higher education.

Greek-letter organizations have been characterized as homogenous, having a body of members sharing common sets of beliefs, values, and behaviors developed frequently before entering higher education (Baier & Whipple, 1990; Chang, 1996). Though these organizations may seem very similar, there are many attributes that make each Greek-letter organization different, e.g., size, gender, religious affiliation, race, ethnicity, aims and mission (McKee, 1987). The foundation of American higher education was influenced by the understanding of race and the belief that colleges or universities were for elite White males (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Rudolph, 1962). The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890 recognized the needs of a more diverse population for an education in a wide variety of areas including agricultural and mechanical areas (Brubacher & Rudy; Rudolph, 1962).

The increase in diversity of the student population became apparent during the 1920s at Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale Universities as the Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants from Europe began seeking admission against the will of the university boards and alumni (Karabel, 2006). Karabel discussed the obstacles put in place to decrease this population's admittance. These obstacles included letters of recommendation, admission examinations, and interviews, all implemented to keep the Jewish and immigrant population low enough to allow these institutions to continue receiving donations from their alumni. As a result, diversity of institutions and their Greek organizations was kept at a minimum as the administration thought it best not to diversify its student body.

Keller (2008) found that American demographics have changed drastically since the 1960s. There have been increases in (a) women in the workforce, (b) immigrants, and (c) technological developments and advancements in medical care. All of these societal changes have made it necessary for colleges and universities to make adjustments in their recruitment practices, degree offerings, and student activities. The result has been that, at the time of the present study, 21st century colleges were embracing diversity as exemplified by increased numbers of students of nontraditional age, international students, and students who have a variety of sexual orientations and possess diverse racial, ethnic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds (Chang & DeAngelo, 2002; Keller; Kuh, 1991). Although colleges and universities have always differed in their definitions of diversity, based in part on their purposes and their service areas, student populations have emerged as anything but homogeneous (Boshini & Thompson, 1998).

Along with the U.S. Census Bureau, Boshini and Thompson (1998) projected quite a change in the racial population in the United Sates showing a growing percentage of people of color compared to the decreasing White population. Earlier, in 1993, Day had observed that the United States population of White Americans was the slowest growing racial group and was likely to consist of less than 53% of the total population by 2050. The remaining racial groups were projected to continue to grow, showing a steady increase with percentages of the population as follows: 16% Black, 23% Hispanic, 10% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut (Day, 2003).

As people of color have grown in the national population, their numbers have also increased in American colleges and universities. In 1984, the national total percentage of non-White undergraduates was at 18.4%. By 1994, the non-White undergraduate population had risen to 25.7% showing an increase of just over 7% (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998). During this same 10-year time span the number of White undergraduates in American higher education increased by only 5.1% compared to a 61% increase in African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American undergraduate in American higher education. Chang and DeAngelo (2002) posited that as the student population continued to become more diverse, comparable modifications in the composition of members in college social fraternities and sororities may occur.

Historically Black fraternities have promoted their anti-discriminatory practices since they were initially organized in the early 1900s. This has been evidenced by the aims of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first fraternity established for African-American male college students, “Manly deeds, scholarship, and love for all mankind” (Wesley, 1950, p.

14). All other nationally recognized fraternal organizations eliminated policies of discrimination involving race and religion by the late 1960s. As policies of discrimination were removed, Black students received bids from White fraternities but few accepted, instead seeking membership in Black fraternities (Tillar, 1974). Though policies of discrimination have been "officially" eliminated, Greek organizations may still participate in practices of discrimination. This can occur through bias and restrictions on membership intake which can contribute to a continued lack of racial and ethnic diversity (Maisel, 1990; Whipple, Baier, & Grady, 1991).

Racial identity indicates the belief and attitude individuals have about their own race as well as other races (Helms, 1990). Helms, in her White Racial Identity Model, added that racial identity refers to the extent in which one feels connected to or mutual commonalities with a racial or ethnic group. Experiences throughout one's life, both positive and negative, according to Helms, will have an influence on one's racial identity. Moreover, a person would be expected to adopt similar attitudes and identities to those who have surrounded them and most influenced them (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994). Rowe et al. (1994) argued that it's not stages but rather types that describe one's racial consciousness and determine the relationship of related racial attitudes that characterize the outlook of a variety of people. They noted that "White racial consciousness is one's awareness of being white and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership" (Rowe et al., 1994, p. 133). Based on the idea that racial consciousness is experienced in types or stages, racial identity models

tend to foster the notion that individual have an acceptance of race as a positive characteristic of themselves and others (Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

Fraternities have been commonplace in the American collegiate environment since the founding of the first fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa, nearing 235 years ago in 1776. Throughout their existence, the importance of these organizations has been debated as to whether they are vital or unnecessary components in higher education (Astin, 1993, 1999; Baier & Whipple, 1990; Kimbrough, 1995, 1996; Kuh & Lyons, 1990; Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler 1996; Pike & Askew, 1990). Many Greek organizations have differentiated themselves by religion, social class, ethnicity and race. These commonalities have grouped these fraternities under separate governing bodies. A number of Historically Black fraternities have claimed a non-discrimination policy (Appendix A) since their founding, and predominantly White fraternities have terminated their discriminatory policies since the 1960s.

Considerable research has been conducted concerning the diversity of predominantly White fraternities and their admittance of Black males (Byer, 1998; Chang, 1996; Chang & DeAngelo, 2002, Tillar, 1974); however, a comprehensive review of the literature to date indicated that no research has been completed on the diversity of historically Black fraternities and their admittance of White males. There has been little research into the phenomenon of White males joining historically Black fraternities, and the life experiences that influence White males to join historically Black fraternities have

been completely overlooked. The lack of research in this area has resulted in a segment of the college population being neglected in areas of recruitment, student activities, and diversity. The population targeted in this research may have had pre-collegiate experiences different from those addressed by a college's recruitment and counseling services. Ignoring relevant experiences could lead to a feel of isolation which could very easily lead to the withdrawal of individuals from institutions in order to find a more inviting college climate in an environment more inclusive of individuals with diverse interests (Katz, 1985; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Sue & Sue, 1990). Not studying this phenomenon could also have a negative impact on institutions, as it could lead to a greater racial divide between historically Black fraternities and historically White fraternities (Bullins, 2003; Tucker, 1983).

This study was focused on White members of a historically Black fraternity. Explored were the pre-collegiate experiences students had leading to their membership in the fraternity and the post-membership experiences they had as fraternity members. Their experiences were analyzed and compared with their pre-membership expected benefits.

The purpose of this study was to identify and investigate the life experiences that influenced the decisions of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity. In order to understand the process of group membership, in this case the decision of White males to join a Black fraternity, the Social Identity Theory (SIT) was examined.

Definition of Terms

Fraternities: Social and service organizations that exist on college campuses whose membership is comprised of male college students.

Greek-letter organizations: Terminology which refers to social and service fraternities and sororities on college campuses.

Group: Three or more people who share social identities (Tajfel, 1959).

Historically Black Fraternities: Terminology used to describe the five largest fraternities in the United States founded for Black males.

Involvement: An expression used to describe engaging as a participant.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC): A collaborative organization of nine historically African American, international Greek lettered fraternities and sororities (Ross, 2000).

Pre-Collegiate Life Experiences: A term used to describe experiences prior to students' matriculation at a college or university.

Qualitative Research: A form of research that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations or materials using the researcher as the method of interpretation.

Self-Construction: Refers to an individual's sense of self in relation to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Sororities: Social and service organizations that exist on college campuses whose membership is comprised of college women.

Research Questions

1. What life experiences influenced the decision to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity?
2. What were the pre-membership expected benefits from joining a historically Black fraternity?
3. What prototype behaviors were identified to make individuals feel part of the in-group?
4. What depersonalization behaviors took place once membership was achieved?

Significance of the Study

Literature on Greeks and racial integration of social fraternities in colleges or universities has been limited (Chang, 1996). The limited amount of published research examining the role race plays in Greek organizations has neglected to examine and depict the experience of White students who join historically Black Greek organizations. Investigation of the experiences of these students can add to the existing body of literature on race relations and racial identity in higher education.

Chang (1996) found that Greek organizations provide a unique social context to study racial dynamics. Historically, fraternities have been chastised for contributing to segregation and excluding potential members based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Greek organizations have been placed, to some extent, under a microscope. They have been encouraged to be more inclusive and create environments that appreciate diversity.

Historically, Black Greek organizations have not had a policy of discrimination against White students, and as campuses became more multicultural in the late 20th century, fraternities experienced some increased multiracial membership (Chang, 1996). It was, therefore, important to examine the role these organizations have in fostering or inhibiting a campus climate that appreciates and embraces diversity (Boschini & Thompson, 1998).

The results of this investigation into the phenomenon of White males who seek membership in Black fraternities may be of use to practitioners in higher education. This study was conducted to highlight diversity practices in the fraternities investigated in this study that were also noted by prior researchers (Bullins, 2003; Kuh, Schuh & Whitt, 1991; Kuh & Whitt, 1988) . Studying this phenomenon was intended to contribute to a smaller racial divide between historically Black and historically White fraternities (Bullins, 2003; Tucker, 1983). Furthermore, as Kuh, Schuh and Whitt suggested, this research should encourage institutions to examine institutional goals and their campus Greek-letter organizations practices to make sure they are aligned with the college's diversity and multicultural initiatives.

Finally, little research has been conducted on the relationship between student involvement, ethnic and racial identity, and how social identity development through pre-collegiate life experiences affects decision-making (Mitchell & Dell, 1992). The investigation of White male membership in Black fraternities was intended to add to this body of literature.

Conceptual Framework: Social Identity Theory

To provide insight on the phenomenon of White males choosing membership in Black fraternities, Social Identity Theory (SIT) was used to guide the conceptual framework for the proposed study. Social identity is centered on the social group. According to Tajfel (1972), social identity was a mixture of the individual's understanding of the group and the level of emotional importance the individual placed on group membership.

In one of his early writings, Tajfel (1959) concentrated on the ability of social pressure to change the way people interpret the physical world around them. His belief was that when social pressure was applied, individuals perceived the size, weight, or color of a particular object differently. This was the beginning of Tajfel's (1959) work toward social identity theory and the possibility of social pressure influencing people's perceptions of abstract characteristics. This also provided the first opportunity for a group to be viewed as something other than a collection of individual personalities. Tajfel's early research and continued exploration of identity in the 1970s and 1980s laid the foundation for what is now known as social identity.

While collaborating with Turner in the 1970s, Tajfel and Turner (1979) were able to develop the concept of social identity by drawing on Tajfel's earlier work on social categorization, ethnocentrism, social comparison, and intergroup relations (Hogg, 2006). Attention in social identity theory was centered on the group and what drew a person toward a group. Groups, as defined by Tajfel (1959), consists of three or more people who share social identities. There are many groups, and each group competes with the

others for status. The strategies used by group members in this competition vary depending on their views of intergroup relations. This model became known as social identity theory (Hogg, 2006), was presented by Tajfel in 1974, and published with Turner in 1979 (Tajfel & Turner).

In social identity theory, people making up a group (three or more individuals), evaluate and define themselves and their characteristics based on how they compare and interact with other people who do not belong to their group. "Group membership is a matter of collective self-construction--'we' and 'us' versus 'them'" (Hogg, 2006, p. 115). Groups to which an individual belongs are designated as in-groups and groups to which individuals do not belong are designated as out-groups. Consequently, the foundation of social identity, being rooted in group membership, becomes the source for in-group/out-group distinctions. In contrast to one another, one person's in-group is another person's out-group. Social identity theory centers on how individuals distinguish in-group/out-group membership and how this influences the individual's behavior.

It should be noted that there is a distinct difference between social identity and personal identity. The latter focuses on characteristics of individuals that are not shared. Hogg (2006) stated, "Personal identity is a self-construction in terms of idiosyncratic personality attributes that are not shared with other people ('I') or personal dyadic relationships with a specific other person ('me' and 'you')" (p. 115). As people travel through life, they have many different personal and social identities, as they will have many different social groups and personal relationships.

The level of importance, worth, and the number of times an identity is accessed fluctuates from person to person. The fluctuation from one identity to the other is determined by how accessible the identity is in the person's mind and how accessible it is in the current situation. A salient identity is one that is prominent in the mind and a person's sense of identity changes from situation to situation. "In any given situation only one identity is psychologically salient to govern self-construction, social perception, and social conduct. As the situation or context changes, so does the salient identity, or the form that the identity takes" (Hogg, 2006, p. 115).

In the study of social identity theory, the notions of social and personal identity have been commonly agreed upon, but there have been some suggested modifications by different scholars. For example, Cameron (2004) concentrated his research on whether social identity was a single-faceted concept or was more accurately categorized by several separable facets. Three facets were suggested: (a) centrality recognizing the lasting psychological salience of group membership, (b) in-group affect symbolizing the value placed upon the group, and (c) in-group ties referring to the relationships established with other members of the group (Cameron, 2004).

Concerned with different categories of social identity, Reid and Deaux argued there should be personal attributes rather than personal identities. Reid and Deaux (1996) defined attributes as "the personality traits, characteristics, and behaviors that an individual uses in self-description" (p. 1,085). In another study, Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, and Ethier (1995) supported their argument for categories by defining five categories of

social identity: “personal relationships, vocations/avocations, political affiliations, ethnic/religious groups, and stigmatized groups” (p. 280).

Hogg (2006) noted that some scholars viewed the dichotomy between social and personal identities as too rigid. Brewer and Gardner (1996) identified personal self, relational self, and collective self as the three categories of self.

> Personal self is the differentiated, individuated self-concept. . . relational self is the self-concept derived from connections and role relationships with significant others. . . [and] at the group level is the collective self, which corresponds to the concept of social identity. (p. 84).

Years later Brewer (2001) proposed four categories of identity: person-based social identities, relational social identities, group-based social identities, and collective identities.

Groups

Groups, according to Hogg (2006) are made up of three or more people. Social identity is constructed by collective self-construction as the basis for a group (Hogg, 2006). These definitions are generally accepted within the research of social identity theory.

Two people making a dyad does not constitute a group. With only two people, the interaction is dictated by interpersonal processes, and it is not possible to see other members interacting with one another. Three people are needed in order to determine norms which are agreed upon after observing the way others interact within the group. It is necessary, however, to have more than three members so that individuals making up

the group identify with it. Additionally, distinctive and cohesive groups are characterized by group structure, interaction, and shared goals (Campbell, 1958; Hamilton & Sherman, 1996). While these strengthen identification, the basis of group phenomenon is the deeper psychological process of identification. Individuals can belong to a group, but if they do not identify with the group or do not classify and evaluate themselves in terms of the group, they will not behave or think like other group members (Hogg, 2006).

Prototypes, Categorizations, and Entitativity

One key aspect of social identity is the process of categorization or a person's ability to identify, define, and differentiate social identities from one another.

> The theory of social identity rests on an assumption that categorization is the process by which people order, and render predictable, information about the world in which they live. This process of categorization operates on objects, other people, and oneself, and consequently people are seen as belonging to the same or different categories as oneself. (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 209).

Groups and social identities are categories of people and are cognitive representations of prototypes. Prototypes are a "fuzzy set of attributes (perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors) that are related to one another in a meaningful way and that simultaneously capture similarities within the group and differences between the group and other groups or people who are not in the group" (Hogg, 2006, p. 118).

Developing descriptions of similarities and differences within and between the group and other people optimizes entitativity. Hogg (2006) defined entitativity as "the property of a category that makes it appear to be a cohesive and clearly structured entity that is distinct from other entities" (p. 118). Therefore, entitativity consists of maximized

prototypes which identify similarities within and differences between groups. Consequently prototypes are classified as following the metacontrast principle, creating the biggest contrast between the in- and out-groups (Hogg & Terry, 2001).

Social Categorization and Depersonalization

Categorizing someone as a member of a group is a process that is critical as it pertains to social categorization. This social categorization is the driving force behind prototypes and is the cognitive basis in determining social identity (Hogg, 2006). Social categorization entails categorizing individuals and also includes depersonalizing them as well. Depersonalization involves viewing people in terms of group membership and comparing them to group prototypes, instead of as separate unique individuals (Hogg & Terry, 2001). Assigning prototypical characteristics to an individual is also a part of the social categorization and depersonalization process.

A major premise of social identity theory is that individuals must depersonalize themselves (Hogg, 2006). This process happens with members of both the in- and out-groups, but it is important for this change in self-perception to take place within each individual. This change is important because it brings individuals' perceptions of self and their behavior in order with that of the relevant in-group prototypes. This results in individuals subordinating their uniqueness and producing "normative behavior, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, positive in-group attitudes and cohesion, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion and empathy, collective behavior, shared norms, and mutual influence" (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p. 5).

Social identity theory was used in this study to aid in the identification of life experiences that influence the decision of White males to seek membership in historically Black fraternities. This exploration exposed a relationship between identity and the role it plays.

Transparency of Researcher

As a 10-year-old boy, I was introduced to the idea of race when I developed a crush on a fifth-grade girl of African-American descent. This was a "big deal" since I was a White kid attending a predominantly White elementary school with very few Black students. My exploration of race and racial identity continued as I changed schools after re-zoning and found myself attending a predominantly Black middle school. Since my two older sisters had already finished middle school at a different middle school, my mother wished for me to attend this other school as well, likely due to familiarity and the homogeneous study body. Though slightly intimidated, due to a new middle school and few friends, I began 6th grade, and my middle school years proved to be full of great experiences. My racial identity was mixed, and I am glad I had the experiences I did while attending this middle school.

When I moved on to high school, I attended what was then a predominantly White high school but the re-zoning that took place years ago had begun to diversify the student body. I was a bit of an outcast during my high school years. I was the White guy who people thought acted Black, and my only close friends were those I had met in middle school and happened to be Black.

As a result, and as I began to consider college and fraternity membership, it never crossed my mind to join a historically White fraternity. My thoughts of fraternities were always those of the historically Black fraternities, because I believed I would be most comfortable as a member of a Black organization. As I began my college years and considered the alternatives, I thought that two of the five historically Black fraternities at my university might be a good fit for me. After further observation I noticed one of the fraternities consisted of men who were always studying and walking fast on campus, and they always had what I thought were the best functions, step shows, and parties. I learned that this same fraternity had the highest grade point average on campus within all the Black Greek letter organizations and the third highest of all fraternities; and that this particular fraternity was stereotyped, members being known as the "business" men who made really high grades. In meeting some of the members, I believed that we had similar interests, academic goals, and similar outlooks on life. After learning all of this, I only had the desire to join Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

I became a member of Alpha Phi Alpha in the Fall of 1999 as an undergraduate and have continued as a life member. I was not immediately accepted by everyone in the Black Greek community, but I never had a problem gaining respect and building a reputation of good character. My time as an undergraduate member gave me my best college memories as I led many programs, held officer positions, and networked within the community. After graduation I attended graduate school at the same university as my undergraduate degree, allowing me to maintain my social network and continue to expand my professional network with Alpha Phi Alpha.

I have since begun work on my doctoral degree at the same university as my previous two degrees and have found my research interest leaning in the direction of my personal experience. I have worked in higher education for the past 12 years in areas of transition programs and diversity, so interviewing students, parents, and potential colleagues has been a part of my normal job duties, and I have easily exceeded over 100 interviews. I actually quite enjoy interviewing others and extracting information from them.

I did have some concerns as I approached the study. Although I was comfortable in interviewing others, I did not want to be overconfident in conducting my interviews for this research. I wanted to make sure that I approached this research as a rigorous academic experience and with as little researcher bias as possible. At the same time I did not in any way want to disrespect my fraternity or fraternity brothers, of any race, with the nature or findings of this study. I was surprised at how much was explained for me through the writing of the proposal for the dissertation in regard to my own reasons for seeking membership in a Black fraternity. The research, in a sense, has explained, in part, my own reasons for taking the path that I did.

Summary and Organization of the Study

This study was conducted to explore the background, characteristics, and behaviors that have attracted White males to seek membership in Alpha Phi Alpha, Fraternity, Inc., a historically Black fraternity. The background, problem, and purpose of the research were presented in this chapter. Definitions, research questions which guided

the study, and the researcher's statement of transparency have been detailed. The conceptual framework of social identity theory and how individuals identify with groups has also been introduced.

College students seek involvement with their institutions clubs and organizations as a means of social interaction but also to develop interpersonal skills, leadership skills, and networking. With the continued increase of diversity within the college student body, it is important to understand the diversity of fraternal organizations and how these fraternities are aligning their practices with those of the institution.

Chapter 2 contains a review of literature on the founding of White and Black fraternities, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, and the challenges, benefits, and diversity of Greek-letter organizations. The methodology which will be used to conduct this qualitative study is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 contains the material overview on the data sourcing, data analysis and participant biographies. Chapter 5 has been used to examine the research design and summarize data results in relation to the research questions guiding this study. Chapter 6 presents conclusions and implications of the research.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Early Establishment of Fraternities

Fraternities and sororities are often referred to as Greek-letter organizations (GLO) and have been a part of the college and university campuses for more than 230 years. Fraternities and sororities were initially created by a few individuals with similar interests, values, and ideals to fill the gap formed by students leaving their families behind in pursuit of their academic goals (Gregory, 2003). These organizations served a number of purposes, e.g., providing students a sense of comradery among the group and offering an escape from the unpleasantness of the collegiate regimen (Rudolph, 1962). Additionally, Greek-letter organizations sought to provide social activities, obtain rights, and correct institutional injustices for students (Rudolph, 1962; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998).

Since the first American colleges and universities were founded, the influence of European schooling has been evident in the establishment of literary societies. In an effort to redefine the American college and change the focuses from the old world to the new, undergraduate students founded fraternities (Rudolph, 1962). Fraternities have ultimately developed a culture where members can look for exciting and fun extracurricular experiences. They have also provided for small group interaction, leadership development, and a voice for students (Gregory, 2003).

In 1776, the first American fraternity Phi Beta Kappa, was established at the College of William and Mary. Phi Beta Kappa established a Greek model and guidelines

that were adopted by other student organizations. They chose certain Greek letters to represent them and created a set of standards, principles, and rituals including secret handshakes to cement a fraternal bond. Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa were mandated to be attached to higher education and all of its members had to be chosen from undergraduate students (Gregory, 2003; Rudolph, 1962). Although Phi Beta Kappa stayed focused on academic pursuits and the academic achievements of its members, other organizing student groups took on a more social and extracurricular role (Gregory, 2003; Rudolph, 1962).

Fraternities take on a variety of purposes that either do or do not align with the goals of the college. Some include leadership development, character building, community service, and foster friendships that last a lifetime (Gregory, 2003). Kimbrough and Hutcheson (1998) found that though heavily criticized on many United States college campuses, Greek-letter organizations played a key role in developing leadership skills among college students. Kimbrough (1995) found that, for Black students attending a predominantly White institution, the effects of membership in a Black Greek-letter organization was a critical element to student success and overall satisfaction with college.

During the late 1800s the United States began to expand higher education to reach a more varied group of students. This was in large part due to the Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 which set aside land to allow for the establishment of new colleges and universities, eventually including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Rudolph, 1962). With this expansion of a variety of

institutions of higher education, enrollment grew and fraternal organizations expanded (Binder, 2003).

Karabel (2006) noted during the late 1800s and early 1900s that social clubs and fraternities were symbols of status more than anything else. Students sought to join these organizations to further their standing within the campus structure, socioeconomic class, and society as a whole (Karabel). Fraternities offered a place for male students to escape the routine of college life, enjoy male companionship, and fill the void caused by separations from family (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Rudolph, 1962). There was also plenty of skepticism regarding the actions of fraternities, their lack of academic prowess, and their abundant social involvement (Karabel; Newsome, 2009). Having expanded the number of American institutions of higher education during this time period, enrollment varied to include women, Jewish, and Black students as well as other students from varied ethnic backgrounds. Fraternal organizations had to expand to meet the demands of these new students and their social requirements while enrolled. Fraternities, up to this point, were historically White and excluded students from ethnic minority backgrounds (Ross, 2000; Wesley, 1950). Segregation was promoted through the "Jim Crow" laws making it an especially abusive and oppressive time for Black students (Ross, 2000).

During this time of expansion and racial segregation, Black students looked to find and surround themselves with individuals of similar mindsets, ideals, and goals. The establishment of the first Black college fraternity began as a social group discussing scholarly works and looking to participate in social activism (Ross, 2000; Wesley, 1950). Cut off from the opportunities afforded White students at New York's Ivy League

Cornell University, seven Black students founded Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. on Tuesday, December 4, 1906. In describing the beginnings of Alpha Phi Alpha, Wesley (1950) wrote: "Thus the idea of Alpha Phi Alpha was born. It came as an evolution, through trial and struggle. It was not spontaneous, but gradual in its growth. The designations, 'club,' 'organization,' 'society,' preceded the term 'fraternity'" (p. 25).

Alpha Phi Alpha became the example for other Black student groups who sought relationships with likeminded individuals and wanted to establish a fraternity or sorority at their institutions. In 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. was founded at the campus of Howard University as the first Black sorority (Ross, 2000). The advancement of the Greek system continued, and at the time of the present study there were nine historically Black Greek-letter organizations including: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. (Kimbrough 2003, Ross, 2000).

The Black Greek-letter organizations were modeled after White Greek-letter organizations to some extent, but many rituals and ceremonies had to be established to meet specific needs of the individual organizations (Wesley, 1950). The desire to have a close knit bond with one another drove these organizations to foster a brotherhood and sisterhood that would not only link them to one another during their collegiate years but establish themselves as brothers or sisters for life. In praising the achievements of Black Greek-letter organizations, Ross (2000) wrote:

> The achievements of the nine National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) organizations and their individual members are astounding when you consider the total history of oppressed Africans in America. To have created African American organizations that stressed education, philanthropy, self-improvement, and excellence, and to have them successfully thrive to this date, is a testament not only to the members of the organizations, but also to the vision of their respective founders (p. xii).

The founding of the nine historically Black Greek-letter organizations took place from 1906 through 1963 with these organizations witnessing substantial change in American society. During the first half of the 20th century, American higher education had seen the advent of admissions offices, numerous degree programs, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill), and increased ethnic and social class diversity (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Karabel, 2006; Keller, 2009; Rudolph, 1962). Ross (2000) stated that the growth of Black Greek-letter organizations can be viewed in three phases:

> Post World War I: Undergraduate chapters of NPHC affiliate organizations began to spread to major universities admitting Black and to major historically Black colleges in the South. Graduate chapters were birthed in cities across the U.S. as civic and service organizations, due to blatant racism prohibiting African-Americans from participating in general civic organizations within their communities after college graduation.
>
> Post World War II: NPHC affiliate chapters proliferated on southern historically Black college campuses. Many cultural traditions which differed markedly from historically White college traditions became refined and embedded with the African-American tradition and culture (e.g. "lining" and public skits on campus as part of "pledging").
>
> Post Civil Rights Act of 1964: Many colleges and universities which had previously denied admittance to African-Americans or which had small enrollments grew in their enrollment of African-Americans and established chapters on their campuses. Such actions caused the numbers of NPHC affiliate organizations to swell to over 400 undergraduate chapters and just as many graduate chapters on the average for each organization. Presently, there are approximately 1.5 million members of undergraduate and graduate affiliate chapters served by NPHC. (Ross, 2000, pp. 424-425)

The growth of Black Greek-letter organizations to include 1.5 million undergraduate and graduate members in some 400 undergraduate and a similar number of graduate chapters occurred during the second half of the 20th century. With the continued growth of organizations, and especially their alumni chapters, the Black community had organizations to rally around community causes to promote justice, equality, and political fairness (Ross, 2000; Wesley, 1950).

The National Pan-Hellenic Council

The governing body of the historically Black Greek-letter organizations, known as the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), was founded on May 10, 1930 on the campus of Howard University in Washington D.C. The charter members of the NPHC were the following five organizations: Omega Psi Phi and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternities and Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta and Zeta Phi Beta Sororities (National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2010). Alpha Phi Alpha and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternities joined the council in 1931; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority joined in 1937, the same year the council received its incorporation under the state Laws of Illinois (National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2010). After a vote to change its constitution at the 1993 NPHC convention, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity was invited to join the group and did so in 1997, bringing the total membership of the NPHC to nine (often referred to as the "Divine Nine"). Table 1 provides a listing of the nine NPHC organizations in order of the year they were founded, the founding institution, current location of national headquarters, and year each joined the NPHC.

Table 1

National Pan-Hellenic Council Organizations

Organization	Founded	Institution	Current Headquarters	Membership
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	12/4/1906	Cornell	Baltimore, Maryland	1931
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority	1/15/1908	Howard	Chicago, Illinois	1930
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity	1/5/1911	Indiana	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1930
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity	11/17/1911	Howard	Decatur, Georgia	1930
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority	1/13/1913	Howard	Washington, D.C.	1930
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity	1/9/1914	Howard	Washington, D.C.	1931
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority	1/16/1920	Howard	Washington, D.C.	1930
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority	11/12/1922	Butler	Indianapolis, Indiana	1937
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity	9/19/1963	Morgan State	Baltimore, Maryland	1997

Note: Adapted from *The Divine Nine* by Ross, 2000

The establishment of the National Pan-Hellenic Council in 1930 marked a sign of unity and cooperation among the affiliated organizations to strive toward a unified betterment of the campus and general public welfare (Ross, 2000). However, for the next 62 years the national office for the NPHC would move from campus to campus with no permanent location. This made regular and consistent correspondence difficult for affiliated chapters, campus representatives, and the council of presidents. In 1992, the NPHC National Board of Directors and Indiana University-Bloomington came to an

agreement allowing for the NPHC to have its first permanent home on the campus of Indiana University-Bloomington. The nine organizations have since mandated any institution with two or more chapters of NPHC affiliated organizations should establish an NPHC chapter on its campus (Ross, 2000).

Challenges to Fraternal Organizations

Greek-letter organizations have, over the years, faced an incredible amount of criticism and have been evaluated in a number of ways by a number of different parties. Institutions have evaluated whether organizations on their campuses make contributions to the college or university through campus involvement, academic excellence (graduation rates), alumni support, and local and national organizational reputation (Malaney, 1990). Potential members evaluate organizations by campus reputation, similarity of member's interests, return on investment through campus and alumni resources, and future alumni networking.

Fraternities and sororities have also faced extensive challenges from faculty and staff, non-Greek students, local community members, and institutional administrators in regard to sexual harassment, sexism, anti-gay, racist, substance abuse, hazing, and a variety of other risk management issues (Jones, 2004; Malaney, 1990). In a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Hoover (2001) wrote:

> Since the university's inception in 1831, Alabama's main Greek system has not offered membership to a single black student. Last fall, Melody Twilley, a black student who participated in sorority rush, could have been the one who ended that lily-white tradition. Yet, while more than 75 percent of the women who signed up

> for the white-sorority rush went on to receive bids, Ms. Twilley did not even make it past the second round of the four-part selection process.
>
> Following press accounts of Ms. Twilley's rejection, critics once more are charging that Alabama's Greek system is racist. Many faculty members are calling for the administration to integrate the system. (p. 35)

In the same article Hoover (2001) continued to address skepticism and criticism about fraternities by pointing out an incident at Dartmouth College:

> At Dartmouth, members of the campus's Zeta Psi fraternity printed and distributed two newsletters that described fraternity members' sexual escapades, naming female students and promising a future issue containing "patented date-rape techniques." Soon after copies were leaded to the press in April, the administration revoked the fraternity's campus charter. Although Zeta Psi has been booted, opponents of the Greek System say college officials should not stop there. Last month, more than 100 faculty members signed a proposal urging the administration to banish all of Dartmouth's fraternities and sororities. (p. 35)

Kuh et al. (1996) stated that critics of the Greek system claimed fraternities and sororities were exclusive, sexist, and discriminatory and that their very existence opposed the mission and values institutions attempted to instill in their students.

The inability of Greek-letter organizations to align themselves with their institutions' visions and academic missions has resulted in administrator and faculty member disapproval of the very existence of fraternities and sororities on many campuses and demands for reform. Kuh et al. (1996) called for initial reform of the fraternity system by barring first-year students from membership despite the threat of alumni withdrawing financial support.

Those opposing the Greek-letter organizations have questioned their importance, their influence on members' psychosocial development, and their effect on members' cognitive-structural development. Critics have stated concerns of membership promoting

superficial relationships, racial insensitivity, social exclusion, and feelings and actions of social elitism by avoiding social interaction with people from cultural backgrounds different from their own (Baier & Whipple, 1990; Kimbrough, 1996; Kuh & Lyons, 1990; Kuh et al., 1996). Kaufman (2002) viewed the fraternal system as the cause of a number of deep rooted problems in American society including racial prejudice, special-interest politics, a fear of government, and a weak labor movement to name a few.

The Benefits of Membership in Fraternal Organizations

Thorsen (1997), in examining the satisfaction of non-Greek to Greek alumni, found the latter to be more satisfied. Numerous writers and researchers have addressed the benefits of fraternity membership. Male students who are members of fraternities have been found to have different attitudes and values than male students who are not members, and they have been shown to be more sociable and involved in the campus environment (Dollar, 1962; Jacobs & Galvin, 1974; Kimbrough, 1996).

As a member of a fraternity the chances of taking on leadership positions would seem to increase due to the number of committees and leadership positions available within the organization. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that membership in a fraternity has been revealed to increase a student's leadership ability (Astin, 1993). Kimbrough (1995) found that Black students at a predominantly White institution believed that Black dominated organizations provided a higher rate of leadership opportunities than did White dominated organizations. Furthermore, earlier opportunities for leadership development were found to be a result of membership in Black Greek-

letter organizations (Kimbrough). Kimbrough also reported that campus leadership development opportunities for Black fraternity members were increased by their participation in Greek organizations.

Astin (1999) found positive correlations between fraternity membership and persistence in completion of a degree and gains in self-reported cognitive development particularly with men of color. Additionally, fraternities have been recognized as encouraging social interaction, and this has been shown to increase a member's confidence and interpersonal skills (Bair & Whipple, 1990; Pike & Askew, 1990). According to Gregory (2003), membership in a fraternity contributes to lifelong friendships and networking as well as making a positive impact on the host institution and encouraging alumni support.

White Privilege

The exploration of White privilege is important in the discussion of the diversity of Greek-letter organizations. Individuals' understandings of their own racial group membership will benefit or penalize them in their determination of in-groups leading to the development of their social identity.

Whether they realize it or not, White people experience elements of privilege every day. They are in a position of privilege because societal norms are defined by the characteristics of the privileged White group of people (Wildman & Davis, 1997). This privilege starts when individuals believe that what they are or what they have (and the positions they hold) are the norm and constitute the standard for comparison. This

possession of privilege is something learned via repeated experiences throughout the upbringing of White people (Kivel, 2002). These experiences provide individuals with assumptions about community, culture, and family that lead to "our values and sense of self. . . they provide us with a sense of stability, coherence, community and identity. Consequently, they are often emotionally charged and strongly defended" (Mesirow, 2000, p. 18). These assumptions are very difficult to deconstruct as they are reinforced with experiences over years or growing up with families and communities. The result is that White people are treated as such, and their cognitive map of the world is constructed by their lived experiences consisting of privileged treatment as White individuals.

White privilege is often invisible, as White people see their Whiteness as ordinary or normal. A main aspect of privilege is that it "is rarely seen by the holder of the privilege" (Wildman & Davis, 1997, p. 316). This privilege is such a normal part of the everyday activities of White people that it is unusual to question it or to think about it. Because it is so deeply rooted, strong emotions are evoked when queried about it. "Empirical psychology's stance toward White identity appears to echo the now-criticized sociological view of Whiteness as inherently 'invisible,' 'transparent,' or 'unmarked'--an attribute that, despite its power to shape lives, is seldom noticed by those who possess it" (Knowles & Peng, 2005, p. 223). McIntosh (1988) found that White males experiencing gender privilege over White females knew about and understood the advantage they were experiencing but did nothing to square this discrepancy. This illustrates that privilege is, to some extent, the opposite of oppression, and one cannot exist without the other. Grillo and Wildman (1997) commented on this dichotomy as follows:

> Whites must confront their role as oppressors, or at least as beneficiaries of the racial oppression of others, in a race-based hierarchy. The pain of oppression must be communicated to the dominant group if there is to be any understanding of racism/white supremacy. (p. 624).

The Impact of Increased Campus Diversity on Fraternal Organizations

When Harvard opened its doors in 1636 as the United States' first university, its intent was to educate elite White males (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Rudolph, 1967). Almost 150 years later, when the first Greek organization, Phi Beta Kappa, was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary, the student population had not changed much.

Because the higher education student population consisted largely of White protestant males, no membership policies existed that encouraged fraternities to discriminate against anyone for any reason, aside from general characteristic of gender until after the end of the Civil War in 1865 (Lee, 1955; Karabel, 2006). After the Civil War, however, legislation, i.e., the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, and the Plessy v. Ferguson decision, fostered the growth of a more diverse population. Marked changes could be observed in the higher education population with the creation of and admission to schools for women and African-Americans (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Karabel, 2006; Kuh, 1991; Rudolph 1962).

As student demographics began to change, Greek-letter organizations started to implement policies discriminating against African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, other minorities, and students who were of Jewish faith (Karabel 2006; Lee, 1955). Lee summarized the situation as follows: "The crucial problem facing men's and women's

fraternities is not scholarship or hazing or wild parties but self-segregation and segregation on the basis of race, ethnic origin, and religion" (p. 8).

There was a push from undergraduate students and from university administrators contesting discriminatory policies from fraternities. Some fraternity chapters implemented non-discriminatory policies even though they risked losing recognition by their national offices and support from their alumni (Lee, 1955). Though implementing non-discriminatory policies became somewhat of a movement, most fraternities were unwilling to support integrating their membership (Lee).

As the minority enrollment continued to increase, and discriminatory practices continued from fraternities and sororities, minority students looked to create their own fraternities (Karabel, 2006; Lee, 1955; Wesley 1950). In 1850 at the University of Pennsylvania, Phi Kappa Theta fraternity was formed as the first fraternity for students who were Catholic. The first non-sectarian fraternity accepting men of all religious faiths, Pi Lambda Phi, was founded in 1895. Alpha Phi Alpha, the first college fraternity for African-American males was formed in 1906 at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. A common thread among most of the fraternities formed for different minority groups was the exclusion of students who were not a part of their minority group (Plotkin, 1993).

In 1946, a Black male at Bowdoin College was initiated under much protest from the national office into a white fraternity, Delta Upsilon. With the acceptance of their first Black pledge, the national office had concerns on how this might affect membership in southern state chapters. Though the national office pled with the Bowdoin chapter to

withdraw the new initiate's membership, the chapter cited violations to the fraternity constitution and refused to do so (James, 2000). Yielding to constant protests from the Bowdoin chapter alumni, the student eventually withdrew his membership (James, 2000).

In 1946 at Middlebury College, members of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity broke ties with the national office, disapproving the mandated racial and religious clauses (James, 2000). As a result, the campus chapter of the fraternity reorganized as an independent and prohibited discrimination based on race or religion. Two years later in 1948, Alpha Sigma Phi initiated its first Black member.

In contrast to the White fraternities and their adoption of discriminatory policies against minorities and certain religions, the historically Black fraternities followed the lead of their first organization Alpha Phi Alpha during the first half of the 20th century. Though integration was not often practiced during this period, no policies of discrimination were enacted, and there were no written guidelines encouraging discriminatory actions. The principles of Alpha Phi Alpha proclaiming "love for all mankind" guided the development of all Black Greek-letter organizations (Wesley, 1950).

In 1954, the court ruling in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS overturned the previous 1896 ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson, clarifying that separate but equal accommodations were, in fact, not equal, especially in education. This court hearing forced Greek organizations to be non-discriminatory and accept individuals of all races, creeds, colors, and religious backgrounds. The Civil Rights Movement added momentum to the anti-discriminatory movement, and soon all fraternities and sororities

removed their discriminatory policies from national headquarters and local chapters (James, 2000; Lee, 1955; Plotkin, 1993).

Title VI and Title VII in the 1960s, along with the Americans with Disabilities Act in the 1990s, were all forms of Federal Legislation passed to prohibit various types of discrimination in both public and private sectors. Following the lead of the federal government, fraternities drafted new anti-discrimination statements that reflected the federal laws and prohibited discrimination toward any applicant on the basis of race, religion, creed, or physical disability. Gender was not included due to Title IX, which was passed in 1972, and gender was treated as an exception so that fraternities could remain single sex (James, 2000).

As noted by Keller (2009), the student population in higher education has grown in diversity every year, and the greatest percentage increases have been seen in minority students. To remain popular in a time when the student population is so diverse in American higher education, diversity of membership and diversity initiatives are vastly important to Greek organizations (Bullins, 2003). The longevity of fraternities comes with their ability to adapt to change, administrators, and Greek Life practitioners must stress the importance of diversity and initiate practices to educate members as to the benefits of a diverse chapter membership and ways to be inclusive (Bullins).

Lee (1955) stated that many individuals do not feel it is necessary for Greek organizations to have their member demographics match that of their institution. However, Bullins (2003) argued that individuals' consciences require them to ensure race is not the deciding factor when accepting or rejecting potential members. Many student

organizations rarely reflect the demographics of the college campus of which they serve (Bullins, 2003; Chang & DeAngelo, 2002).

Fleming (1984) found that students from minority groups feel separated from the rest of the campus community. Other researchers have found fraternity membership promotes superficial relationships, racial insensitivity, social exclusion, and feelings and actions of social elitism by avoiding social interaction with people from cultural backgrounds different from their own (Bair & Whipple, 1990; Kimbrough, 1996; Kuh & Lyons, 1990; Kuh et al., 1996). Many underrepresented students believe that their campuses do not meet their needs in that they find the environment intimidating and unwelcoming.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) noted that institutions are defined by their history, traditions, culture, values and beliefs. The college campus environment has also been recognized as having a steady influence on the behavior of its study body and its organizations. The efforts institutions put forth in diversifying their campus climates are influenced by factors of culture in the institution and student organizations which include their Greek systems (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Kuh et al. (1991) suggested that institutions and their campus Greek-letter organizations need to examine discrepancies between institutional goals and fraternity and sorority practices to align them with college diversity initiatives and multiculturalism in their organizations.

Diversity in the Greek-letter organizations has been stressed for years. However, not much has been accomplished in ways of racial integration within predominantly White or Historically Black fraternities and sororities (Tucker, 1983). Tucker suggested

the lack of interaction between White and Black Greek organizations was a concern, given their separate governing systems and the tendency to segregate themselves from one another's activities. Following the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS line of thinking, Tucker stated that "separate but equal Greek systems are not equal" (p. 146).

Review of Research: Diversity within Social Fraternities

In reviewing the literature, the results of several research studies (Byer, 1998; Chang, 1996; Chang & DeAngelo, 2002; Tillar, 1974) were particularly germane to the proposed research in that the findings addressed various aspects of racial integration or diversity within social fraternities and campus life. The findings of the studies are reported in the following section.

Tillar's study (1974) was conducted among six select universities in the southeastern United States to determine the presence and extent of racial integration in social fraternities. The six universities used included North Carolina State University, the University of Tennessee, Duke University, the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, and the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Staff members at each school who worked with fraternities were interviewed and asked to recommend a few names of fraternity leaders who had participated in their fraternities for at least two years. This resulted in a total of 20 Black and non-Black students who were interviewed. Tillar conducted structured, personal interviews with students and staff, asking questions regarding (a) policies concerning integration; (b) evidence of policies being ignored; (c) the number of members of an opposite race who rushed, pledged, de-

pledged, or lived in the fraternity house; and (c) information on individuals who were initiated into membership. Other questions addressed the participation by members of different races in fraternity social life, recruitment and race relations (Tillar).

Findings from Tillar's study (1974) indicated that at universities not having Black fraternities the number of Black students in both White and Black fraternities ranged from one to five students. At universities that had Black fraternities, the range was from 19 to 26. The number of Black students rushing White fraternities ranged from 10 to 25 with five to six Black students accepting membership bids at two universities that had Black fraternities. No evidence was found of any non-Black student rushing a Black fraternity or attempting to join any Black social group on any of the six campuses. After Black chapters were formed at these college campuses there was no evidence of White fraternities attracting Black students to join. In fact, several Black students had de-pledged from their White fraternities for personal reasons (Tillar). Tillar concluded that Black students at predominantly White institutions had a tendency to join Black social organizations where they could interact with students of their own race and that White students participated in mainstream predominantly White social organizations.

Tillar's research (1974) was important to the development of this study because it provided a historical foundation for membership diversity in fraternities. Tillar's study addressed students' choice of involvement in campus life and activities, and it also examined the factors that determined their choices. Tillar's work supported the notion that the phenomenon of diverse membership in fraternities existed and was worthy of

further examination due to the increase of diversity in the student population on college campuses.

To further address diversity in fraternities, Chang (1996) examined the dynamics of racial identity and race relations within the undergraduate Greek system impacted by the emergence of multiracial and multicultural campuses. Greek organizations have been criticized for being racially intolerant, excluding potential members based on race or ethnicity (Maisel, 1990). Chang (1996) wanted to identify (a) the ways in which participation by White students in social fraternities and sororities were influenced by racial dynamics, (b) what conditions were students of color accepted by the dominant group into the organizations, and (c) what this occurrence implied about racial identity. Data were collected in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) database of college students. This database consisted of information from two surveys, the 1985 Student Information Form (SIF) and the 1989 Follow-up Survey (FUS) gathered from a sample of over 300,000 students from 364 four-year institutions located all over the United States. The research design utilized the Input-Environment Outcome (IEO) methodological framework for assessing student change (Astin, 1991).

Chang (1996) observed that race played a crucial role in Greek organizations and was a critical factor in determining participation. Greek organizations either add to the racial climate on campus by contributing to the current conditions or by standing up in support of intolerance. Chang, therefore, concluded that Greek organizations provide a context by which to investigate a number of social issues.

Another conclusion by Chang (1996) was that race can be transcended within and between racial groups. Racial differences can be transcended as evidenced by White students and students of color developing personal relationships as a result of formal peer groups such as fraternities and sororities. Also evident was the idea that interracial personal relationships were based on shared values and commitments. According to Chang, students of color who were members of Greek organizations had a distinctive social status and had a different outlook on racial identity than did other students of color. He found that racial identity for individuals of the same race was often contradictory and fluid (Chang).

Additionally, Chang (1996) found that the campus climate, along with a student's race, influenced participation in Greek life. Though racial barriers to gain membership and segregation were prohibited, White students were still found to be the dominant group in Greek organizations. He did conclude, however, that students of color were being granted membership into Greek organizations that had historically excluded them. Chang (1996) suggested the differences in participation by White students and students of color may be a result of self-selection, informal membership barriers or both.

Chang (1996) concluded his study by supporting Astin (1993), indicating that students were more likely to interact and form peer groups with other students they believe share common beliefs, values, goals, behaviors, ideology and political tendencies and attitudes. Therefore, students of color who joined White Greek organizations were likely to connect with White students and form peer groups leading to social acceptance into White Greek organizations. Students of color developed different strategies and

positions created by a variety of experiences and associations that allow them to maneuver through a racially stratified society in which their power is limited (Chang).

Byer's 1998 qualitative study focused on one Black male and three White males who were enrolled at a university in the southeast. These four participants were members of student government, a fraternity or both. Interviews were tape-recorded as the participants expressed their perceptions of the effects of their fraternity and student government participation on their college experiences. The interviews were transcribed, and the transcripts were qualitatively analyzed using Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method.

Byer (1998) concluded that the four participants perceived their fraternity and student government involvement as promoting their social and leadership skills. Participants had mixed perceptions of fraternity involvement, expressing that some aspects of their fraternity life encouraged social exclusion of diverse individuals, but other aspects of fraternity life encouraged acceptance of diverse individuals. When asked follow-up questions, participants stressed the importance of accepting and appreciating social interaction with individuals with diverse backgrounds (Byer).

To clarify the uncertainty of the fraternity members' perceptions of their fraternity encouraging social exclusion and acceptance of diverse individuals, additional interviews were conducted. It was concluded that if fraternity members appreciated individuals of diverse backgrounds and were open to social interaction with diverse individuals, the goals of the fraternity would be more likely to support the goals of the student body (Byers, 1998). All of the interviewees stated that the encouragement of social exclusion

was passed onto them through the social interaction that occurred within the fraternities. The participants believed that social interaction on campus with individuals of diverse backgrounds could be improved if fraternity members would interact with a wider range of students rather than their typical, common student groups.

To further examine diversity in fraternal organizations, it may be useful to understand the participation rates of White students in fraternities. In a study conducted by Chang and DeAngelo (2002), levels of undergraduate racial composition were examined to determine if different levels of racial composition affected White student participation in fraternities or sororities. Chang and DeAngelo used a national longitudinal sample utilizing 4,210 students who attended different institutions with a varied racial composition. For this study, the main source of data came from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) database that also included the 1994 Student Information Surveys (SIS) and the 1998 College Student Survey (CSS). Statistical analyses were performed including cross tabulations and Chi Square significance tests to examine relationships between independent variables. The central analysis entailed a number of stages of logistic regression analysis to determine how the campus percentage of White students affected participation in Greek organizations (Chang & DeAngelo).

It was concluded that that White students who attended predominantly White institutions were significantly more likely to become members of Greek organizations than their peers who attended more racially diverse campus environments (Chang & DeAngelo, 2002). The college campus with a more racially diverse student body was

determined to more directly affect the probability of students' socializing with someone from a different racial background and that students were more likely to raise their level of cultural awareness and racial understanding (Astin, 1993b). An increase in campus diversity challenges the norms and interests of both non-Greek and Greek students. The change in the make-up of the student body, along with the change in values and traditions of the institution, could have an effect on the student's decision to become involved in campus organizations and activities. As this shift continues, according to Chang and DeAngelo, it can be expected there will be a decline in White Greek membership at more racially diverse campuses.

Chang and DeAngelo (2002) concluded that variations in the racial composition of the undergraduate student body altered White students' rates of participation in Greek organizations. The racial composition of undergraduate students played a significant role in whether or not White students joined Greek organizations. White students enrolled at institutions with few minority students or little diversity in student population were more likely to join a Greek organization than were White students attending an institution with a more diverse student population. White students with small numbers of minority students on their campus were 72% more likely to join a Greek organization compared to White students at a campus that was more racially diverse (Chang & DeAngelo).

Chang and DeAngelo (2002) indicated that it was difficult to explain the factors causing differential rates of participation. They found, in their research, that on campuses with a more racially diverse student population, the gap between the values of the general student population and the values of the Greek system grew wider. In contrast, they

found that as the student body became more diverse, the views held by students broadened. As a result, a more diverse campus appeared to possess a different set of institutional norms and values, and White students might find membership in a Greek organization to be less attractive due to conflicting values between the institution and the student body (Chang & DeAngelo).

Chang and DeAngelo's (2002) work was relevant to the present study due to its focus on the participation rates of White Greek members and the factors that influence their patterns of membership. It was speculated that this information may have an effect on White Greek membership in Black Greek organizations. Examining participation rates of White students in Black Greek organizations, and how their participation affected the culture, values, and norms of their institutions and Greek organizations, may provide further insight into the phenomenon of White male membership in Black fraternities.

Summary

This chapter presented the historical development of Greek-letter organizations in the institutions of American higher education from the first historically White fraternity to the first historically Black fraternity. The journey from homogeneous to diversity is illustrated throughout the chapter's exploration of various studies conducted on aspects of fraternity membership, as well as the benefits and challenges faced by Greek-letter organizations. Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the methodology and research design used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify life experiences that influenced the decision of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity and to explore their experiences in these organizations. To gain understanding of this phenomenon, the concept of social identity theory and the role it might have played in influencing White males' decisions to become members of these organizations was examined. In this chapter, the research design, rationale, and research questions are presented, and the site description and participant selection process are described. Procedures used in data collection, including the development of the interview protocol, and data analysis are detailed.

Research Design and Rationale

Much of the research conducted on fraternities and sororities has been quantitative, relying solely on the use of questionnaires and surveys (Attinasi & Nora, 1992). Unlike quantitative research methods, qualitative methods permit researchers to explore important details as they conduct their research (Attinasi & Nora). Such details as point of view, perception, sensitivity and tone or pitch of voice are observed, evaluated and interpreted during qualitative research.

As a result, the research design for this study was exploratory and consisted of qualitative research methods designed to identify life experiences that influenced the

decision of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity at a number of institutions. The use of qualitative research methods permitted the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and meaning of the White male experience in a historically Black Greek-letter organization.

Qualitative research does not have a single set of methods, techniques or procedures that belong only to qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Researchers utilizing the qualitative method have used many approaches and methods including phenomenology, ethnography, observation, survey, and cultural studies to name a few. Qualitative researchers often (a) include various perspectives of participants within their different contexts (Agee, 2002), (b) search for greater understanding of a certain phenomenon from the vantage point of the participant, and (c) discover meaning and patterns or solutions and answers (Bloland, 1992).

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) identified qualitative research as research that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials. A direct source of data is the natural setting. In qualitative research, researchers become an integral part of the instrumentation process so as to be able to increase their understanding of the context in which the participants' experiences occurred (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Words and pictures are the primary method of data collection for qualitative research, and reporting detailed observations is the primary method of data analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Researchers utilizing qualitative research methods are interested in how and why events take place and usually do not formulate hypothesis beforehand and seek to test them (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Qualitative researchers

often (a) begin with a foreshadowed problem, (b) decide on a particular phenomenon they are interested in investigating, and (c) allow the hypothesis to emerge as the study develops (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Qualitative researchers are mainly concerned with the process and how the participants find meaning. Conclusions from studies are usually drawn continuously throughout the course of the qualitative research and reveal an individual's personal perspectives and experiences through in-depth investigation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Phenomenology Theory

In this study, the researcher investigated the phenomenon of White male membership in historically Black fraternities. Specifically, the life experiences that influenced the decision of White males to seek membership in a Black fraternity were explored. In order to gain an understanding of this phenomenon, a phenomenological study making use of an exploratory and naturalistic design was utilized.

Researchers using phenomenology are interested in how people experience their life, what makes up the world for them and the best way to understand them. The purpose of phenomenological research is to describe the life experience of a person or people and to document this experience as the lived experience of the person described (Spiegelberg, 1984). Phenomenology is one of the five different human science research approaches that use qualitative methods. The other four are: ethnography, grounded theory, hermeneutics, and heuristic research (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological researchers seek to have the participant return to their experience to obtain

comprehensive descriptions that allow for reflective analysis to be conducted. Phenomenology studies focus on the wholeness of an experience and not just certain objects or parts (Spiegelberg, 1984), and they search for the essence and meaning of an experience rather than explanations and measurements (Moustakas). Moustakas (1994) stated that the aim of a phenomenological study is to determine what the participant's experience means.

Epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis are important principles of phenomenological research. Epoche refers to the need for researchers to avoid thinking they know in advance the experience of participants. The process of describing what researchers see externally and internally and the relationship of these between phenomenon and participant is called phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). The third principle is imaginative variation which refers to the range of perspectives and frames of reference allowing the researcher to develop structural themes leading to the final stage of synthesis or meaning (Moustakas4).

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What life experiences influenced the decision to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity?
2. What were the pre-membership expected benefits from joining a historically Black fraternity?

3. What prototype behaviors were identified to make individuals feel part of the in-group?
4. What depersonalization behaviors took place once membership was achieved?

Site Description

Because participants were located throughout the United States, the study was conducted using Skype, a web-based video chat software. The use of Skype was chosen due to the multiple locations the researcher would have to travel to conduct the interviews that are an integral part of this face-to-face research. Cater (2011) found the use of Skype to be a cost effective way to conduct interviews with interviewees spanning many locations and an easy technological tool allowing the researcher to accommodate for many different schedules. The participants and the researcher were free to choose locations at their homes or schools that guaranteed optimal internet connections and that afforded them the ability to speak openly and confidentially with no or very few interruptions. In a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Winzenburg (2011) wrote: "It's easier to have a conversation when you can see how people are responding to your remarks. And even when things go wrong technologically, it's revealing to see how both parties handle the problem" (p. 1). Video chat allowed interviewer and interviewee to see one another while speaking, giving them the opportunity to build a better rapport and enabled the researcher to take notes on non-verbal observations. Consideration for using Skype as an acceptable medium to conduct interviews was validated through a conversation with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the researcher's institution.

Participant Selection

Participants in this study were chosen from a number of institutions and communities nationwide. The institutions from which participants were selected were required to have a currently active chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, a historically Black fraternity, and an active alumni chapter in their communities. This was important because members are able to join the fraternity as undergraduate students or as alumni of any college or university.

The participants consisted of White male undergraduates and graduates who were members of Alpha Phi Alpha. All participants accepted for interviews needed to meet the following criteria: (a) must have been 18 years or older, (b) must have been a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. during their undergraduate studies at a nationally recognized chapter of the fraternity or must have been initiated as a member in a nationally recognized alumni chapter of the fraternity, (c) must not have relinquished their membership in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., (d) must have self-identified as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., (e) must have self-identified as White.

White members who self-identified as "White" or "Caucasian" on their Alpha Phi Alpha national application for membership, as verified by the fraternity's national Office of Member Intake, were eligible to participate in the study. No fraternity members self-identifying as "other" on their Alpha Phi Alpha national application for membership were eligible to be interviewed. No fraternity member of mixed races or of any race other than White was interviewed. Black members of the organization were excluded from the study. Alpha Phi Alpha's national Office of Member Intake was contacted by the

researcher to obtain a list of fraternity members who self-identified and were officially documented as White on their national applications for membership.

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants for this study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), purposive sampling allows researchers to use their judgment and select samples that will provide them with the most relevant data. Purposive sampling in this study permitted the researcher to identify participants who had the necessary and appropriate information and had been identified as representatives fitting the study's framework.

Establishing Rapport

Developing trust and rapport, along with mutual understanding, are important aspects of the researcher/participant dynamic. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) found rapport and trust to be associated with one another. Rapport, in their view, can be established by sharing common interests, by verbal and nonverbal cues, and by behavior showing appreciation for what the participant is sharing. Establishing rapport is essential in gaining trust, and trust was found by Bogdan and Biklen to be critical in facilitating detailed answers to interview questions.

Because the researcher is a White male member of Alpha Phi Alpha, it was relatively easy to facilitate fraternal rapport with the participants. In addition, because the research was conducted over a period of time, participants had sufficient time to get

to know the researcher in the process of arranging and finalizing times for interviews. The researcher maintained contact with participants and kept them updated, e.g., email conversations and phone calls, and was responsive to questions about his career and experience over the course of the study.

Instrumentation

The Interview Protocol

An interview protocol was used as the major form of instrumentation during the individual interviews of White male participants who were members of a historically Black fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha. The interview protocol utilized for this study consisted of open-ended questions, allowing the participants to respond and communicate their thoughts and experiences based on the questions asked of them.

The interview protocol (Appendix B) was established based on the researcher's personal experiences and knowledge of the phenomenon, current literature, the research questions, and input from the dissertation chairperson. After the initial formulation of the interview questions, a discussion with the dissertation chair led to further refinement of the questions to ensure that they addressed the theoretical framework selected. In order to receive the most useful information, a two part questionnaire was developed for use in the interviews that will be conducted with participants. Part I gathered demographic information including age, race, chapter and date of participants' initiation and was used to describe the population. Part II consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions in

13 areas designed to elicit information related to the research questions. The relationship between the research questions and the interview protocol areas is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Relationship of Research Questions to Interview Protocol Areas

	Research Questions	Interview Protocol Areas
1.	What life experiences influenced the decision to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity?	Areas 1-3
2.	What were the pre-membership expected benefits from joining a historically Black fraternity?	Areas 4, 5
3.	What prototype behaviors were identified to make individuals feel part of the in-group?	Areas 6-10
4.	What depersonalization behaviors took place once membership was achieved?	Areas 11-13

With regard to Research Question 1 as to the life experiences of participants that influenced their decisions to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity, three interview protocol areas were used to gather information. This information permitted the examination of socio-economic status, family diversity, environmental surroundings (area 1), high school extra-curricular involvement (area 2), and any pre-collegiate in-groups of White males seeking membership in a historically Black fraternity (area 3).

Research Question 2 was concerned with participants' pre-membership expectations prior to becoming a member of a historically Black fraternity. Two

interview protocol areas were used to gather information to examine expectations (area 4) and the level to which these expectations were met once membership was achieved (area 5).

Interview protocol areas 6-10 were used to gather data to answer Research Question 3 as to the prototype behaviors that participants identified in members of a historically Black fraternity that made the participants feel part of this in-group and how the participants own behaviors may have changed to fit that of the group once membership was achieved. Participants were queried as to their interest in historically White fraternities (area 6), their perceptions about Alpha Phi Alpha prior to becoming a member (area 7), their experience during recruitment into the fraternity (area 8), their perceptions of their fraternity overall after becoming a member (area 9), and their overall fraternity experience (area 10).

Lastly, Research Question 4 was concerned with the depersonalization behaviors that took place once membership was achieved. The researcher explored changes that may have occurred in participants' behaviors, expectations and outlook (area 11); the reactions of family and friends to their new membership status (area 12); and challenges they faced or continue to face as a fraternity member (area 13). Because the interview format was one of open-ended question design, any of the interview protocol questions could lead to information gathering for any of the four research questions.

Interviews

Interviews are conducted as a form of data collection where individuals or groups are orally questioned (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Interviews are purposefully driven conversations between two or more people that are directed by one person in order to get information from the other person (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In the research process, interviewers are instruments and are encouraged to build rapport and trust with the interview participants by being good listeners and by being sympathetic and understanding of the participants' opinions, thoughts and perspectives (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2002). Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) stated the purpose of an interview is to find out what the interviewees feel or think about something. Reysoo and Heldens (2007) described the interview cycle which is displayed in Figure 1. Resoo and Heldens explained the interview cycle as consisting of four phases: (a) the planning phase in which the interviewer formulates questions, designs motivating questions, and determines how a communicative atmosphere can be established; (b) the doing phase in which questions are delivered and the interviewer is involved in listening, observing, evaluating, probing, and recording; (c) the analysis phase in which interviews are transcribed, interview records are established, and the interviewer's own behavior is analyzed; and (d) the reflecting phase where information gaps are identified and preparation for any subsequent or follow-up interview is made.

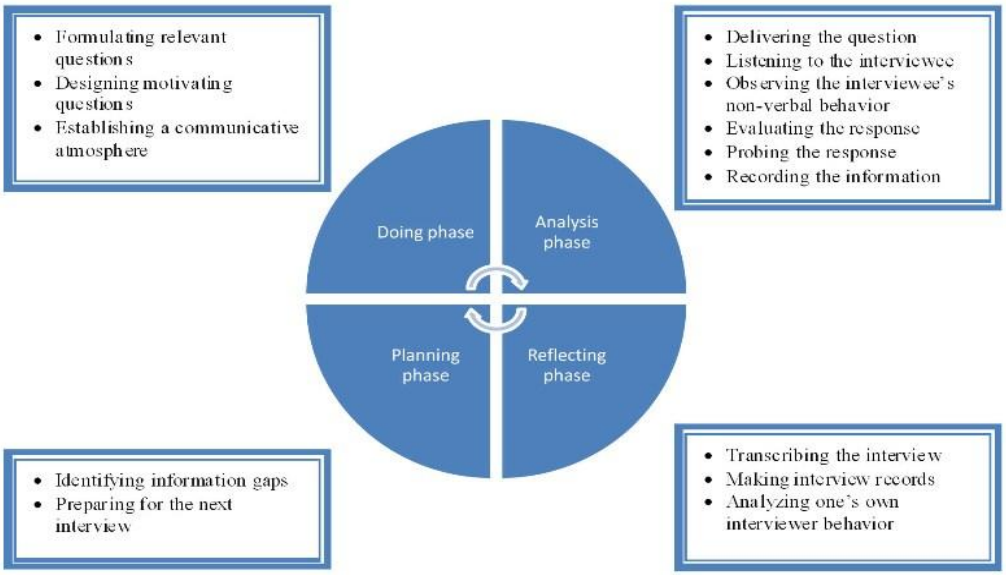

Figure 1. Interview Cycle

Note. Figure is adapted with permission from *Qualitative Interview* by F. Reysoo and J. Heldens, 2007.

There are many different types of interview questions that can be utilized including opinion/value questions, experience/behavior questions, knowledge questions, feeling questions, sensory questions and background question (Patton, 1990). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggested that interviews should usually begin with conversation that establishes a common ground with the participant in an effort to develop a relationship and to relax the subject.

In conducting the interviews for this research, the purpose of the interview was appropriately communicated to each participant, and all participants were treated with respect. Participants were assured of confidentiality and given support throughout the process.

Field Notes

Field notes consist of documents, interview transcripts, pictures, statistics and other material that become important enhancement tools to other methods of collecting data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Accurate and detailed field notes determine the success of the researcher's observations of the participant.

Field notes consist of two separate types, descriptive and reflective (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Descriptive field notes are objective observations by the researcher of what has taken place in the field. These types of notes contain the observer's behavior, description of the physical settings, portrayal of the interviewee, description of activities, accounts of certain events and a reconstruction of dialogue. Reflective field notes are subjective accounts of the interview experience that include reflections on ethical dilemmas and conflict, method, analysis, and the observer's frame of mind and behavior (Bodgan & Biklen, 2003).

During this study, both types of field notes were taken. In order to maintain integrity and detail, the researcher wrote his descriptive field notes immediately following each of the interviews. Field notes in this study incorporated what the researcher saw, heard, thought, and experienced in the course of the interviews. As a part of the field notes the researcher recorded feelings, reflections, hunches, and patterns that surfaced.

Reflective field notes were written 24 hours after completion of each interview. This allowed for time to reflect on the interview and read over the initial observations.

Data Collection Procedures

Selected participants were contacted with an introductory e-mail (Appendix C) explaining the study and requesting their participation. Follow-up phone calls and e-mails were made to gauge the interest in participation and the availability of each of the participants and to schedule the interviews. The participants in this study chose the time and date of their interviews based on their and the researcher's schedule of availability.

Participants were e-mailed a letter of confirmation (Appendix D) with the date and time of the previously arranged interview. This confirmation email contained (a) Part I of the interview protocol, the participant demographic questionnaire to be completed and returned to the researcher prior to the interview and (b) Part II of the interview protocol so that participants could review the areas to be investigated in advance of the scheduled interview (Appendix B).

Before each interview began, the purpose of the study and the steps which would be taken to ensure confidentiality were explained. The procedures used in data collection and analysis were also be discussed. Interview participants had the opportunity to ask questions as well.

All interviews were conducted using internet video-chat software "Skype" allowing the interviewer and the participant to see and hear one another while in completely different physical locations. The researcher audio taped all interviews and transcribed them following the interviews.

Data Analysis

According to Lincoln & Guba (1995), the process of data analysis begins with the first collection of data. In this research, data were produced from a human instrument, the participant interview. Relying on Bogdan and Biklen's (2003) process of data analysis, the researcher systematically searched and arranged interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials for use in determining findings and relating them to the literature and to broader themes.

Analyzing the data to move from an explanation of the situation to shedding light on the reasons why something exists involves reviewing and synthesizing collected information into a clear description (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Analysis of the interview results needs to be systematic and verifiable. Instead of relying on a feeling or guessing, analysis of the data needs to be a careful and deliberate method of examining, categorizing, and tabulating the evidence (Krueger, 1988).

Coding is an essential step in the data analysis process. Auerback and Silverstein (2003) noted the "central idea of coding is to move from raw text in small steps, each building on the previous one" (p. 35). The first task associated with coding includes sorting the data into manageable units. A fundamental task associated with coding includes identifying themes and constructing models that identify relationships among codes and testing those models against empirical data (Auerback & Silverstein). Auerback and Silverstein's three criteria for coding transcripts are related to deciding: (a) whether the item relates to the research concern; (b) whether the item helps understand the participants better and clarifies their thinking; and (c) whether, even though there is

no particular reason, the data seem important. The processes put forth by Auerback and Silverstein was applied in coding and analyzing the data in this study.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research must obtain trustworthiness to be observed as "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). The four areas of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discussed credibility as the researcher's ability to make their interpretations credible to the respondents. In order to achieve credibility, the researcher incorporated peer debriefing, member checking, and data triangulation strategies. A peer debriefer was utilized to identify any bias or misinterpretations. The researcher also sought advice from, debriefed, and counseled with his dissertation chair on any aspects of interpretation that was thought to contain bias or need further explanation. Member checking is the process where the researcher allows the participants to review the results of the inquiry for accuracy (Creswell, 2002). Member checking was completed by sending the participants their interview transcripts via so that they could be reviewed for accuracy. The participants were given two weeks to clarify or respond regarding their interview transcripts. They could also make an appointment to speak with the researcher regarding the transcripts if necessary. Data triangulation, according to Lincoln & Guba (1985), increases the probability of the findings being credible. The number of research sources, document reviews, objective and reflective

observations, combined with the semi-structured interviews ensured that data were triangulated.

Transferability is the extent to which the research is useful in another context. To achieve transferability, the researcher reviewed literature to further explore each participant interview allowing him to produce answers to the research questions. Also, rich, thick descriptions of the procedures for the study were provided to ensure transferability.

The likeliness the results would be the same if the study were conducted or repeated by someone else is referred to as dependability. This was achieved by providing clear and detailed procedures used in the selection of participants, development of the interview protocol, and the procedures used in data collection and analysis.

Confirmability is the process of utilizing a peer to audit the research to confirm the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1989). An auditor examined the data gathered for this study including transcripts, field notes, dissertation data, and comments from the member checks.

Originality Score

The University of Central Florida requires its students to present their dissertations to the website Turnitin.com upon completion of the document. Turnitin is a web-based program matching the document to other previously submitted documents and web sources to review work for originality. The maximum originality score allowed as indicated by the graduate advisor has been defined as a score not to exceed that of 10%.

The initial submission of this work yielded a score of 55%. Upon review of the turnitin.com report, 43% was attributed to previously submitted work by this researcher reducing the score to 12%. Once bibliographical material and quotes already cited were excluded, the score was further reduced. This left the final score of originality at 2%.

Summary

The research method and design, along with the research questions used to guide this study, have been presented in this chapter. The site description, selection of participants, sampling method, and establishment of rapport was also discussed. The interview protocol was described in relation to each of the research questions, and the procedures of the study including data analysis were explained. Due to the qualitative design of this study, trustworthiness was also discussed. Finally, the confirmation of the originality score was provided. Chapter 4 contains the material overview on the data sourcing, data analysis and participant biographies.

CHAPTER 4
METHOD TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The following chapter is comprised of information on White male membership in a Black fraternity and the life experiences that influence their decisions to seek membership in this organization. In order to gain an understanding of this phenomenon and the diverse experiences of White males in Black fraternities, a phenomenological study using an exploratory design was utilized. This approach facilitated describing the meaning of the White male experience in a historically Black fraternity and the life experiences that influenced White males to join.

In this chapter, after restating the research questions, is a description of the process of collecting data through participant interviews identifying life experiences that influenced the decision of White males to seek membership in historically Black fraternities. The population and sample are described, and the recruitment and selection of participants is detailed. The process that was used in conducting interviews is explained. Also discussed are confidentiality, sorting, and coding procedures that were important in the research as well as a reflection on the theoretical framework used in the research. The chapter concludes with brief biographical information for each of the seven participants which includes family and school demographic data. Readers are also introduced to each of the participants as they appeared via SKYPE at the time of the interviews.

Research Questions

1. What life experiences influenced the decision to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity?
2. What were the pre-membership expected benefits from joining a historically Black fraternity?
3. What prototype behaviors were identified to make individuals feel part of the in-group?
4. What depersonalization behaviors took place once membership was achieved?

Population and Sample

The target population for this study included undergraduate and graduate White nationwide members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., a historically Black fraternity. The seven participants were selected from Alpha Phi Alpha due to the researcher's affiliation of membership with the organization, its history of anti-segregation, and its large number of members. The participants were identified using a purposive sampling procedure. Identified subjects were representative of the necessary population and had essential information for the study. The fraternity national headquarters served as the source of official documentation about membership and race of fraternity brothers identified as White male members of Alpha Phi Alpha.

Recruitment and Selection of Participants

I made a phone call to the Alpha Phi Alpha National Headquarters located in Baltimore, Maryland to acquire a list of the White members on file in the headquarters office. Initial contact was made via a telephone call to a female assistant who directed my call to the Director of Membership Services, Mr. Cory J. Anderson. Though this attempt yielded no direct contact with Mr. Anderson, I was able to leave a message informing him that I was a fraternity brother looking for a list of current White members of the fraternity. Within days Mr. Anderson returned my phone call, leaving a voice mail message. My return call the very next day was successful, and Mr. Anderson and I were able to establish in-person telephone contact. I introduced myself as a brother of Alpha Phi Alpha, explained my educational background, and provided information about my proposed research. Mr. Anderson was very helpful and sounded genuinely interested in my topic and in providing whatever information he could to assist me.

My initial intention in interviewing had been to interview White members in the state of Florida so I could interview them face-to-face. I asked Mr. Anderson for a current list of White members, both alumni and undergraduate, in the state of Florida. He found, in reviewing his membership list, that I was the only White member in the state of Florida. When I mentioned expanding my potential pool of participants to White members in the southern region, he indicated that number would also be very low. I informed Mr. Anderson of my need to have between 5 and 20 possible participants to interview and also inquired as to the number of White members nationwide. When he informed me that his listing revealed 17, I was in disbelief because I know I have run into

a number of White Alphas over the years, and this number seemed to be very small. When I inquired about the small number, he indicated that (a) members have to self-identify on the application and (b) some information was lost when the national office updated their database in 2005. Knowing that I had no alternative to the database, I requested that Mr. Anderson email the list of White members along with their contact information. He emailed a file containing the White members' names, alumni or undergraduate status, email address, and year and state where initiated to me. I confirmed receipt and thanked Mr. Anderson. I must admit I was surprised by how easy it was to obtain the participant information I needed, but I was also surprised at how few members the national office had identified as White members in their database.

The initial correspondence was completed through an introductory email to the 17 possible participants in which I introduced myself and the study and inquired as to possible interest in participation in the study. All email correspondence contained my phone number for prospective participants to call with any questions or concerns. I was overwhelmed with the positive responses of individuals who indicated interest in participation and the quick response time. All seven of the eventual participants responded positively within three days of my initial email and asked me to email them the necessary information to participate.

Pre-meeting correspondence took the form (telephone or email) requested by participants as being most convenient for them. A thank-you email with the necessary attached IRB letter of participation was sent to the four participants who had immediately

agreed to participate along with a request that they identify a day and time for an interview.

Three of the seven individuals originally contacted had specific questions about the study, inquiring about (a) confidentiality of the study; (b) number of participants in the study; and (c) assurance that their comments would not be taken out of context. Though they afforded me the option of email or telephone response, I called each of them. I assured them of the confidentiality of their interviews, informed them of the 17-person population from which they had been recruited, and re-stated the procedures that would be employed beginning with the interview through their review of the final transcript, all of which would occur before I would identify themes or findings. The three participants were friendly and seemed to be pleased with our conversation and the procedures that would be followed in conducting the research.

I corresponded with each participant a number of times through email or phone conversations and met with each once in the interview setting. The correspondence before meeting each participant was related to introductions, an overview of the study, and participant questions being answered.

Interviews were conducted on the schedules established with each of the seven individuals. Each interview was audio recorded and lasted approximately one hour. The participants seemed to expect me to be a White member of the fraternity and did not appear to be surprised when we saw each other (using SKYPE) for the first time. I believe that my being a White member of the fraternity allowed participants to be

comfortable and speak openly, knowing we shared a common story that had not been told.

Interviews

Open-ended, semi-structured, individual interviews were conducted with White male members of a historically Black fraternity using an interview protocol (Appendix B). Data collection during interviews provided an in-depth understanding of life experiences that influenced these White males to join a Black fraternity. Participants in this study spoke to experiences that influenced their decisions to join a Black fraternity, the perceived challenges and benefits they experienced prior to joining and during membership, and the ways in which their fraternity experience adjusted their behaviors.

The Use of Skype to Capture Narratives

Each interview occurred over Skype video chat software with participants and the interviewer located at their individual homes. The location for individual interviews was determined by each participant and identified as a location that ensured confidentiality. The interviews were conducted at a time selected by the participant. The major reason for using Skype video chat software as a method to complete the interviews was to relieve the researcher of the financial burden of traveling to seven different cities across the United States.

The video chat was not without problems in three or four of the interviews. The connection to the Internet allowing the software to work, and letting the participant and I

see and hear one another, disconnected numerous times. This made it necessary for us to reconnect and resume our interrupted conversation. This was troublesome because it interrupted the flow of conversation. When I had to repeat a question or the participant had to repeat a response, the response did not seem as detailed as the initial response prior to the interruption.

Field Notes Usage

Field notes were taken during each of the interviews. A sample of the field notes taken is included in Appendix E. I did not use a structured format in recording field notes, because I wanted the flexibility of being able to record words and phrases that were independently prominent during each interview. My field notes captured the physical features of participants, descriptions of the rooms in which they were sitting, any items in the background that seemed important and any distractions that occurred during the interview. Two participants had such distractions. One individual was cooking using a pressure cooker and had to periodically tend to the pressure cooker. Another individual could hear his newborn baby crying in another room. These distractions could have definitely led to participants' having their thoughts interrupted and to their providing hasty responses so as to permit them to conclude the interviews and deal with the distractions.

Confidentiality, Sorting, and Coding

To protect the confidentiality and identity of the subjects, each participant's interview and transcript was modified after analyzing the verbatim conversation. During the analysis, core themes and patterns emerged that related to the research questions. The themes and patterns supplied further insight on life experiences that influenced White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity.

Sorting and coding of data were guided by research questions, and field notes were incorporated into the data analysis used to describe participants' reflections, conversations, and patterns that emerged (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). When sorting and coding, I chose to read through each of the interview transcripts and to identify major categories such as: personal factors, attitudinal factors, environmental factors, fraternity experience, consequences and other-related factors. Within each of these categories I identified common themes among the seven participants. Once the themes began to take shape, I identified major themes as those common to four or more of the participants and minor themes as those common to two or three participants. The subjective experiences of each participant were incorporated into a narrative using his own language, which enabled his story to be communicated in a descriptive and authentic manner (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003). Each man's story was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to capture the authenticity of his words. Each of the participants received an electronic copy of his interview transcript for authentication of his actual words and to make any necessary changes. Participants' precise words have been retained in the narrative examples to provide their perspectives and rich description.

Reflection on Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of social identity theory was selected as appropriate for this study. As I reflect, I believe it was the best choice. When conducting the interviews, I was expecting certain similarities between the participants' stories and my own. Suspending judgment, I was forced to accept that I did not know the participants' stories and needed to pay attention to their experiences. Prior to the interviews, I was concerned with the guidance afforded by social identify theory. Once I began the interviews, I found myself listening for the voices of those being interviewed rather than focusing on theory.

Participant Biographical Data

The participants were asked to complete a demographic information form (Appendix B) which asked for participant name, race, age, year in school and included the following questions pertaining to fraternity and family membership.

1. What undergraduate school are you attending or did you attend? If currently attending undergraduate school, what year are you in school (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior)?
2. What year and semester (Fall, Spring, Summer) did you join?
3. Do you have any family members older than you who joined an NPHC organization? If so, please indicate the name of the fraternity or sorority.

Following are brief overviews of each participant's background and some overall impressions of the researcher in regard to the interview experience. This information

proved useful in the examination of life experiences that influenced participants to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity.

Participant 1 (DB)

DB is a 28-year-old White male who attended a private university in the south and joined Alpha Phi Alpha during his junior year. DB moved around a lot as child due to his family's military involvement but eventually settled into a major metropolitan city where he attended middle and high school. DB had a very meek experience when settling in this metropolitan area as he lived on food stamps and out of a hotel. Eventually life turned around for him and his family, and they moved to an upper-middle class part of town. DB did not have many friends until he went to high school, but he always found it easy to quickly make friends. He noted,

> Like I learned how to make friends real fast and then I didn't really hold onto them too much because I moved around so much as a kid, I kind of was, I kind of was somewhat of a man without a country if you will, um and it wasn't until I hit high school that I, I made those, life-long friends so luckily I am still friends with some people I was friends with in high school. (DB file, page 2, lines 2-6)

Due to his humble upbringing, DB formed a nonprofit organization as a youth to give back to the community during Christmas. He spoke very proudly about this accomplishment:

> I had already formed a nonprofit whenever I was younger to kind of help, try to create some Christmas for some homeless shelter kids here in the area so uh so you know it was real important to me to, to serve the community cause. I, I know from those moments when we were lowest that it is very important to help those people (DB file, page 3, lines 18-23).

DB excelled in sports during his high school years and received an offer to attend a private school to play sports. While at this school, he noted the higher expectations in academics and community service.

DB and I scheduled our meeting a few times, after he needed to reschedule our original meeting due to complications with work. DB was still very busy when we met for our interview and had to stay late at his work office that evening to have our meeting. DB arrived 30 minutes late for our meeting and had complications with his video feed. Unfortunately, the video only worked for a few minutes when we started our interview, not allowing me time for visual notation. He was very apologetic about having to reschedule and felt very bad for being late for our appointment. He seemed genuine in his apology and made time for this interview even though he indicated having plenty of work to continue with for the evening. The interview continued, though a bit rushed, so that we could conform to the original agreed-upon time span. The interview continued, though I was frustrated and a bit disappointed with the rescheduling and tardiness of DB. If there had been more available participants for this study, I would have replaced DB in the study.

Participant 2 (DT)

DT is a 30-year-old White male who attended two public universities in the east and joined his fraternity in his senior year after having some complications with intake at one institution. He grew up in the south with a preacher for a father and a nurse for a mother. His was a larger family as his father was previously married and had three

children with his first wife, giving DT three half-siblings and later two more with DT's mother. DT grew up in a wealthier part of town, though it was surrounded by what was considered the "Black" part of town. It had its roots in segregation with a number of the of the black families still being some kind of servants to many of the more affluent people in the community. With his surroundings growing up, DT had a number of friends that were Black as he explained:

> So, most of my friends in the area who were my age actually in that neighborhood, most were my age and most of my friends growing up tend to be black going to school. Now, because of where we were zoned for elementary school, it was still, my friends were like the only, like 1% black people in the whole school, so it was still mostly a white school. (DT file, page 5, lines 21-24)

DT was at his apartment at his desk with a bookshelf that housed some Alpha Phi Alpha paraphernalia and his fraternity history book visible in the background as we began our interview. DT was tall and slender with a really short, almost buzz, hair cut with a little bit of facial hair. He was wearing a pair of shorts and a large black t-shirt with no identifiable logos. During our interview, DT was using his pressure cooker to make dinner and had to get up a few times during our discussion to attend to it. We had some initial connection problems during our interview, but DT was able to connect his computer using a hard line connection to his network and remedied the problem.

Participant 3 (RH)

RH is a 28-year-old White male who started college at the age of 16 by attending a public university located on the east coast and joined Alpha Phi Alpha during his junior year. RH had moved around quite a bit as a child, attending 13 different schools in three

southern states before finding some stability in one location at age 11. He described his upbringing as "normal," saying: "Uh raised in a Christian house so we had some uh religious impact but not much but um just some so. . . kind of consider myself as average across the board so as far as upbringing so" (RH file, page 1, lines 6-8).

RH described most of the schools he attended as being diverse in student body and indicated that his middle and high schools were predominantly African-American. He participated in his high school's ROTC program and finished high school at the age of 16 by taking one more English course during his junior year and started college the following fall.

RH and I met on a Tuesday evening. Though his network connection was good, the quality of his camera made it a bit difficult to pick up many details. In this interview, RH was pleasantly mannered, had a short haircut almost like a buzz cut, and was slightly on the heavier side in terms of weight.

Participant 4 (BB)

BB is a 30-year-old white Male who attended a public university in the south and joined his fraternity through an alumni chapter shortly after graduating from college. BB's parents were 18 when they married. Having BB at a young age complicated their family structure. BB described his relationship with his parents as giving him a different perspective, "And a lot of times I felt like I had roommates instead of parents" (BB file, page 3, lines 15-16). Two years after BB was born his parents had his sister and over the next five to six years of BB's life they divorced and remarried a number of times,

eventually deciding to stay divorced. BB also had to deal with the uncertainties that come with a father who was a recovering drug addict. He traveled back and forth, living with both parents and grandparents but never staying with one parent/grandparent for an extended number of years. This meant several changes of schools. He was fortunate to attend one high school all four years. BB describes part of his upbringing as such:

> Uh, I mean you know, I'm beginning to sound like I had the worst, worst childhood ever but you know, all in all I think we um, uh, I mean, I turned out kind of normal. I hope. I have a lot of different influences on me besides those two. I mean, my grandparents were a big influence on me. They helped raise me (BB file, page 4, lines 17-20).

BB met with me at his home one evening and was seated at a computer desk that appeared to be located in a bedroom. BB is married with a newborn baby who could be heard crying in the background throughout the interview. Though his wife was at home and the door had been shut for privacy, the baby could still be heard. BB was a slender White male in appearing to be in his late 20s with a short hair style (about two inches long on the top). He wore a University of Florida t-shirt, and his room had a number of bookshelves filled with books (indistinguishable) and athletic trophies..

Participant 5 (MS)

MS is a 30-year-old White male born in the Midwest who attended college on the east coast and joined Alpha Phi Alpha during his senior year. MS is married to an African-American woman who was born and raised in the same city where MS attended college. MS has an older brother and a younger sister, and his parents remain an intact family. Growing up in the Midwest, MS never really encountered any life experiences

dealing with race or witnessed any forms of racism. However, when he and his family moved to a small town on the east coast, MS noticed some racial anxiety in his town and in playing high school basketball. He noted: "I didn't really care on the basketball court if you were, you know, black, white, yellow, purple, male or female. If you stepped on the court, then it was time to play ball and I didn't really care about, you know, what you looked like" (MS file, page 2, lines 5-7).

MS was a first generation college student when he decided to attend college in the same east coast state where he had attended high school. While playing on the high school basketball team, MS made a close friend who was from a poor neighborhood. MS and his friend worked together at a restaurant as part of the kitchen staff, and they became very close friends, doing almost everything together outside of work.

MS is bald with no facial hair and moved around a lot during out interview. He appeared to be swaying and very jittery throughout our conversation. There wasn't any particular time that he was moving around more than any other, but he definitely seemed very passionate about our conversation topic.

Participant 6 (KR)

KR is a 42-year-old White male from the west coast who joined Alpha Phi Alpha during his junior year at a university located in the south. KR and his older sister were born into a military family. His father was a marine. Born on a military base on the east coast, KR was very knowledgeable about his parent's lives before he was born and spoke highly of them as follows:

> My parents being a little older, 39 and 40 I think, by the time I was born, they met in Somalia while my mother worked for the State Department as a cryptographer and my father was a missile officer but he was a warrant officer by the time he retired. There's a lot of stuff that I'm not sure exactly what he did, because he is not at liberty to say (KR file, page 5, lines 11-14).

He continued to speak about his parent's upbringing having a sizable impact on him as they were raised during the depression. KR's father was raised on a farm and lived in a chicken shed for some time. His mother moved around quite a bit, having attended seven different schools during her fourth grade year alone. Unlike his parents, KR had a stable home his entire life as his parents made it a point to provide. KR says:

> We moved up to the west coast when I was about a year old and stayed in that house for 17 years. So that was all I really knew which was a good stability for me, unlike what my mother had moving around. (KR file, page 6, lines 11-14)

KR participated in sports as a child and through junior high. He did not excel in any, but continued to run track in high school. Growing up in what KR described as a White, blue-collar neighborhood, he became close friends with a Black student named Cole. This friend would later introduce KR to all types of social norms on the "Black" side of town. It was Cole who gave KR his first taste of acceptance in a Black culture.

KR arrived at our SKYPE interview wearing a dark colored shirt, a black Kangol hat worn backward, and a gold necklace with a fraternity charm. He seemed to be excited about the interview. He had draped a sheet over some shelves in the background and made sure that he had extra lighting so that his video image would be clear. Picture and sound were good. The only slight distraction was periodic noise from a fan somewhere in the background.

Participant 7 (JP)

JP is a 24-year-old White male born in the south who joined his fraternity through a chapter at a university located in the south during his sophomore year in college. JP has four half-sisters and one half-brother that he considers to be no different from biological sisters and brother. He referred to his upbringing as normal, saying:

> I guess you could just describe it as just any normal, ordinary, middle class upbringing. Blue-collar parents. Both of them worked in restaurants. You know lived in a nice little neighborhood. You know played sports with the neighbors, football, basketball, and baseball. You know got in a little bit of trouble in school but you know most kids do (JP file, page 3, lines 1-4).

JP spoke of the importance of his relationships with both his stepfather and his biological father. JP's stepfather is the man he considers to be his father because his biological father wasn't around to help raise him. His biological father's role in his life increased as he began to play sports as a youth. He speaks about the father figures in his life by saying:

> We had a relationship but it wasn't nothing you know, not like a regular…like a father/son relationship should be I should say. Now I mean we still have a relationship now. I mean I talk to him maybe once or twice a month but um like I said, my mom and the man I consider my dad they're divorced now but um like I say…he'll always be the man I consider my dad. (JP file, page 3, lines 17-21)

JP was active in sports throughout high school. Basketball was his sport of choice and one he spent a lot of time practicing and playing during his high school years. He has had the same best friend since fourth grade.

JP presented himself for our interview wearing a white dress shirt and a tie, had a short hair-cut and sported a fully grown goatee. Dim lighting and poor picture quality

made it very difficult to pick up any details during the interview. JM seemed very sincere during our discussion and appeared to put a lot of thought into each answer.

Table 3 contains a summary of basic demographic information for each of the seven participants. Participants' ages ranged from 24 to 42, and they had joined Alpha Phi Alpha between 1990 and 2006. Only one of the participants was initiated into an alumni chapter. The remaining six were initiated as undergraduates. None of the participants had family members who had been affiliated with any National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) organization.

Table 3

Participants' Demographic Information

Participants	Current Age	Semester & Year Joined	Initiated	Family Members in NPHC Organizations
DB	28	Fall, 2004	Undergraduate	No
DT	30	Spring, 2006	Undergraduate	No
RH	28	Spring, 2002	Undergraduate	No
BB	30	Spring, 2004	Alumni	No
MS	30	Spring, 2003	Undergraduate	No
KR	42	Spring, 1990	Undergraduate	No
JP	24	Fall, 2005	Undergraduate	No

CHAPTER 5
WHITE VOICES IN A BLACK FRATERNITY: LOVE FOR ALL MANKIND

Introduction

Contained in this chapter are answers to the four research questions which guided the study. The narratives of seven White male study participants obtained in interviews provide a view of the life experiences that may have influenced their decisions to seek membership in a Black fraternity.

The first section provides a review of the research design. Subsequent sections have been organized to address the four research questions concerning (a) pre-membership background, (b) pre-membership expectations, (c) prototype behavioral expectations, (d) and the depersonalization of the fraternity experience. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of themes: major, minor, and other themes which have emerged from participants' experiences as they relate to social identity theory.

Summary of Research Design

This phenomenological study used an exploratory design in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of White male membership in a historically Black fraternity. The design of this study assisted in exploring the meaning of the White male experience in a historically Black fraternity and life experiences that influenced the decisions of White males to join these organizations.

Participants in this study were identified using purposive sampling methods. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) wrote that in order to allow the researcher to identify

subjects who are representative of the necessary population and who have the necessary information for the study, purposive sampling was appropriate. Also, purposive sampling allows researchers the freedom to use their judgment to select a sample they believe, based on prior information, will provide the most relevant data needed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Bogden and Biklen (2003) identified phenomenological research as research that entails the identification of common perceptions of several individuals pertaining to a particular phenomenon. It addresses the meaning of events and interactions of people in particular situations. A phenomenological research approach was used to describe individual experiences of White males in a historically Black fraternity. This method allowed each of the subjective experiences to be described from the viewpoint of the participants. It also enabled an exploration of their growth through interviews and other data sources that helped explain those experiences. This strategy acknowledged the right to be heard of White males in a historically Black fraternity, and it allowed participants to share their life experiences that led to their decisions to join their organization. Use of this method allowed the researcher to identify common themes in the participants' experiences.

To address the research questions, a series of open-ended, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with seven participating White male members of a historically Black fraternity. Each of the seven participant's interview transcripts was analyzed. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to protect their identity and to assure confidentiality. The interview process brought to light central themes and patterns

that related to the research questions. The emergent themes and patterns provided insight on experiences that influenced White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity.

The research questions guided the sorting and coding of data. Field notes describing the participant's mannerisms, surroundings, research-participant conversation, and the overall patterns that emerged were incorporated into the data analysis process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). To enable the participants' stories to be communicated in an authentic and descriptive manner, their individual experiences were included in the narrative by incorporating their own words (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003).

Pre-Membership Background

Research Question 1: What life experiences influenced the decision to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity?

Three secondary interview questions were asked of each participant to identify pre-membership background experiences that influenced the decision of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity. Participants were first asked to describe their upbringing, including family dynamic, neighborhood and any other aspects they felt were important. They were also asked to describe their high school experience, friendships, relationships and any extra-curricular involvement. Lastly, they were asked to explain any experiences that may have influenced their decision to join a historically Black fraternity. Participant responses to these questions were important in identifying (a) similarities between participants' pre-membership experiences and (b) common

themes that emerged to provide insight into the decisions to join a historically Black fraternity. Several common themes emerged from the responses to these questions that included type of neighborhood environment in which the participant was raised and similar overall high school experiences including high school characteristics, interracial dating, friendship groups, and participation in athletic sports teams.

Racially Diverse Neighborhood Environment and Schools

There was a common theme regarding the type of neighborhood in which participants were raised. Four participants (BB, MS, DT, RH) were raised in racially diverse neighborhoods and attended high schools that reflected racial diversity as well. In contrast, DB, RH, and BB moved a lot growing up and attended many different schools due to the constant moving.

BB lived in a number of locations but described his neighborhoods as follows:

> . . . I also grew up in a pretty diverse community. I was in a town called _____ in high school and there were a lot of different types of people who went to school there. The majority of the people at school were Hispanic and there was a lot of Hispanic ethnic groups there. I guess Caucasians would have to be next. (page 4, lines 23-25; page 5, lines 1-3)

DT lived in a town with a historical racial divide and was hesitant as he commented:

> The town, I guess, is wealthier than the city in general but that specific neighborhood within that town; most of the people in that town, the history of it was the Black section ____ segregation. So the neighborhood still had Black families who were servants of many of the rich people in the community. Our house was the old Negro school during segregation (page 5, lines 14-19).

MS identified his neighborhood as about a 50/50 make up in terms of Black/White racial diversity. RH had a good racial mixture in his neighborhoods from the south to the east coast. Rob commented,

> It's a very diverse population. So as far as it being a specific White or Black thing, actually I think there was probably a larger Hispanic influence when we were in the south and then we moved to the east coast and the school I was in with was more predominantly Black. (page 2, lines 8-12)

JP described his neighborhood as, "just any normal, ordinary, middle class upbringing. Uh, blue-collar parents (page 3, lines 1-2)." DB had two very contrasting neighborhood experiences growing up as he described:

> Well when I first moved here actually my dad, my stepdad the job we moved here for wasn't uh it actually wasn't here once we got here. I think we spent all our money getting here and then actually lived out of a hotel kind of. We were doing the food stamps thing for a while and then um and then you know a, a couple of great things you know broke my way and then we ended up living in a really nice area. We went from the bottom in our area to kind of living in a not, in kind of more a poverty stricken area and actually out of a hotel room in that area all the way to living in an upper middle class area. (page 2, lines 17-23)

KR however, was born on a Military base and raised in the city on the west coast that he described as follows:

> The environment was a fairly, fairly WASPy (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant), blue-collar neighborhood I suppose. It's definitely blue-collar. By the time I got into junior high, so there were probably a few Latino students, a few Asian students, and a smatter of Black students during the time I was in grade school. I'm going to judge, let's see I think about maybe about 200 students in the grade school where I went. (page 7, lines 19-23)

Friend Group

Another common theme among all seven participants was the racial diversity of their friend groups. All of the participants identified their friends in their neighborhood

or their schools as a racial mixture of 50/50 Black and White, predominantly Hispanic, or predominantly African-American.

DB said, "I had some close African-American friends but my best friend was Puerto Rican" (page 4, lines 5-6). RH spoke of his friend group by stating:

> The school I was in with was more predominantly Black, so I tended to make more friends during that time period that were Black. But even in high school I mean it was kind of, I kind of followed suit. The high school I went to was more predominantly Black, so I probably go a pretty good mix of friends as far as across the races but I did tend to kind of go more towards the African-American race. (page 2, lines 11-15)

KR described a close friendship which developed with one of his junior high school classmates:

> By the time I got into junior high though interestingly, I happened to befriend one of the kids in the class, a friend named ____ who was the only black kid in the class as it happened. But we hit it off very well so we were kind of thick as thieves from that point on and in seventh grade we had the same homeroom and ended up being locker partners from there. I just talked to him the other day. So he kind of was, which I'll get into a little later, was really my introduction to the African-American community, to any, any real regular social level because I had become an extended member of his family to the point that I felt comfortable going into the more of a neighborhood where his extended family lived and knowing that I was a visitor, I still had somebody there to vouch for me so I wasn't treated like an outsider so much. (page 7, lines 23-28 – page 8, lines 1-4)

High School Athletics

Another theme that emerged during the questions on high school experiences was involvement in high school athletics. All study participants were involved in high school athletic teams that included tennis, wrestling, track, football and basketball.

BB commented, "I played sports, a lot of sports. I played football for three years. I tore my knee up. I wrestled for four years except for the year I blew my knee out and I think that's it (page 8, lines 13-15)." When speaking about the racial diversity of his friends, he stated,

> It was kind of all over the board actually. Again, I think a lot of it came from the athletic portion of my high school career because all the guys on the team were from such different backgrounds that it, it wasn't odd to see a guy that was White, Black and Hispanic all hanging out at the same time or doing different things. (page 9, lines 8-11).

DT discovered his athletic ability his sophomore year of his high school career. He stated,

> Sophomore year I discovered that I was really good at running. I was tennis before that, tennis and basketball, but sophomore year I discovered I was really good at running. I ended up running the 800, mile, and 2 mile. I actually junior year was state champion, and I actually went to college on a running scholarship. (page 7, lines11-14)

Comfort in Socializing with People of Different Backgrounds

A theme that emerged with three of the participants was their comfort when socializing with individuals whose backgrounds differed from theirs. BB, DB, and MS expressed this comfort. MM explained this in his description of being recruited to play on his high school basketball team:

> I was the only White person he recruited, kind of a little draft class. Being in that type of environment where, you know, on a basketball court, or any athletic team, I mean, at that point in time you're one time. You're only going to succeed if you're on one accord, and so I really, and that's why I think, you know, racism really at that point went out the window and I didn't really care on the basketball court if you were, black, white, yellow, purple, male or female. If you stepped on the court, then it was time to play ball and I didn't really care about what you

> looked like, it was going to be how could you perform on the court? And so, I think that the coach who recruited me probably contributed to me being comfortable around different types of people, and obviously, when you're in a locker room and you, then you get personal when you're on bus rides and all that good stuff. So it definitely probably made me more comfortable. (page 2, lines 1-11)

BB felt this comfort gave him an edge when interacting with people of different backgrounds:

> I was put into a diverse situation in high school and when I got into college I was more comfortable around people that didn't look like me. I was able to make connections with people no matter what their background. So that gave me a little bit of an edge because I am comfortable talking to people about things that some folks may not be comfortable talking about. (page 11, lines 14-18)

DB was so comfortable growing up that he never really paid attention to color or race. He said,

> You know, I think I was very cognizant of color but I rarely ever treated it different um so more or less so than individuals that I went to school with who maybe would turn and say hey you have this breakdown of races in your friendships. I never really paid attention to that much. (page 4, lines 6-10)

Interracial Dating

The final theme that emerged as contributing to participants' pre-membership life experiences and their desire to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity was interracial dating. Five participants (MS, JP, DT, DB, and RH) shared their dating habits, reporting attraction to and actually dating Black women.

JP discusses this stating, "It wasn't until college that I dated [my] first Black girlfriend, but you know high school, you know the attraction was there and everything but at the time my girlfriend just happened to be Caucasian" (page 4, lines 20-22).

Summary

More than half of the participants in this study attended racially diverse schools and resided in racially diverse neighborhoods. Exceptions were the three who attended predominantly White schools and resided in predominantly White suburban neighborhoods. The participants valued their racially diverse mixture of friend groups in social settings and in athletics, many of which were Black or Hispanic. The participants were comfortable socializing with people of different backgrounds and dating outside of their own race. None of the participants revealed any challenges or negative altercations stemming from their friendship groups or choice in significant others nor did any of the participants express any desire to have had other types of friends. Participants expressed satisfaction with their choice of friends during high school and the bonds created that gave them a sense of brotherhood and camaraderie.

Pre-Membership Expectations

Research Question 2: What were the pre-membership expected benefits from joining a historically Black fraternity?

Though participants had different expectations as to the benefits of joining a historically Black fraternity, there were two common themes that emerged: brotherhood or a sense of wanting to belong to something bigger than oneself and service. Each participant's frame of reference and impact of various life experiences determined his expected benefits of membership in a Black fraternity and how his personal needs would be met.

Brotherhood

A theme that was prominent among six of the seven participants was a desire for brotherhood and the sense of belonging to something bigger than oneself. BB, RH, DT, JP, DB, and MS expressed this expected benefit of brotherhood in a number of their responses. Only KR did not share this expectation.

The sense of brotherhood was observed or even further fostered through social interaction with friends who were already members of the fraternity. DT said, "Some of my friends socially at college, most of my closest friends, were actually in the fraternity" (page 10, line 6). MS spoke about his roommate in the fraternity saying that he "watched him and his LBs (line brothers) get really close, you know, studying together, just growing together, in the fraternity, and so I naturally became friends with them because they were always at our apartment" (page 1, lines 4-6).

JP said, "brotherhood was definitely a big, I seen as a big benefit of joining" (page 8, lines 13-14). RH said brotherhood was the biggest thing he was looking for when he stated, "Biggest thing I was looking for was some more long term, like meaningful relationships, and that was really one of the main benefits" (page 5, lines 14-15). DB said, "I would be able to have that support from um from the group of guys" (page 6, lines 3-4); and MS continued, expressing the expected benefit of brotherhood saying, "Really brotherhood, I mean, I, I think brotherhood was the most intriguing" (page 2-3, lines 28 & 1).

The aspect of brotherhood, as expressed by BB, was observed a number of times as a benefit of membership, "Seeing the connections that people made with each other,

seeing the brothers hang out and just the way that they were kind of jovial and joke with each other" (page 13, lines 16-18). MS shared the observed brotherhood in this story about his college roommate:

> Watching my roommate at that time, the brotherhood and seeing how close he was with people after he had crossed. He actually got called off to Iraq, um because he was a Reserve in the Marines, and watching kinda that support structure come around when he was first notified, you know, that was something that was real strong. It was actually the first time I'd seen, you know bros get around and singing the hymn around somebody and kinda just, you know, pray and, and be that support group that, you know, regular friends don't always do that (page 4, lines 15-21).

Service

Another theme that encouraged participants to join a historically Black fraternity was the anticipated service opportunities and philanthropy. All participants, with the exception of KR and RH, were extremely impressed and interested in joining the fraternity due to their giving back to the community through service. BB expressed this saying, "I did see Black organizations and Hispanic organizations actually doing things out in the community" (page 12, lines 21-22). Later, BB elaborated:

> I found the service aspect to be very enticing for me. That's kind of what I was, what I gauged my career choices on, was how I could make a difference with other people. So, talking with some of the brothers and getting to know what they were about, really let me see that this is an organization that falls in line already with the things I value (page 13, lines 11-15).

DT viewed giving back to the community and aligning that with an organization as a member as a major benefit.

> Just to get involved with other people and their resources and stuff, I mean, always an issue, is when I was in college I tutored kids and stuff, like high school and middle school kids. So, it's always been a huge issue of mine, always, and to

> this day I still harp about it. Just uh, kids not thinking like school, learning and education is cool, so thinking it is uncool and thinking that it's like a White thing to learn. So that's always been a huge issue of mine, and that's like a big (thing) that did attract me to Alpha. (page 10, lines 24-29)

Lastly, JP spoke to the benefit of service, saying, "The benefit I'd seen of becoming a member was really just helping the individuals through the three you know um national programs (page 8, lines 2-4)."

Summary

In summary, participants revealed a few anticipated benefits that influenced their decisions to join a historically Black fraternity. These anticipated benefits included brotherhood or belonging to something bigger than oneself and the ability to provide service to others throughout the community. These were primary factors that influenced participants' decisions to join their historically Black fraternity. Participants indicated that these aspects of the fraternity were representative of their lives and life goals and were important in their decision making process as they sought membership in their organization.

All but DT reported that their pre-membership expectations had been met since becoming a member. MS summed it up best when he said, "I would say that definitely (the organization) met my expectations in terms of, you know, the brotherhood and the benefits that I thought I would get out of it" (page 5, lines 4-5).

Prototype Behavioral Expectations

Research Question 3: What prototype behaviors were identified to make individuals feel part of the in-group?

It is important to uncover the participants' perceptions of their fraternity and fraternity members. These perceptions provide insight on the organization the participants joined and also revealed commonalities leading the participants to identify as part of the in-group.

Outlook on White Fraternities

Determining which fraternity to join is a part of the membership process for every fraternity member. In order to understand their perceptions of this process, participants were asked to discuss their consideration of joining a historically White fraternity. With the exception of one, DT, who never explored any historically White fraternity, all of the other participants (BB, RH, DB, MS, JP, and KR) considered a historically White fraternity but did not have enough positive experiences to explore membership.

KR viewed historically White fraternities as, "organizations of having to follow without question and I didn't have any desire to do that" (page 25, lines 5-6). BB's observation of White fraternities was, "the only thing I ever saw White organizations do was throw parties and you know, walk around campus with blazers on. I really didn't see them doing much else" (page 12, lines 19-21).

In sharing his outlook on why he was not interested in seeking membership in a historically White fraternity, DB further explained his expectation of service and brotherhood:

> You want to be with like-minded individuals so you can ultimately be able to take care of those missions or shared missions and values. Ultimately when it came down to it, I kind of noticed that there was a little bit more of a social aspect to those fraternities and more actually was the absence of the service aspects to those. So it wasn't really something that was necessarily for me because they kind of started to feel if there wasn't really the service part that kind of brought it all together, that it almost felt like kind of buying your friends. (page 7, lines 7-13)

MS, RH, and JP shared in the observed thought that the historically White fraternities placed more emphasis on social aspects than any other quality. MS, in speaking about his White friends' historically White fraternity experiences said,

> Like when I looked at what they were doing, it seemed like there was just a lot of people who were being social and most of the people who were kinda in his fraternity or group, to me it was like, you know, they didn't really do a lot of programs. It seemed like it was more of a four-year commitment. (page 3, line 29; page 4, lines 1-3)

JP had this to say about the White fraternities on his campus,

They had to dress a certain way for rush and it's just some of the things they did, they were more social I guess you can say. It seemed like large groups of them just seems like they'd just pick anybody, not really any I guess standards. (page 11, lines 5-8)

RH was very number oriented when looking at the historically White fraternities and took that approach to explain his lack of interest:

> I love statistics and when I looked at the statistics of the White fraternities and things like that, it just wasn't appealing. It wasn't as impressive. I mean you look at your chapter GPAs with 50 guys in there; it's a 2.6. You're like how does that happen you know. I mean that's enough people that you can really offset a low GPA you know. In the community service hours at the time, there were only three guys in my chapter on campus at the time that I pledged and they had

> cumulatively done more community service hours than some of the White fraternities that had you know 20+ members. So, you know it was really kind of odd. I mean when you look at that, you're like how could I go that direction when you know it is so blatantly clear over here that these guys are going the right way (page 6, lines 9-18).

Recruitment Process

When inquiring about experiences in the decision making process employed by participants seeking membership in a historically Black fraternity, it was important to ask about the participants' perceptions of their recruitment experience. Participants were queried to determine commonalities and differences in experiences during and after their recruitment. Participants indicated experiencing racism. They also encountered members who questioned their motives and mentors/advocates who supported them and informed them of the pressures that would come from membership.

Of the seven participants, four (JP, MS, DT and KR) were approached by Alpha members at their schools in various ways. Each of the four had members approach them in different arenas and they gained experiences first hand with members of the fraternity through friends, roommates or other organizations.

DT attended events and service projects but never attended any informational meeting to seek membership. DT spoke of his recruitment as being very informal, saying, "I was just in the car with a brother and he was, we were just talking about it, and he's like why don't you do it? So, I was like, "okay" (page 13, lines 14-15).

MS was very interested in the fraternity and was in the process of doing research and trying to ask his roommate questions about the organization but he wouldn't answer

him. MS said, "He really made me feel like I had to really want it. Even though some of the brothers that were on campus had already asked me, like, hey, are you interested in becoming an Alpha?" (page 7, lines 7-10).

KR took the process of seeking membership very seriously. He did a lot of introspective searching before deciding to accept the personal invitation from one of the fraternity members to attend an interest meeting. KR stated,

> So, I had to evaluate my seriousness and my commitment to even go but minimally. If he had the respect for me to give me the invitation then the lease that I could do was show up at the meeting. So that was a given. Where it went from there was, was definitely contingent upon both what I heard and what the reception would be when I went to the meeting. (page 27, lines 6-10)

JP was a member of another student organization that had some fraternity members in it as well. While attending a meeting for this organization, JP was approached about becoming a member and spoke of his experience:

> I was in another organization on campus with one of the (fraternity) members at the time and we had a meeting. After the meeting he pulled me aside you know it was like he asked a question or asked if I'd ever considered joining the fraternity. Uh, I said, 'no.' He gave me the national website and said, 'you know he check this out. I think you could potentially you know be a good fit.' So, I checked out the website, did some extensive research, you know, liked what I saw. So you know then I took all the necessary steps to you know start the process. (page 13, lines 10-16)

Six of the seven participants shared stories of overt or covert forms of racism toward them either from chapter members, alumni brothers, brothers from other chapter, or outsiders. Their comments are shared in the following paragraphs.

> I was an RA (resident assistant) and I got something that was actually carved into my door that said "nigger lover" while I was on-line (pledging) and the whole thing that was really kind of hard here was that I was…people weren't supposed to know that I was hanging out with certain people so, so like you know you had

to go to the administration and things along those lines. You understand like hey, this happens and yes I was hanging out with you know all these friends and they're just like wow, I didn't know you were friends with all these people. So you're trying to have to deal with all those challenges. (DB file, page 9, lines 5-12)

"When I showed up to the national (intake) process people you know, would call me names like Slim Shady" (MS file, page 7, lines 28-29).

So I went to the social and uh after a little bit I went up to go get some punch and a guy accosted me and I was smart enough not to put my back to the room cause I could tell there was a group of people that were just simmering and so he came to the table and he said, "Are you having fun?" And I said, "I'm having a good time as a matter of fact. Thank you very much." And he said, "What are you doing here?" And I said, "Well, I'm pouring some punch and getting some cookies. Can I pour you a cup?" And he said, "No, I mean why are you here?" And I said, "Well it's an Alpha social right and I'm an Alpha so that's why I'm here." And he said, "Oh really, how do you figure?" And I said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I guess we were denied the opportunity of an introduction." I said, "Brother KR, Theta Sigma chapter spring 1990. Pleasure to make your acquaintance." And uh he said, he said, "Oh, is there somebody that can vouch for that?" And then at that point I started to get a little irritated and I said, "Oh, there's plenty of people that can vouch for that" and I said "Or you can give me the official challenge if you know it." Right. And he said, "That doesn't mean nothing." I said, "Oh the official challenge doesn't mean anything?" And I said, "Did I do something in particular to you?" I said, "I don't even know you." And he said, "Look I'm just looking out for you." He said, "This is our homecoming. We're going to have some older brothers in here who are not going to appreciate seeing you so you should probably leave now um so that there won't be any problem." And I said, "Why would there be a problem?" And he said, "Look, I'm just looking out for you. You should leave now while you still can." "While I still can? What is that a threat? Are you going to, are you going to drag me out?" And he said, "I hope it doesn't come to that." (KR file, page 36, lines 5-24)

I remember there was a time where it was like, don't ____like, okay, we can only put one of you on, yuh you know, they didn't want you because you are White, like type thing. So, it was played up but I never really believed it unless it was someone I didn't know, because a lot of them were my friends. (DT file, page 14, lines 17-21)

And so uh I remember being in line. I remember being moved and I didn't realize, that till after the fact that I was moved over to that spot because I was the

> shortest one at the time but they still…they didn't want me to be a number one and so you know I, I think that, that was a White thing. I think they didn't want that to be the leading, the leading of the line so cause there have been, there have been no other reason to really justify it and um one of the old school guys has eluded to it but he's never actually…none of the guys would actually admit it so…um which is fine by me. (RH file, page 10, lines 8-14)
> I think the Zeta's were doing their probate show and I went out and you know they do introductions where all organizations do call on the spot _____ and I, they said, Alpha Alpha Fraternity and I let go of a big *A Phi* and nobody responded. And those dudes, all ten of them were standing fifteen feet away from me and just looked at me and said, "What the hell are you doing?" So, that's just an example of kind of the things that happened. (BB file, page xx, lines xx)

DB, MS, BB, and RH were all questioned about their motives in seeking membership in a historically Black fraternity. MS shared his experience with older brothers stating, "They constantly asked me you know, why I was pledging Alpha and after a while, was I trying to do it because of the girls or the social aspect (page 7, lines 29-30)." DB spoke about both chapter members and older brothers saying,

> There are some individuals who wanted to know, "Hey, is he the real deal? What is he, what is he trying to do? Is he a future politician in the making, you know, just trying to get this on his resume or you know is he actually doing it for the right reasons (page 9, lines 17-20)."

BB had his own experience with others questioning his decision to join a historically Black fraternity that he shared: "I don't know if they said it exclusively or not uh that didn't understand or know why I wanted to join a Black fraternity and probably, uh, had issue with me doing that" (page 20, lines 9-11). RH was not taken seriously in his first attempt to seek membership. He shared the following story:

> I went to the meeting and I think at first they kind of perceived it like, I don't know if this guy is serious or is he doing this as a prank or you know whatever. Of course I just kind of, I just popped on the radar out of nowhere. I mean they didn't know me from Adam. So they were very skeptic at first and basically I really didn't get a real serious consideration that first semester. (page 9, lines 5-9)

BB, MS, DT, and RH shared a common link of a mentor or chapter brother advocating for and supporting them in their quest for membership. Each spoke to this relationship and the advice he received regarding the expected pressure that would be exerted once he became a member of Alpha Phi Alpha. When speaking about this relationship, BB said,

> I started talking to him about Alpha and it was almost immediate that he started advocating to me to become a member. You know he started calling people up and saying, "Hey I've got this guy that's interested in joining the fraternity." He would always tell them I was a White guy and he definitely advocated for me. (page 22, lines 1-5)

MS was approached by members of Alpha at his institution but he never accepted their advances to join even though his roommate was a member. Eventually MS asked his roommate if he would sponsor him in becoming a member. MS shared,

> I think he realized I really wasn't going to let it drop and he was getting ready to go off to war, so he was like, yeah, I'll sponsor you, but you gotta promise me that no matter what happens, you won't quit or shy away from it and if you make it through the process, you'll never be inactive. I made that promise to him. (page 7, lines 21-25).

Shared Attitudes, Perceptions, Feelings, and Traits

Participants were asked to discuss the attitudes, perceptions and traits they felt they shared in common with members of the fraternity prior to becoming a member. Five of the seven participants were able to speak specifically about these shared attitudes, perceptions, feelings and traits. The most common one was that of intelligence.

When asked about prior understandings, MS said,

> Alpha's were known to be a little nerdy, you know, business-like, and I've always felt like, you know, because I did a lot of tutoring and I did excel in the classroom. I also actually felt like I was a little bit of a nerd. I think that's actually a good trait. (page 6, lines 6-9)

BB stated similar feelings in a different way: "There were a lot of really, really smart and professional people in this fraternity that are doing really amazing things" (page 24, lines 6-7). Observing the similarities in academic intelligence, KR said, "But most of them were very strong academically. I mean very good contentious conversations and so those are things that really served me well, even now in the business sense (page 29, lines 19-21)." Additionally, DT mentioned his perception of shared qualities between chapter members and himself before joining, saying the Alphas were "very smart, very cocky, confident about getting stuff done and very businesslike, but at the same time I'd wanna say a smoothness to doing that (page 12, lines 15-17)." JP's perception of chapter member's attitudes before he became a member follows:

> They were, I guess laid back, relaxed, just kinda went about their own business. Didn't really you know, get involved in anything that didn't pertain to them. Um but at the same time you know like I said they'll be cordial and what have you so I shared, I shared the same, the same traits you know just relaxed, (page 12, lines 22-23 – page 13, lines 1-2)

Summary

In summary, participants revealed experiences of behaviors and feelings that made them feel sufficiently adequate, as members of the in-group, to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity. These experiences and feelings were related to their outlook on historically White fraternities and their feelings of acceptance, alienation, or

racism. Their having been recruited or having a member advocate on their behalf were also experiences that influenced participants' decisions to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity.

Depersonalization in Fraternity Experience

Research Question 4: What depersonalization behaviors took place once membership was achieved?

In examining life experiences that influenced White males to seek membership in historically Black fraternities, it is important to further understand their experiences once membership was achieved. These experiences can be discussed using three categories: (a) leadership, (b) personal growth, and (c) family support. KR, BB and RH all experienced being identified as that "White Alpha." RH was even identified as "White Rob" because he another Black member both had the name Rob.

Leadership

DT, JP, RH, BB, MS, and DB stated that being a member of Alpha Phi Alpha aided in their leadership development. Values, work ethic and leadership were influenced in a positive manner due to what participants felt was a high regard for their fraternity and the leadership they experienced with other members. Participants were aware of the history of the fraternity and the well-known leaders that came before them. Participants became more involved in campus organizations and campus life, and two even became chapter presidents.

DT held the office of president in his fraternity for multiple years after coming into the organization with no previous experience in such a position. DT described his involvement,

> I hit the ground running as soon as I go in and was involved. So, I guess I was well known and held in high regard. I, you know, was president of my chapter for a couple of years. Took part in a lot of stuff, went to conferences and stuff. (page 18, lines 8-10)

JP took advantage of the leadership development opportunities presented by the fraternity, holding a number of offices and achieving a number of personal awards:

> As soon as I crossed I was thrown in as secretary the day I crossed, they're like oh, you're a secretary cause at the time we didn't uh…they had like I think eight, six to eight members total in the chapter but only three were active. I went from secretary to next year being vice president from the next year being a president. During that time, my time as vice president, we won Organization of the Year on campus as well as a couple of other awards. I was chapter member of the year, served on the district board as chairman or co-chairman of the oratorical contest as well as I was the webmaster for the chapter, of the district's website. (page 17, lines 1-9)

DB felt the Alphas on his campus were real leaders that could be seen on campus and in the community. DB spoke about this and its impact on him, stating:

> I could just kind of see on campus that they were the leaders. They were, they were the kind of you know the guys…really they were men of action and uh I wanted to be able to kind of put myself in a situation to where I could be more of a man of action instead of kind of a man of ideas. (page 6, lines 5-8)

RH shared the following similar thoughts:

> You know 'cause they were and I think they continue to be even today, is the campus leaders and you just, you know you just don't…you want to hold up the light. You know you don't want, don't want to be the guy who lets everyone down or the one that's the you know, like how'd he get in or how'd he slip by, somebody who shouldn't have. (page 8, lines 6-10)

When speaking about his fraternity, MS included himself in his description of the perceptions of his organization, saying Alphas were, "people that were really kind of looked at as leaders on campus, sat on the Black Student Union and headed up different programs and groups on campus. So they were seen as leaders on campus" (page 6, lines 14-17)

BB was concerned about meeting the expectation of leadership and involvement in fraternity programming. His concerns were put aside as illustrated here when another brother informed him, "I do plenty of work and I had one brother from the chapter told me that I'd done more than my share to earn my shingle. Having him say that to me really meant a lot" (page 26, lines 22-24).

Personal Growth

All seven participants spoke to gains in areas of personal growth through their membership in a historically Black fraternity. Participants spoke to changing behaviors in areas such as learning more about themselves, building confidence, seeing new perspectives, and being more involved in social issues.

DB, JP, and BB spoke to gaining confidence. BB mentioned the impact the fraternity had on him, "I think it's changed who I am uh well, I should say that, it's had an impact on who I am I think is a better word to describe that. Just the way I carry myself in the way of confidence that I gained. . ." (page 26, lines 11-13). DB mentioned, "I became a little more confident in myself" (page 11, line 17), and JP said, "uh, made me a little more confident as well" (page 19, line 4).

MS credited Alpha Phi Alpha for improving his time management ability and work ethic among other things, stating:

> Alpha has made me learn a lot about myself, both from how much my work ethic will go, what I'll do just to get something that I want. It's taught me about managing my time. People all the time look at me and say, 'well how can you work 70 hours a week, still put in all the time that you do in the community, and have time for a life?' Often times my answer is one word, Alpha, it's what I do. (page 10, lines 12-16)

KR spoke to learning to be assertive, saying: "It was learning how to be assertive and that [the] organization had high standards for its individuals and how it projected itself" (page 29, lines 24-25). BB mentioned, "I don't (think) there's anything that I can't do if I put my mind to it. I really think that's a direct product of the pledge process" (page 28, lines 8-9).

An increase in racial sensitivity was common among a number of the participants after joining Alpha Phi Alpha. This included RH who shared the following thoughts:

> Once I crossed I kind of felt like I was more in touch with some of the stereotypes and things that you've heard about the Black men and how they're treated. I really wasn't quite prepared for that I don't think. (page 12, lines 15-17)

JP spoke about the change he experienced in interacting with persons from different backgrounds after joining the fraternity, saying the brotherhood "helps you to learn about yourself more, um, you know how to interact with people, of different race, different ethnicity, seeing things from their point of view" (page 19, lines 7-9).

DB indicated that he gained more sympathy for those who had experienced racism saying,

> I have more sympathy than even more so than I already had and more…and when I say sympathy, I think I mean more along the lines of I'm more cognizant of the

> fact that individuals of color may be a lot more self-conscious about their skin color than I normally would have [thought] prior to doing the fraternity experience (page 11, line 28; page 12, lines 1-4)

DT learned that joining his fraternity changed his perspective regarding people in general. He said,

> I went to camps where I was like the only White person, but I was still ignorant of this society until I got into the frat. So, it's interesting and it does change your perspective a little bit on just how people are. (page 15, lines 34-35; page 16, line 1)

MS believed that the fraternity changed his outlook on different cultures and shares:

> But it also, I think, changed the way I looked at different cultures. You know being somebody who would often be in a very impoverished community that's helping people. I mean, I have seen some of those things before but you just kind of see things in a different light and then when you see kind of the injustices that occur, you can't help but look on how you would change things or how you wished you could affect the world. Where it's politically or just one person at a time. (page 12, lines 8-14)

Family Support

When asked about family and friends' perceptions of their fraternity and whether or not they were supportive of the participants' decisions to join a historically Black fraternity, five participants responded that their experience was positive. DB said, "My family loved it" (page 12, line 7). RH addressed it by saying, "My immediate family, like my parents and sister were amazingly supportive. I mean I never felt any kind of slight to it. They never questioned it. I mean it was never an issue at all" (page 14, lines 13-15).

DT said his family was fine with his decision: "They were just like, oh, okay. It was kind of expected, I mean uh, since I got to college they've seen all my girlfriends.

They've seen who I hang out with. I mean, it wasn't shocking at all" (page 17, lines 16-19).

BB was a member of his fraternity for four years when his mom called him one day after she and a coworker had seen him in a step show video with some questions for him:

> Well, we were just wondering why you did that?' So, I think that's the longest conversation I've ever had with her about being in a fraternity, quite honestly. Again, I think it's just because she wasn't around Greek life as a traditional student since she was an older student going back. (page 30, lines 17-20)

Similarly JP had to explain the concept of a fraternity to his mother:

> So, my mom, she didn't have any clue really what a fraternity was. So, you know I just kind of told her about it and what have you, but I mean she didn't have a problem with it. She was like you know, just make sure it's something you want to do (page 19, lines 17-20).

JP continued, saying, "Once I finally joined and explained it to them more, they didn't have no problems with it. They're like as long as that makes you happy and that's what you want to do, by all means do it" (page 20, lines 5-7).

Summary

The same trend of acceptance seemed to hold true for both participants' families and friends. All of those interviewed spoke positively about their experiences with friends, learning of their membership in a historically Black fraternity. When asked to describe their experience as members of a historically Black fraternity, all participants provided positive feedback and indicated that they enjoyed their experience immensely. Personal growth was highlighted as a positive aspect by all seven of the participants, and

growth in leadership was noted by six of the seven. These participants indicated that their different life experiences contributed to their being very comfortable around Black people and that they had never regretted joining a historically Black fraternity.

Emergent Major and Minor Themes

This study consisted of seven participants who were White male fraternity members in a historically Black fraternity at various institutions along the East and Southeastern coast. Each participant was an alumnus of his institution and a member of a historically Black fraternity at the time of this study. Each participant was identified for this study by his fraternity's national office of membership intake during the Fall 2011 semester.

Major and minor themes emerged as the data were analyzed. Major themes (Figure 2) were shared by four or more participants, and minor themes (Figure 3) were identified by two or three of the participants. Major themes were (a) growth, (b) service, (c) comfort, (d) diverse environment, (e) high school athletics, (f) friend group, and (g) shared traits. Minor themes were (a) family support, (b) leadership, (c) shared traits, (d) recruitment, (e) outlook on white fraternities, (f) brotherhood, and (g) interracial dating.

Pyramids have been used to display the themes because of their significance to Alpha Phi Alpha. Pyramids are icons used throughout the fraternity and on the Alpha Phi Alpha shield. The pyramids reflect the stages of growth for the fraternity and, in this instance, the growth of the participants interviewed in this research.

Figure 2. Major Themes

Figure 3. Minor Themes

Life Experiences Influencing Membership Decisions

Many common themes emerged relating to life experiences that appeared to have influenced the decisions of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity. Understanding the participants' life experiences proved to be important when examining reasons why they joined a Black fraternity. A participant's high school experience, friendship groups, team sport involvement, interracial dating and neighborhood environment appeared influential in their decision to join a historically Black fraternity.

Most participants resided in culturally diverse neighborhoods during high school. Thus, three participants attended high schools that consisted of 50% or more African-American or Hispanic students, and the remaining four attended predominantly White

high schools. Two of the participants attended private schools, one receiving an athletic scholarship to attend. All of the participants believed their high school environments to have been rewarding and embraced the schools they attended. None of the participants expressed any regrets regarding the high schools they had attended.

All of the participants, regardless of high school demographic make-up, had exposure to Black students who attended their schools. Most participants had a close friend who was Black, but all of the participants felt their friendship groups consisted of individuals with diverse backgrounds including White, Black and Hispanic. Participants who had predominantly Black friendship groups were comfortable with the individuals they chose as their friends.

All of those interviewed had participated in high school athletic programming through team sports. Thus, all participants reported having developed acquaintances and close friendships with teammates who were Black. Also, four of the participants expressed an attraction to Black women and dated interracially.

Participants cultivated diverse friendship groups during their high school years that became a "comfort zone" as they established diverse friendship groups in college. Participants welcomed diverse relationships and were open and inclusive in establishing their "comfort zones." Participants were exposed to cultural differences in their fraternity. Due to their assimilation within this culture, however, they remained open and accepting of these differences.

Expected Benefits

A number of themes emerged from participants' expectations about the anticipated benefits and other experiences leading to their decisions to join a historically Black fraternity. One of the most influential themes in their decision to seek membership in a Black fraternity was having the ability to provide service in the community with like-minded individuals. Many of the participants had observed roommates or friends who were fraternity members completing community service and believed this was a natural benefit of membership as it coincided with their values.

Chang, in his 1996 study of fraternal racial integration, concluded that the acceptance of students of color in White fraternities and their decisions to seek membership were determined by their views of society and the interests they shared with White Greek members. According to Chang, students are more likely to interact and seek peer groups with persons who are believed to share a common set of beliefs, values, goals, behaviors and attitudes. Similar to Chang's findings, participants in this study shared many of the same values, i.e., brotherhood, camaraderie, academic excellence, social behaviors, service and attitudes toward fraternalism.

Another factor influencing study participants to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity was their desire to belong to an organization that would provide them with opportunities for leadership development and benefits which would assist them in the future. Participants observed their fraternity's leadership on campus and believed affiliation with the organization would help them professionally. Participants expressed that they observed numerous ways in which opportunities for leadership positions and

development could be facilitated by their fraternity, and this provided them the incentive to seeking membership. This observation was similar to that of Kimbrough (1996) who concluded that opportunities for leadership development for Black fraternity members at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) were increased by their participation in Greek organizations. Also, Longino and Kart (1973) found rates of involvement in college extracurricular activities were higher for male fraternity members than for males who did not belong to a fraternity.

The results of this research are similar to those of many researchers who have advised that fraternity involvement encourages participation in extracurricular activities and leadership development (Astin, 1993; Baier & Whipple, 1990; Kuh & Lyons, 1990). Fraternities and sororities, as formal peer groups, play a significant role in enhancing the college student experience and facilitating positive educational outcomes such as leadership development (Chang, 1996).

Participants indicated that experiencing an enhanced social life, networking opportunities, service to others and the brotherhood of which they would become a part influenced their decisions to join a Black fraternity. Participants desired a close-knit friendship group such as the fraternal organization provided its members. Participants believed that the fraternity would give them that experience, filling a social and emotional need.

Participants' responses supported research findings of Kuh and Lyons (1990) that a fraternity can serve as a viable option for involvement and can provide a caring and supportive sub-community. Additionally, participation in Greek life can assist students'

development of interpersonal and leadership skills, developing friendships and creating a balanced approach to life in college.

Identifying as a Member of the In-Group

Participants in this study indicated their perceptions of traits they believed they had common with members of the fraternity that influenced their decisions to seek membership in a Black fraternity. They discussed having in common attitudes and feelings of motivation, professionalism, confidence, and a desire to do something for the greater good of the community.

Outstanding as beneficial among the traits participants believed they had in common with fraternity members was professionalism. Though they assumed responsibility for their own professionalism, they believed this was a trait that could be improved through the fraternal organization. Kimbrough (1996) found that opportunities for leadership development for Black fraternity members at PWIs were increased by their participation in fraternities and sororities, and that college extracurricular involvement was higher for fraternity members than for nonmembers. Participants in this study had been influenced to be active in their campus and community activities by fraternity members who participated in extracurricular activities and assumed leadership positions.

All of the participants observed members of their fraternity doing some type of community service, and this led them to feel a shared sense of doing something for the greater good of humanity. This theme was consistent and remained not only as a shared attitude of the participants but also as an expected benefit for seeking membership into a

Black fraternity. Participants believed that historically Black fraternities, unlike White fraternities, consistently fulfilled a societal need through community service.

Member Depersonalization Behaviors

A few themes emerged from participants' experiences as brothers of the fraternity once membership was obtained. The most consistent theme for all participants in this study was the increased self-awareness and confidence that they experienced after becoming members of a Black fraternity Participants indicated that their having been accepted for membership into an organization, with what was believed to be a high reputation, made them hold themselves to a higher standard.

Participants continued to experience changes in their behavior as the fraternity gave them opportunities for increased leadership positions. This leadership development influenced the participants to be more confident in themselves. Participants, indicating that they were sometimes described as "cocky," knew that other individuals sensed this increased confidence. In contrast, after becoming fraternity members, participants did not note changes in behavior toward them from family members.

A final theme that emerged in the data analysis was the participants' sense of greater awareness of racial tension and cultural sensitivity. All participants were members of diverse friendship groups in high school. After they became members of the Black fraternity, they developed a different perspective. Participants believed, to varying extents, that they became objects of racism. Having this experience made them change their behaviors when confronted by questions surrounding race. Furthermore, they felt an

increased need to protect their Black fraternity brothers when they observed or were present during any racial discrimination.

Emergent Themes from Participants' Experiences Related to Social Identity Theory

This study was guided by the theoretical construct of Social Identity Theory. This theory provided insight into the experiences that influenced White males to seek membership in a Black fraternity and revealed whether participants' social groups played a role in their decision-making process.

Social Identity Theory is centered on the group and what draws a person toward a group. This theory consists of grouping using prototypes, entitativity, categorization, and depersonalization. Grouping is the individual's ability to see behaviors and commonalities through prototypes and entitativity and then being able to categorize themselves as a member of the in-group or out-group based on social identities. It consists of constantly categorizing members as in-group or out-group and may have the individual changing from one to the other. Depersonalization takes place once an individual is a member of the in-group and begins to change behaviors to take on characteristics of the in-group. One key aspect of social identity is the process of categorization or a person's ability to identify, define, and differentiate social identities from one another (Hogg, 2006).

There were three themes that emerged from participants' comments related to social groups that influenced their decisions to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity.

Theme 1: Comfortableness

Four of the seven participants were raised in culturally diverse environments. They all attended diverse high schools and had diverse friend groups. The participants played on high school sports teams, dated interracially, and shared time at work or on a sporting team with close friends of different cultural backgrounds. Though they were aware of racial differences, none of the participants viewed race as an important factor when choosing their friendships, dating partners, or team sports. Participants did not have confrontational experiences in their friend groups or other personal relationships.

Participants were assimilated into the Black culture and were influenced by it. Yet they maintained a good sense of identity as White men. They did not join Alpha Phi Alpha because it was Black. Rather, they joined the group because they believed it was the best "fit" for them in terms of individuals with whom they would feel comfortable and relaxed and to whom they could relate.

The participants' responses toward this first theme of comfortableness met Hogg's (2006) definition of grouping as it relates to Social Identity Theory. Grouping, according to Hogg, involves three or more people who identify as members of the group and determine norms after observing the way others interact within the group. Individuals can belong to a group, but if they do not identify with the group or do not classify and evaluate themselves in terms of the group, they will not behave or think like other group members (Hogg, 2006).

Theme 2: Community Service

Participants desired to become facilitators of service throughout their community by becoming members of their fraternity. They believed that membership in a Black fraternity would provide them with opportunities to be change agents in their community by providing community service with like-minded intelligent men. They hoped membership would lead to closer ties with other members as they provided leadership through service in their community.

Participant responses to the second theme of service were aligned with prototypes as discussed by Hogg (2006) in regard to Social Identity Theory. Hogg (2006) defined prototypes as

> fuzzy set of attributes (perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors) that are related to one another in a meaningful way and that simultaneously capture similarities within the group and differences between the group and other groups or people who are not in the group. (p. 118)

Participants identified personal attributes of their own with those of members of the fraternity who influenced them to seek membership.

Entitativity is achieved once participants become members of the fraternity and actually become a member of the in-group. Hogg (2006) defined entitativity as "the property of a category that makes it appear to be a cohesive and clearly structured entity that is distinct from other entities" (p. 118). Hence, participants seek membership because of identified common attributes of the fraternity that make up prototypes that are maximized after participants achieve membership and creates a larger contrast between themselves as members of the in-group and others as members of the out-group.

Theme 3: Personal Growth

Several participants indicated their observations of members' leadership, service and academic excellence influenced their decision to join their historically Black fraternity. The extent to which members completed service while balancing classes and maintaining high academic standards was influential in their decision making process.

After becoming members, participants had opportunities to observe the leadership development experienced by fraternity brothers and to increase their own leadership presence on campus through chapter programming. Participants' responses regarding personal growth were compatible with depersonalization as a construct of Social Identity Theory. Hogg and Terry (2001) indicated that depersonalization consists of individuals aligning their perceptions of self and their behavior with that of the relevant in-group prototypes. Participants in this study subordinated their uniqueness once membership was obtained and produced collective behavior, shared norms and positive in-group attitudes (Hogg & Terry, 2001). This was evidenced by participants' experiences of leadership development, increased racial awareness, and statements about personal growth aligning them with that of the in-group.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter addresses the implications of this research for higher education professionals, persons who work with Greek organizations, and members of the Greek life community. Recommendations for future research will also be provided. The results and recommendations of this study may inform and assist those who work with fraternities on membership diversity and how to provide educational and social support to White males who join Black fraternities.

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to identify and investigate the life experiences that influenced the decision of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity and to consider the concept of social identity theory as it influenced study participants to seek membership and participate in this organization. Understanding the experiences of White males in a Black fraternity may give insight to fraternity personnel and higher education professionals about the White male experience in these organizations. Implications that emerged from study findings are discussed in this chapter.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What life experiences influenced the decision to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity?
2. What were the pre-membership expected benefits from joining a historically Black fraternity?
3. What prototype behaviors were identified to make individuals feel part of the in-group?
4. What depersonalization behaviors took place once membership was achieved?

Implications for Educators, Administrators and Fraternity Staff

Fraternities share many common goals for members of their organizations. The Greek Life experience is regarded as a learning activity designed to give confidence and build character, to institute growth intellectually, to assist in completing a college degree, to develop personal growth and social skills, to obtain an understanding and respect for differences, and to produce achievable life goals (Winston, Nettles & Opper, 1987).

Though some Greek Life organizations are ethically diverse, programs should be developed by Greek leaders to assist students in examining their attitudes toward cultural and racial differences and to develop strategies for recruitment (Bryan, 1987). There are several implications for Greek Life professionals and fraternity staff that may assist fraternities and fraternity members in with the recruitment of White males into historically Black fraternities.

Recruitment

One of the common themes in this study pertaining to recruitment revealed that participants were pre-recruited before going through the official recruitment process. Members of the fraternity encouraged participants to go through the recruitment process and to become members of their fraternity. Participants were encouraged by friends and were personally invited by fraternity members to join their fraternity. It seemed as though individuals recruiting participants believed they would be good brothers, fit in well with the group, and enhance the fraternity.

In light of this, it may be beneficial for fraternity national officers, chapter advisors, and members of the fraternity to discuss how informal and alternative recruiting methods may assist with recruitment of diverse individuals into their organizations. Fraternities can do more to identify individuals who meet their standards and possess fraternal characteristics needed for membership. An increased effort can be made to support White male membership in historically Black fraternities.

Chapter Advisors

For chapters to reach fraternal goals and their fullest potential, fraternities must have chapter advisors who play a visible role. Fraternity members boast about their historical legacy and tend to base their current actions on past events. This can lead to chapters being stubborn and resistant to change. Chapter advisors, who have real life experience with diverse issues and leadership development, can take an educational position by assisting their chapters in understanding the importance of accomplishing

chapter and institutional goals as well as embracing the changing student demographic by becoming more inclusive (Winston & Hughes, 1987).

Chapter advisors play an important role in educating members on issues related to diversity such as the importance of inclusion and respecting differences. Chapter advisors can also take a proactive role by identifying White students who may be interested in joining their fraternity and providing these students with guidance and support throughout the process.

Research and Assessment

Greek Life and Student Affairs staff work closely with fraternity and sorority leaders. It could prove beneficial for these professionals to commit resources and time to study the diversity of membership in Greek organizations. Preparing new student leaders who have an understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion and how to incorporate this into their programming should be a target. This could be achieved using surveys, focus groups and additional research awareness of future studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that future research be conducted to further highlight issues surrounding White male membership in historically Black fraternities as follows. This study should be extended to examine the experiences of White males in the other four National Pan-Hellenic Council fraternities. A replication of this study using participants from these organizations may provide a body of literature with a more holistic

perspective of White male membership and experiences that may influence decisions to join a historically Black fraternity. It may also be beneficial to compare responses of White male members of different historically Black fraternities to expand on any differences and to provide Student Affairs professionals and Greek Life leaders with a better understanding of membership diversity. A similar study could prove beneficial if conducted in Hispanic fraternities and even in NPHC and Hispanic sororities to explore White female membership.

Another recommendation for continued study would be to explore the impact of racial identity on White male membership in a historically Black fraternity. Though this framework was not investigated in this study, it may have an impact on the decision-making processes of White males. It may also be relevant to consider social adaptive behavior and its influence on the decision of White males seeking membership in a historically Black fraternity. In reflecting on this study, the change that occurs throughout the life of the participants and their ability to adapt to the change should be further explored. Lastly, it may be of some value to complete a study comparing Black males seeking membership in historically White fraternities to White males seeking membership in historically Black fraternities.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations that must be acknowledged in regard to this study. The first limitation would be in regard to the accuracy of the number of White male members identified by the national headquarters of the Black fraternity. Because

information was lost at the national headquarters in a 2005 database update, the population for this study may have been, in reality, greater than was provided to the researcher. Given the inability to obtain an accurate count of White male members, negative stories that may exist were not able to be accessed. The 10 White members who did not respond to the initial email may reflect this population. It is possible that without their participation another dimension of this study was left unexplored.

Another limitation was in the alignment of interview questions with the theoretical framework. Though I was able to gain information needed for this study in the interviews, closer alignment would have simplified the task.

Lastly, the use of video chat software fit the needs of researcher and participants in this study, but conducting the interviews face-to-face would allow a better rapport to be established and would permit greater attention to be given to the substance of the interview by participants and the interviewer.

Closing Remarks and Reflections of a White Alpha

I started this study asking a question to which I believed I already knew the answer. I believed this because I had lived the White male seeking membership in a Black fraternity experience. I knew, logically, that not all experiences are the same but I expected the experiences of other White Alphas to be so similar to mine that interview responses would be like listening to my own story. I was definitely surprised at how different the participants' experiences were from my own, but they, too, had sought membership in a Black fraternity. For the participants, race did not seem to play a factor

leading to their decisions nor did it play a large role in their being accepted or not. In my experience, it was something that had to be overcome by long-term interactions and continuous demonstration of my character.

The study I have conducted was something I wanted documented for others to read about and know that White males in Black fraternities do exist. However, I did not want to disgrace my fraternity. I was pleasantly overwhelmed by the quick responses to my initial email from the seven participants and their eagerness to participate. I hoped that the stories of the participants would reflect only the great ideals I know Alpha and the brothers of Alpha uphold. I was proud to learn the experiences of the participants reflected brotherhood and fraternal companionship, no matter the color of their skin. It reemphasized the decision I made in 1999 to join this great fraternity knowing the aims of scholarship, manly deeds, and love for all mankind were not just words the fraternity spoke but words they truly lived.

APPENDIX A
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

Eligibility Requirements

College Chapter Membership

Any male student of an accredited college may be presented as a candidate for membership in a college chapter provided that he:

- Attends an institution where an active chapter is located;
- Has successfully completed one semester or two quarters of a regular year's program;
- Is a full-time student taking courses leading to his first academic degree;
- Is in good academic standing with a cumulative grade point average of not less than 2.5 on a 4.0 grade point scale; or equivalent except where the minimum grade required by the college for graduation is greater, then the minimum grade for graduation must be used for eligibility;
- Is of good character;
- Is registered to vote, if eligible and qualified; and
- Is sponsored by one (1) active (financial) member.

Alumni Chapter Membership

Any male holder of an earned baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university may be presented as a candidate for membership in an Alumni Chapter provided that he:

- Has been minimally conferred a four year baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution;
- Is of good character.
- Is registered to vote, if eligible and qualified.
- Is sponsored by one (1) active (financial) member.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Membership Intake Process
http://www.alpha-phi-alpha.com/Page.php?id=69

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Demographic Questions

1. Name
2. Race (Black, White, Asian, Latino, etc.)
3. Age
4. What undergraduate school are you attending or did you attended? If currently attending undergraduate school, what year are you in school (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior)?
5. What is the name of your fraternity?
6. What year and semester (Fall, Spring, Summer) did you join?
7. Did you initially join through an undergraduate or alumni chapter?
8. What is the name of the chapter you joined?
9. What city and state is this chapter located in?
10. Do you have any family members older than you who joined an NPHC organization? If so, please indicate the name of the fraternity or sorority.

Open-Ended Questions

1. Describe your upbringing, family structure, and home environment growing up including parents being married or separated, number of siblings and where they were in age compared to you, family's financial status, suburban or rural location, diversity of family and family friends, and neighborhood.
2. Describe the experience you had during your high school years including any extra-curricular activities, your group of friends, any personal relationships you may have had with girls or boys (boyfriend/girlfriend), and types of activities you participated in outside of school.
3. Describe any past life experiences that have influenced your decision to become a member of a historically Black fraternity.
4. Prior to joining your fraternity what aspects of fraternity life did you find interesting? What benefits did you feel would come from becoming a member?

5. Discuss the benefits you have received in being a member of your fraternity. Were your pre-membership expectations met?

6. Was there a time prior to joining your fraternity that you ever considered joining a historically White fraternity? If yes, why? If no, why not?

7. What perceptions, attitudes and feelings did you have about your fraternity prior to joining? Of these which ones did you feel you shared in common to make you feel a part of that group prior to joining?

8. What was the recruitment process for your fraternity like when you were recruited including any challenges from other pledges or members of the fraternity, related to recruitment, that you experienced.

9. Once you became a member, how would you describe your fraternity overall including its membership, characteristics, types of events conducted, and its reputation?

10. Taken as a whole describe your experience as a member of your fraternity.

11. What changes, if any, occurred in your behaviors, expectations, outlooks or thought processes after you became a member of your fraternity?

12. Discuss how your family and friends acted or reacted toward you once you became a member of a historically Black fraternity. Did they label you in the same manner that they may label your fraternity?

13. Describe any challenges you have faced and any challenges you continue to face as a member of your fraternity.

14. Please add any additional information you feel necessary as it relates to White male membership in a Black fraternity.

APPENDIX C
PARTICIPANT LETTER

September 19, 2011

Brother John Doe:

My name is Christopher Butts a proud White life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. through the undergraduate chapter of Xi Iota in the Fall of 1999. I am also currently a graduate student in the Department of Educational and Human Sciences at the University of Central Florida. I am conducting research on the life experiences that influence the decision of White males to seek membership in a Black fraternity.

The purpose of this study is to identify and investigate life experiences that influence the decision of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity, specifically Alpha Phi Alpha. I am asking for your participation in this study.

Your participation will involve postal, email, or phone correspondence and the use of a computer with the software "Skype" for one interview. The postal, email, and phone correspondence will be used to discuss any questions you may have before agreeing to the interview, to make sure you have access to a computer with "Skype," to send you a Participant Confirmation Letter and an Informed Consent Letter that all participants must sign and to make arrangements for a time and date for our interview to take place. The actual interview will take place at a date and time of your choosing and will last for one hour. The interview will be conducted through semi-structured open-ended interview questions. You will be provided with the interview questions prior to the interview.

Your name, chapter or college will not be used in the research. This is done to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all the participants. If you are willing to participate in this study or would like to ask questions please contact me at buttsc@seminolestate.edu or at (321) 278-7342. Thank you for your consideration and support for this study. I am extremely grateful.

06,

Bro. Christopher Butts
University of Central Florida Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational and Human Sciences

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT CONFIRMATION LETTER

September 19, 2011

Brother John Doe:

Thank you so much for assisting me with my dissertation research by agreeing to participate in an interview. I am a White member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and a current doctoral candidate at the University of Central Florida in the Department of Educational and Human Sciences. My research will explore life experiences that influence the decision of White males to seek membership in a historically Black fraternity, specifically Alpha Phi Alpha. This research study will provide further understanding on diversity of fraternities, challenges and benefits of membership in this organization.

I have attained permission from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Central Florida to conduct this study. Completion of this study will be valuable because it will lead to further understanding of diversity in fraternal organizations, more importantly the understanding of White males seeking membership in a historically Black fraternity. Enclosed, you will find information regarding the agreed upon date and time of your interview.

If you have any questions regarding your participation in the interview or questions about the interview itself, please contact me at (321) 278-7342 or at buttsc@seminolestate.edu. Thank you for your time and support with this study. You are greatly appreciated!

06,

Bro. Christopher Butts
University of Central Florida Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational and Human Sciences

APPENDIX E
FIELD NOTES

[redacted] interview Tues., Oct. 4, 2011 7pm.

Notes + Observations during interview:

very difficult to see facial expressions. dim lighting

1) - Short hair cut, goatee, shirt + tie.
- a little hesitant during answer until he got to talking about his dad.
- Seemed to look off quite a bit during answer.

2) - Seemed very sincere while answering.
- put thought into what he was saying.

- 4 siblings (3 girls, 1 male)

- exposure to A.A. culture from basketball due to amount of time @ practice.

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