

WHO YOU WITH

Who You With: A Qualitative Analysis Exploring Why Students of Color Join Historically
White Greek Letter Organizations

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the world of Sorority and Fraternity Life (SFL) there are on average four governing council communities: Interfraternity Council (IFC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) and the Panhellenic Council (PHA). IFC consist of 75 chapters that are traditionally housed, accept first year students for membership, large in numbers and historically comprised of white men. The North American Interfraternity Council (NIC) serves as the umbrella organization for IFC and it serves to advocate the needs of its member fraternities through enrichment of the fraternity experience; advancement and growth of the fraternity community; and enhancement of the educational mission of the host institution (North American Interfraternity Council, 2021). NPHC is comprised of the nine historically Black Greek Lettered Organizations (BGLOs), unhoused, have exclusive membership requirements to join, do not accept first semester students and the chapter size can range from single digits to double digits depending on the type of institution. Each of the nine NPHC organizations evolved during a period when African Americans were being denied essential rights and privileges afforded others. Racial isolation on predominantly White campuses and social barriers of class on all campuses created a need for African Americans to align themselves with other individuals sharing common goals and ideals (National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2021). MGC consist of organizations that have an emphasis on a cultural identity such as Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander, and sometimes LGBTQIA identity. The mission of the National Multicultural Greek Council is to promote multiculturalism by advocating for justice and equity, cultivating interfraternal relationships, and empowering its member organizations (National Multicultural Greek Council, 2021). Some organizations within MGC will allow first year students to join but

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have exclusive membership requirements to join and they are unhooded organizations. The chapter size could range between 10-20+ in members. PHA, which on most campuses is the largest council community, was established for women and comprised of 26 organizations. Panhellenic is the world's largest umbrella organization and is specifically charged with advancing the sorority experience (National Panhellenic Conference, 2021). They have a formal membership selection process that occurs primarily the week prior the first week of classes that is targeted at first year students. On most campuses these organizations are comprised of on average 200+ members and their membership is largely comprised of White women.

When incoming students think of SFL, they automatically affiliate membership with IFC and PHA and neglect to include members of our culturally based community from NPHC and MGC. As a Student Affairs professional with almost a decade of experience, one trend I have noticed is that women of color go through the formal NPC process and have zero knowledge of culturally based organizations. What this looks like in practice is you have students of color join these historically White organizations and that are often rooted in racist practices such as Delta Sigma Phi's White clause. In 1923, the organization introduced their White clause that stated, "Membership is confined to men of the Caucasian race, whose 'ideals and beliefs are those of modern Christian civilization'" (Harris, et al., 2019). When statements such as Delta Sigma Phi's White clause are woven into fraternal history, it erases the opportunity for students of color to join let alone create a safe environment for them. What has always been interesting to me is the why and how students of color learn about recruitment. This action research dissertation will examine why students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations. And further how does awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations impact students of color joining a Historically White Greek letter organization?

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Background, Context, History and Theoretical Framework

December 5, 1776, is a significant date in the fraternal movement. The birth of the first fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa was established at William and Mary College in Virginia. What began as a student organization lit the flame for the fraternal movement that has existed for 245 years. At the time African Americans and other minorities were not allowed access to higher education because it was “regulated by racist laws that excluded them from attending college or segregated them into specific colleges and universities” (Gillon, et al., 2019) nor were they allowed access to Greek-lettered organizations. 114 years later, the first international Latinx American fraternity, Alpha Zeta, was established on January 1, 1890 on the campus of Cornell University. On December 4, 1906, the first Black intercollegiate fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., was founded at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. In 1908, on the campus of Howard University, the first Black sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., was founded on January 15th. In 1916, the first Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) fraternity, Rho Psi Fraternity, was founded at Cornell University. On April 5, 1929, the first Asian interest sorority, Chi Alpha Delta, was founded on the campus of University of California at Los Angeles. On December 1, 1975, the first Latinx sorority, Lambda Theta Alpha Sorority, Inc., was founded at Kean University.

What is important to understand with this timeline is that culturally based fraternal organizations (CBFOs) emerged during the times of social unrest. Exclusionary clauses such as the second Morrill Act of 1890 and the Immigration Act of 1924 were just some of the policies that impacted students of color and their ability to access higher education. Rooted in a history of exclusion of underrepresented students, these “restricted policies created conditions in which

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Students of Color were “socially homeless, invisible to the majority, with no virtual or physical dwelling” (Gillon, et al., 2019). Many organizations have removed racist membership clauses, which have resulted in more students of color joining historically white Greek letter organizations (HWGLOs).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory, Narrative Methodology and Alexander Astin’s Theory of Involvement will provide the foundation for exploring the problem statement. These three theories explore the contributing factors that students of color experience and how the level of connectedness can contribute to this research study. Critical Race Theory examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012). It also emphasizes the importance of examining and attempting to understand the socio-cultural forces that shape how we and others perceive, experience, and respond to racism (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012). The narrative approach allows for rich description of the participants' experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences (Moen, 2006). It amplifies the voices that are often mute and silenced. By using this methodology to present findings, we can access rich layers of information that can provide a more in depth understanding of the participants’ point of view. Astin’s Theory of Involvement reinforces that student involvement in co-curricular activities such as student organizations, fraternities/sororities, assuming leadership positions and being engaged in campus residence halls has a positive correlation with retention and academics. It can be used both by researchers to guide their investigation of student development and by college administrators and faculty to help them design more effective learning environments (Astin, 1984). This also creates a sense of belonging for students when they find a component of campus that they feel connected to.

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Literature Review Themes

Recruitment process & Race

Using both Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Feminist Theory can be used to explore the impact white privilege has played in fraternity and sorority life. Gibbs' (2011) dissertation focused on the formalized sorority recruitment process used by traditionally White sororities and its impact on students of color. While this concept might be taboo to some, white privilege "does seek to address issues surrounding the traditions and customs in fraternity and sorority life" (Gibbs, 2011). The results of their study concluded that "the traditional practices fraternities and sororities cling to only further draw discriminatory barriers between traditionally White Greek organizations and potential multicultural members" (Gibbs, 2011).

Critical Race Theory

In a study using a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of membership in a traditionally, historically, and predominantly White collegiate social organization can explain how those experiences influence the Black racial identity development of Black members of White Greek letter organizations who attend different predominately white institutions (Ford, 2018). The four research questions utilized in their study included:

- How does membership in a White Greek letter organization influence the Black racial identity development of Black members
- How do experiences with members of White Greek letter organizations influence how Black members view their Blackness
- How do experiences with Black family members, friends, students, and Black members of Black Greek letter organizations influence how Black members view their Blackness

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- How do Black members reflect upon their undergraduate Greek experience and how it shaped their Black identity for today. The information presented in Fords' dissertation provides evidence-based research as to why students of color join historically White Greek-lettered organizations. Critical race theory examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression and attempts to understand how victims of systemic racism are affected by cultural perceptions of race and how they are able to represent themselves to counter prejudice.

Narrative methodology

The role of a researcher to “examine and understand how human actions are related to the social context in which they occur and how and where they occur through growth” (Moen, 2006). A narrative methodology can be used to analyze and make sense of the behaviors of others. This method reveals “how human beings experience the world, and narrative researchers collect these stories and write narratives of experience” (Moen, 2006). Through this process, participants from this study will share their stories and experiences of being members of historically white Greek letter organizations.

Creation of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations

There are organizations for White, Black and Latinx students in Greek Life. What is not discussed often is the role race plays in recruitment practices or how it shapes the experiences of members, chapters, organizations and overall fraternal community. What we have learned is that race is at the core as to why these organizations were created (Gillon et al., 2014). The research provides historical context as to how racially exclusive clauses were legal at one point in time and how that manifested into the creation of organizations for people of color. With many historically White Greek letter existing with these systemic racist clauses, there's a reason many

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of the recruitment practices are problematic. Because of this “Black collegians banded together to form Greek-letter organizations collectively referred to today as ‘the Divine Nine’. More recently, people from other racially minority groups, including Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and others, formed Greek-letter organizations” (Gillon et al., 2014).

Problem Statement

As of lately, more scholarly research has focused on how being a member of a historically white Greek organization impacts the identity of Black students (Ford, 2018), but there is room to explore why students of color join HWGOs. When students think of Greek life the immediate images are those that align with what they see in television and film. Often it is the chapter facility or the thousands of people trying to “rush” or join a chapter during recruitment. What is not discussed is how our upbringing and influence contributes to our decision for which type of organization we join. Do you join an HWGO or a CBFO? How does awareness of culturally based organizations factor into the decision-making process? As many culturally based organizations are disproportionately at a disadvantage per their peer council communities that have larger membership, housed and affluent in financial resources this impacts our ability to be seen on campuses.

Purpose of the Study

After working in Sorority and Fraternity Life for almost a decade and as a strong advocate for the fraternal experience, I want to examine what factors contribute to students of color to joining Historically White Greek Letter Organizations. As someone who has worked with the women’s organizations in the Panhellenic community during recruitment, you can count on one hand how many students of color start the rush process and how many complete it. What

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has always been interesting to me is the “why” and how students of color learn about the process of what it means to seek membership in fraternities and sororities. From an organizational standpoint I want to understand what “best practices” are being utilized by Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and how potential new members level of awareness of culturally based organizations influenced their decision to join their organization.

Research Question

RQ1: Why do students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations?

RQ2: How does awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations impact students of color joining a Historically White Greek Letter Organization?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

While scholars produce findings on how membership in Historically White Greek Letter Organizations impacts racial identity, there is a lack of research addressing why students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and how awareness of Culturally. Based Fraternal Organizations impact their decision to join a Greek letter organization. Through exploring these research questions, this study will help educate Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals, national fraternal leadership, parents and our very own Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors on what factors contribute to students of color joining Historically White Greek Letter Organizations. The results from this study can impact recruitment practices from national organization leadership and local campus-based professionals. This study will utilize Narrative Methodology, Critical Race Theory and Astin’s Theory of Involvement-to critically examine how race contributed to the participants’ selecting and seeking membership in a Greek letter organization. It is important that as a profession we acknowledge the disadvantages our

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culturally based organizations are faced with from lack of visibility on campus, low membership and financial disparities. Through this study it is my hope that these themes emerge in the conversation with participants as a factor for their decision to join their organization.

Over the past few year's scholars have researched the phenomena of race and its role in sorority and fraternity life. What has been explored is how the fraternal recruitment process used by traditionally White sororities and fraternities are exclusionary to students of color (Gibbs, 2011), yet there are students of color who seek to join although they are sometimes the only member of their race. Another focus area that has empirical support behind it is race is at the core of why culturally based organizations were created (Kimbrough & Hutcheson, 1998). This study aims to present evidence that highlights the factors that contribute to students of color joining historically white Greek letter organizations and providing understanding of their awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations. The combination of understanding the formation of Greek letter organizations and their exclusionary recruitment practices, impact on racial identity (Ford, 2018) and personal narratives from participants should answer the question: why do students of color choose to join historically white Greek-lettered organizations? And, further how does awareness of culturally based organizations impact students of color joining a historically white Greek letter organization? This study will address the gap that seeks to understand the contributing factors to a student of color's decision to join a historically white Greek letter organization.

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Rationale for Methodology

This study will utilize the Narrative Methodology framework along with referencing Critical Race Theory and Astin's Theory of Involvement. Since I will be interviewing participants, a narrative approach allows for storytelling to surface along with creating themes from participants. Coupling this methodology with Critical Race Theory explains how race and upbringing contributes to research questions asked. Creating a sense of belonging through involvement is explained in Astin's Theory of Involvement and aligning that theory with Critical Race Theory articulates the narratives of participants. This framework will reveal answers to my stated research questions: why students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and how does awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations impact students of color joining a Historically White Greek Letter Organization? To provide more validity in the responses from participants' interviews, a constant comparison narrative allows "the researcher to do what is necessary to develop a theory more or less inductively, namely categorizing, coding, delineating categories and connecting them" (Boeije, 2002). Glasser and Strauss constant comparison methodology makes it "possible to answer questions that have arisen from the analysis of and reflection on previous data" (Boeiji, 2002), which makes this method necessary for this study.

Instrumentation or Sources of Data

The instrument that will be used to gather data includes a ten-question survey. Through this tool, I will be able to capture demographic information, which national governing umbrella organization their chapter corresponds to, their awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations at the time of seeking membership, if their decision to join a Historically White Greek Letter Organization would change depending on their awareness of Culturally Based

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Fraternal Organizations and contact information for phase two. Phase two would include conducting interviews with participants that opted in to understand their narrative perspective. During the interviews I would ask seven questions around their upbringing, proximity to their cultural heritage and about their experiences in an historically white Greek letter organization. Through this method, we can piece together different themes that emerged through our conversations.

Data Collection

The first step to collecting data is to determine the target audience and what demographic identities they need to possess to be considered a participant. For this study, I am seeking alumni members of an HWGO who identify as a person of color with a degree from an accredited, four-year institution. The target age demographic for a participant is between the age of 24 and 30 years old. My reasoning for this age range is due to their ability to recall on their experiences as they might not be too removed from their undergraduate experience. They would also need to be willing to discuss their experiences as a member of a Historically White Greek Letter Organization and participate in a 60-minute virtual interview. Once I receive Institutional Review Board approval, I would begin to advertise in Higher Education related Facebook groups and the GroupMe platform as well to gain initial contact for participants. Utilizing a graphic, I will be able to explain the purpose of this research study, which is to answer my research questions: why do students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations and how does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining historically white Greek letter organizations and the requirements to participate. I will begin with obtaining authorization from the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA) organization to distribute my participant inquiry request. AFA provides exceptional experiences, a vibrant

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community, and essential resources for the success of fraternity/sorority advisors. Its vision is to be the catalytic force in aligning the fraternity/sorority experience with the changing dynamics and enduring principles of higher education. AFA is committed to professional development, academic and applied research that examines the entire spectrum of the fraternity/sorority experience and the advising profession, and collaborations within and between the higher education and interfraternal communities. This professional organization promotes professionals to participate in research driven studies such as mine. Once selected as a participant, I will have participants complete an interview consent agreement. It will outline how this research will be used and how it will be confidential with no identifying information being used, but how their perspectives will help answer my research questions.

Data Analysis Procedures

A narrative analysis is how stories and storytelling make meaning in our lives. It's based on the premise that any one person's story, analyzed in sufficient depth, represents a larger collection of social experiences. Once the interviews are conducted, I would begin to transcribe the interviews. Following that process would include merging stories and experiences to describe patterns of behavior or how people connect, but specifically looking for key words or phrases that surfaced from the participants. Using the coding process allows for us to make comparisons among the data and determine what information is important to this study. As a visual learner, I would create a visual aid to track themes found in the interviews. These themes would be supported with source integration utilizing quotes from participants. Combining systemic data and coding results in constant comparative method, as I will be comparing the covert themes with one another.

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Definition of Terms

Active: a fully initiated member of a chapter who is in good standing with the organization (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

Chapter: the local group of a national sorority or fraternity (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

Co-curricular/Extra-curricular activity: refers to any student activity, aside from the regular curricular program, which has organized purpose and which requires some degree of time, energy, and initiative on the part of the individual participating. (Bankhead, 2003)

Culturally Based Fraternal Organization: a sorority or fraternity that incorporates a specific culture(s) into its ritual, purpose, activities, and ceremonies. Member organizations that identify as Latinx, Multicultural, Black and Asian-American are all culturally based (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

Fraternity: often, a men's organization characterized by high ideals and leadership, scholastic achievement, fellowship, oaths of fidelity, and a ritual; however the term "fraternity may apply to an women's sorority (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

Greeks: Members of a fraternity or sorority. The term "Greek" is used because a majority of fraternities and sororities use Greek letters to distinguish themselves (Oregon State Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life, 2021)

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Historically White fraternities and sororities: Refers to the fraternities and sororities on the campus that are affiliated with the National Panhellenic Conference or the North American Interfraternity Council (Bankhead, 2003)

Informal Recruitment: Any time outside of a formal recruitment period where Greek organizations recruit new members. It is called informal because potential members need not follow a designated schedule set by the governing council (Oregon State Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life, 2021)

Membership intake: the process by which one becomes a new member of an sorority or fraternity. Typically used to reference culturally based Greek-letter organization practices of acquiring membership (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC): The governing body of the nine traditionally African American fraternities and sororities, also known as the "Divine Nine." (Oregon State Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life, 2021)

National Panhellenic Council (NPC): A national organization comprised of 26 women's fraternities and sororities, each of which is autonomous as a social, Greek-letter-society of college women (Oregon State Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life, 2021)

New Member: A person who has accepted a bid but is not yet initiated to a sorority or fraternity (Oregon State Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life, 2021)

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North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC): A national organization comprised of 69 fraternal organizations (mostly for men), each of which is autonomous as a social, Greek-letter-society of college men. (Oregon State Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life, 2021)

Potential new member (PNM): a term used to describe an individual seeking membership and/or participating in a recruitment process (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

Predominately White Institutions (PWI) : Refers to colleges and universities in which the majority of the student population is composed of White (Anglo) students and has been throughout the history of the institution (Wallace, 1993)

Primary recruitment: a designated period during which each National Panhellenic Conference sorority holds a series of organized events. Primary Recruitment is implemented and organized by the local Panhellenic council on university campuses (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

Sorority: an individual women's organization characterized by high ideals and leadership, scholastic achievement, fellowship, oaths of fidelity, ritual, and typically designated by Greek letters (The University of Texas at Austin Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2021)

Students of color: Any students who self-identify as being non-Caucasian/White (The Forum on Education Abroad Conference, 2015)

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Underrepresented students: Low-income, first-generation, LGBT+, and minority students are often underrepresented on college campuses; this means that they make up only a small fraction of the college's total population. These underrepresented groups face unique challenges both in applying to and attending college. LGBT+ and minority students are more likely to become the victims of discrimination than their white, heterosexual peers. Low-income and first-generation students may struggle more in the application and financial aid process than students who come from families where college is an expectation (Studentcaffe, 2021)

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

As a practitioner, I commit to ensuring that every ethical standard has been considered and that my participants feel valued and equitably heard while participating in this study. An ethical consideration that will also be factored into this study is an individual's willingness to participate. When recruiting participants for the study, I will be sure to use aliases or assign them a number as opposed to their preferred names to protect their identities. Along with creating pseudonym names for the participants, I would rename their affiliation as well. I do not want readers to view this as anti-students of color joining historically white Greek organizations, instead a true understanding of their experiences as a member. It is also important for me to reflect on my positionality to this study. I am a Black male that chose to join a historically Black Greek letter organization and should be aware of how my biases could arise when conducting interviews with participants. As a student affairs professional that has worked in Sorority and Fraternity Life for over seven years, primarily with culturally based fraternal organizations, I have to acknowledge my identities and how I approach this project. Understanding this, it is important to recognize how power dynamics connected to my identities might impact participant recruitment and involvement and impact response bias. It is my hope that those that volunteer

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will trust that their narratives will serve a greater purpose. To mitigate my natural response bias, I would conduct mock interviews to gain feedback from participants to understand how my body language, tone and expressions would be perceived by others. This would help ensure that I am creating an space where actual participants would feel comfortable and able to share their experiences and not feel judged or invalidated for making their decision to join an historically White Greek letter organization.

Summary

Through this study, it is my hope to answer the proposed research questions: Why do students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations and how does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining a historically white Greek letter organization. Utilizing Critical Race Theory, Astin's theory of involvement along with narrative methodology, can help illustrate an individual's experience and provide context as to their decision to join an historically White Greek letter organization.

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Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Literature Review

December 5, 1776, is a significant date in the fraternal movement. The birth of the first fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa was established at William and Mary College in Virginia. What began as a student organization lit the flame for the fraternal movement that has existed for 245 years. At the time African Americans and other minorities were not allowed access to higher education because it was “regulated by racist laws that excluded them from attending college or segregated them into specific colleges and universities” (Gillon, et al., 2019) nor were they allowed access to Greek-lettered organizations. 114 years later, the first international Latinx American fraternity, Alpha Zeta, was established on January 1, 1890, on the campus of Cornell University. On December 4, 1906, the first Black intercollegiate fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., was founded at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. In 1908, on the campus of Howard University, the first Black sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., was founded on January 15th. In 1916, the first Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) fraternity, Rho Psi Fraternity, was founded at Cornell University. On April 5, 1929, the first Asian interest sorority, Chi Alpha Delta, was founded on the campus of University of California at Los Angeles. On December 1, 1975, the first Latinx sorority, Lambda Theta Alpha Sorority, Inc., was founded at Kean University.

What is important to understand with this timeline is that culturally based fraternal organizations (CBFOs) emerged during the times of social unrest. Exclusionary clauses such as the second Morrill Act of 1890 and the Immigration Act of 1924 were just some of the policies that impacted students of color and their ability to access higher education. Rooted in a history of exclusion, these “restricted policies created conditions in which Students of Color were “socially

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homeless, invisible to the majority, with no virtual or physical dwelling” (Gillon, et al., 2019). Many organizations have removed racist membership clauses, which have resulted in more students of color joining historically white Greek letter organizations (HWGLOs).

As of lately, more scholarly research has focused on how being a member of a Historically White Greek Organization (HWGO) impacts the identity of Black students (Ford, 2018), but there is room to explore why students of color join HWGOs. When students think of sorority and fraternity life, the immediate images are those that align with what is showcased in television and film, which showcases parties on Greek row, a chapter facility or the hundreds of people trying to rush or join a chapter during recruitment week. There is an emphasis on how being a member of HWGO impacts the identity development for people of color, but what is not discussed is how our upbringing and influence contributes to our decision for which type of organization we join. Do you join an HWGO or a Culturally Based Fraternal Organization (CBFO)? How does awareness of CBFOs factor into the decision-making process? As many CBFOs are at a disadvantage per their peer council communities that have larger membership, housed and affluent in financial resources this impacts the visibility and awareness of CBFOs, specifically at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs).

As a strong advocate for the fraternity and sorority experience and serving in the capacity as a campus based professional since 2014, I want to examine what factors contribute to students of color joining HWGOs. As someone who has worked with the women’s organizations in the Panhellenic community during recruitment, you can count how many students of color start the formal recruitment process and how many are selected for membership. What has always been interesting to me is the “why” and how students of color learn about the process of what it means to seek membership into fraternities and sororities. From an organizational standpoint, I want to

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understand what recruitment practices are being utilized by HWGOs and how potential new members' level of awareness of CBFOs influenced their decision to join their organization.

Literature Search Strategy

To find relevant literature, I began to use search engines such as the Search, Organize, Research and INteract (SORIN), which is an academic library that provides access to a multitude of digital resources. We are provided access to SORIN by being affiliated with St. Edward's University to conduct research. I also expanded this search by using Google Scholar to find more scholarly support as well. Since my dissertation focuses on sorority and fraternity life, specifically students of color that are members of Historically White Greek Letter Organizations (HWGLOs), I used keywords “recruitment practices”, “students of color”, “marginalized identities”, “membership”, “exclusion policies” “sense of belonging” and “membership experiences” to guide my search. To organize my references, I created a Google spreadsheet and labeled a tab for each themes stating: recruitment/race, Critical Race Theory, Narrative Methodology, creation of CBFOs and a miscellaneous tab that consisted of definitions used in Greek Life. Each tab has headers that list the title of the article, website link, proper citation and the abstract.

Theoretical Framework

Analyzing race, sense of belonging and student involvement will be the focus of this theoretical framework. To understand how race contributes to a person of color, POC, deciding to join a historically White Greek Letter Organization, critical race theory will be used to understand the relationship between race, racism and power. Critical Race Theory (CRT) centers seven tenets:

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- Racism is a normal part of American life, often lacking the ability to be distinctively recognized, and thus is difficult to eliminate or address (Harper, et.,al., 2009)
- CRT rejects the notion of a “colorblind” society (Harper, et.,al., 2009)
- CRT gives voice to the unique perspectives and lived experiences of people of color(Harper, et.,al., 2009)
- CRT recognizes interest-convergence, there process whereby the White power structure will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Black only when they also promote White self-interest(Harper, et.,al., 2009)
- CRT utilizes revisionist history to re-examine America’s historical record, replacing comforting majoritarian interpretations of events with ones that square more accurately with minorities’ experiences (Harper, et.,al., 2009)
- CRT also relies on Racial Realist, or individuals who not only recognize race as a social construct, but also realize that racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status (Harper, et.,al., 2009)
- CRT continuously critiques claims of meritocracy that sustain White supremacy (Harper, et.,al., 2009)

The first tenet of CRT normalizes that racism is a common experience of most POC in America. The second tenet implies that having a color-blind lens causes more harm than good. It “insist only on treatment that is the same across the board, can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination.” (Harper, et.al., 2009). As mentioned previously, CRT centers race, power and privilege. Because racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class whites (physically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it.

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This theory also holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations, meaning that races are invented categories, manipulated and can be retired as needed. Theorists have drawn more attention to the ways the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times when it comes to the labor market. Using a Critical Race Theory framework allows for understanding the factors that contribute how a person of color views themselves and the importance of their race in correlation to their identity.

Hagerty (1995) states that a sense of belonging is the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment. Two components of this theory that relate to this study are feeling valued in the involvement or the experience of feeling valued, needed, or accepted and fit the perception that the individual's characteristics articulate with the system or environment. Students who join sororities and fraternities or participate in extracurricular are more than likely to persist (Astin, 1984). Communities are necessary for students of color and being involved in a Greek letter organization can foster a sense of belonging for students of color.

To understand the Greek choice made by students of color, I will also draw on Astin's Theory of Involvement. This theory has five basic components:

- Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (Astin, 1984)
- Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is, different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifest different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times (Astin, 1984)

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- Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The extent of a student's involvement in academic work, for instance, can be measured quantitatively (how many hours the student spends studying) and qualitatively (whether the student reviews and comprehends reading assignments or simply stares at the textbook and daydreams) (Astin, 1984)
- The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program(Astin, 1984)
- The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (Astin, 1984)

Critical Race Theory and Alexander Astin's Theory of Involvement will provide the foundation for exploring my problem statement. These two theories explore the contributing factors that students of color experience and how the level of connectedness can contribute to this research study. Critical Race Theory examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (Delgado, Stefanic, 2012). It also emphasizes the importance of examining and attempting to understand the socio-cultural forces that shape how we and others perceive, experience, and respond to racism (Delgado, Stefanic, 2012). This framework will reveal answers to my stated research questions: why students of color join HWGOs and how does awareness of CBFOs impact students of color joining a HWGO?

Review of the Research and Methodological Literature

There are organizations for White, Black, Latinx and Asian American students in Greek Life. What is not discussed often is the role race plays in recruitment practices or how it shapes

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the experiences of members, chapters, organizations and overall fraternal community. What we have learned is that race is at the core as to why these organizations were created (Gillon, et.al., 2014). The research provides historical context as to how racially exclusive clauses were legal at one point in history and how that manifested into the creation of organizations for people of color. With many HWGOs existing with these systemic racist clauses, there is a reason many of the recruitment practices are problematic. Because of this, “Black collegians banded together to form Greek-letter organizations collectively referred to today as ‘the Divine Nine’. More recently, people from other racially minority groups, including Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and others, formed Greek-letter organizations” (Gillon, et.al., 2014). Perhaps one of the most salient practices to engage African American students at PWIs is involvement in African American and cultural organizations (Greyerbiehl, Mitchell, 2014). CBFOs were created to uplift their minoritized communities. Historically Black sororities can be considered “intersectional support groups” because they provide African American women a unique space on predominately White campuses—space where the overlapping of race and gender are acknowledged (Greyerbiehl, Mitchell, 2014).

Using both Critical Race Theory and critical race feminist theory Gibbs (2011) explored the impact White privilege has played in fraternity and sorority life . Gibbs’ (2011) dissertation focused on the formalized sorority recruitment process used by traditionally White sororities and its impact on students of color. While this concept might be taboo to some, white privilege “does seek to address issues surrounding the traditions and customs in fraternity and sorority life” (Gibbs, 2011). The results of their study concluded that “the traditional practices fraternities and sororities cling to only further draw discriminatory barriers between traditionally White Greek organizations and potential multicultural members”

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(Gibbs, 2011). During Newsome's (2009) dissertation they utilized a phenomenological study using an exploratory and naturalistic design. This assisted with describing the meaning of the Black male experience in historically White fraternities and the factors that influenced Black males' decisions to become involved. To address (Newsome, 2009) their research questions, a combination of open-ended, semi-structured individual interviews was conducted with participants who are Black males in historically White fraternities at a predominately White research I university in the southeastern United States. In their interviews with eleven Black male undergraduate students, they were able to identify "pre-collegiate background factors that influenced the decision of Black males to seek membership in a historically White fraternity" (Newsome, 2009). A common theme included participants feeling that their environment played a significant role in their decision to join a historically White fraternity (Newsome, 2009). Out of the eleven participants only one lived in a Black neighborhood, prior to arriving at the university. Another question posed was the anticipated benefits and other factors influenced the decision of study subjects to seek membership in a historically White fraternity. A common theme shared by three participants was a feeling of not fitting in with other Black students (Newsome, 2009). Based on environment and predominately White social friend groups, these factors were a motivating factor as to why they joined their White organizations. Some of the Black and Asian members in HWFS organizations believed that "Whites just have their stuff together" and mentioned "Yeah, White people can be a little prejudiced, but who isn't?" (Salinas, Gillon, Camacho, 2019). On an individual oppression level, "as cross-racial fraternity and sorority members interact with each other, oftentimes, racially diverse students experience negative stereotypes, alienation, isolation, and marginalization from their peers" (Salinas, Gillon, Camacho, 2019).

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By using a phenomenological approach, exploring the experiences of membership in a traditionally, historically, and predominantly White collegiate social organization can explain how those experiences influence the Black racial identity development of Black members of White Greek letter organizations who attend different predominately White institutions (Ford, 2018). The four research questions utilized in their study included:

1. How does membership in a White Greek Letter Organization influence the Black racial identity development of Black members?

2. How do experiences with members of White Greek Letter Organizations influence how Black members view their Blackness?

3. How do experiences with Black family members, friends, students, and Black members of Black Greek letter Organizations influence?

4. How Black members view their Blackness and for post-graduation how do Black members reflect upon their undergraduate Greek experience and how it shaped their Black identity for today?

Through their dissertation it provided evidence-based research as to why students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations. Critical Race Theory examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression and attempts to understand how victims of systemic racism are affected by cultural perceptions of race and how they can represent themselves to counter prejudice. My goal is to analyze the impact race has on making the decision to join a CBFO or a HWGLO and utilizing Critical Race Theory, to examine how historical racist clauses are prevalent in recruitment practices have resurfaced in different forms in today's society.

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Summary

While scholars produce findings on how membership in HWGOs impacts racial identity, there is a lack of research addressing why students of color join HWGOs and how awareness of CBFOs impact their decision to join a Greek letter organization. Through exploring these research questions, this study will help educate Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals, national leadership of Greek organizations, families of students, and the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors what factors contribute to students of color joining HWGOs and how to better support students of color collegiate experience. The results from this study can impact recruitment practices from national organization leadership and local campus-based professionals. Utilizing Narrative Methodology, Critical Race Theory and Astin's Theory of Involvement will be used to critically examine how race contributed to the participants selecting and seeking membership in a Greek Letter Organization. It is important that as a profession we acknowledge the disadvantages our CBFOs are faced with from lack of visibility on campus, low membership and financial disparities. Through this study it is my hope that these themes emerge in the conversation with participants as a factor for their decision to join their organization.

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CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study utilized the narrative methodology framework along with referencing Critical Race Theory and Astin's Theory of Involvement. Since I will be interviewing participants, a narrative approach allows for storytelling to surface along with creating themes from participants. Coupling this methodology with critical race theory, it can explain how race and upbringing contributes to research questions asked. Creating a sense of belonging through involvement is explained in Astin's theory of involvement and aligning that theory with critical race theory articulates the narratives of participants. This framework will reveal answers to my stated research questions: why students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations and How does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining a historically white Greek letter organization?

Research Questions

RQ1: Why do students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations?

RQ2: In what ways does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining a Historically White Greek Letter Organization?

Purpose and Design of the Proposed Study

While scholars produce findings on the ways membership in Historically White Greek Letter Organizations impacts racial identity, there is a lack of research addressing why students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and how awareness of Culturally

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Based Fraternal Organizations impact their decision to join a Greek letter organization. Through exploring these research questions, this study will help educate Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals, national leadership, parents and our very own Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors on what factors contribute to students of color joining Historically White Greek Letter organizations. The results from this study can impact recruitment practices from national organization leadership and local campus-based professionals. This study will utilize Narrative Methodology, Critical Race Theory and Astin's Theory of Involvement-to critically examine how race contributed to the participants' selecting and seeking membership in a Greek letter organization. It is important that as a profession we acknowledge the disadvantages our culturally based organizations are faced with from lack of visibility on campus, low membership and financial disparities. Through this study it is my hope that these themes emerge in the conversation with participants as a factor for their decision to join their organization.

Over the past few year's scholars have researched the phenomena of race and its role in sorority and fraternity life. What has been explored is how the fraternal recruitment process used by traditionally White sororities and fraternities are exclusionary to students of color (Gibbs, 2011), yet there are students of color who seek to join although they are sometimes the only member of their race. Another focus area that has empirical support behind it is race is at the core of why culturally based organizations were created (Kimbrough & Hutcheson, 1998). This study aims to present evidence that highlights the factors that contribute to students of color joining historically white Greek letter organizations and providing understanding their awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations. The combination of understanding the formation of Greek letter organizations and their exclusionary recruitment practices, impact on racial identity (Ford, 2018) and personal narratives from participants should answer the question: why do

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students of color choose to join historically white Greek-lettered organizations? And, further how does awareness of culturally based organizations impact students of color joining a historically white Greek letter organization? This study will address the gap that seeks to understand the contributing factors to a student of color's decision to join a historically white Greek letter organization.

Research Population and Sampling Method

The first step to collecting data is to figure out who is my target audience and what demographic identities they need to possess to be considered a participant. For this study, I am employing purposive non-random sampling (Nardi, 2008) in order to reach the profile of people who best fit the purpose of the study. This will involve seeking alumni that attended an accredited four-year institution that identifies as a person of color. They will also need to identify as a person of color who holds membership in a Historically White Greek Letter Organization (HWGLO). I would be interested in hearing from individuals that are as old as 30, but as young as 24. My reasoning for this age range is due to their ability to recall on their experiences as they might not be too removed from their undergraduate experience if beyond that age range. They would also need to be willing to discuss their experiences as a member of a HWGLO.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation will involve a two-fold mixed method approach that will be used to gather data that includes a brief 12 question short answer and likert-type survey, see appendix A. Through this tool, I will be able to capture demographical data, which national governing

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umbrella organization their chapter corresponds to, their level of awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations, if their decision to join a Historically White Greek Letter Organization would change depending on their awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations and contact information for phase two. Phase two would include conducting interviews with participants that opted in to understand their narrative perspective. During the interviews I would ask seven questions around their upbringing, proximity to their cultural heritage and about their experiences in an Historically White Greek Letter Organization, see appendix B. Through this method, we can informally trace themes together and have a natural conversation with follow up and clarify about responses from Phase One.

Data Collection

After I received Institutional Review Board approval, I began to advertise in Higher Education related Facebook groups and the GroupMe platform as well to gain initial contact for participants. Utilizing a graphic, I will be able to explain the purpose of this research study, which is to answer my research questions: why do students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations and how does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and the requirements to participate. I will begin with obtaining authorization from the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA) organization to distribute my participant inquiry request. AFA provides exceptional experiences, a vibrant community, and essential resources for the success of fraternity/sorority advisors. Its vision is to be the catalytic force in aligning the fraternity/sorority experience with the changing dynamics and enduring principles of higher education. AFA is committed to professional development, academic and applied research that examines the entire

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spectrum of the fraternity/sorority experience and the advising profession, and collaborations within and between the higher education and interfraternal communities. This professional organization promotes professionals to participate in research driven studies such as mine. Once a participant has expressed interest in participating in the study by replying to recruitment messaging, I will send the participant informed consent documentation in order for them to begin Phase One. It will outline how this research will be used and how it will be confidential with no identifying information being used, but how their perspectives will help answer my research questions. The final question on the 12 item Phase one (appendix A) asks participants if they are will to participate in a follow interview lasting between 30-60 minutes.

In phase two, the narrative approach is utilized to allow for rich description of the participants' experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences (Moen, 2006). It amplifies the voices that are often mute and silenced. By using this methodology to present findings, we can access rich layers of information that can provide a more in depth understanding of the participants' point of view. There are six qualities of narrative research that are purposeful with this study:

- Narrative offers rich insights into lived experiences
- Narrative approaches shed light on the meaning of personal experience
- Narrative offers insights into the trajectory of life across time
- Narrative permits a focus on both the *personal* and the *social*
- Narrative offers insights into what life is like as an *embodied*-living, breathing, feeling-human being
- Narrative research calls for *ethical relational engagement*

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Lived experiences are a center focus for narrative methods. Rather than focusing on constructs, opinions or abstractions, narrative methods prioritize an individual's experience of concrete events (Carless & Douglas, 2017). It is in these moments the researcher can understand the individual's subjective response to those events. Recalling stories is also another method to shed light on the meaning that was created and communicated. It positions the participant to be an "expert on her/his own life, understanding and co-constructing meaning through a reciprocal, dialogical interaction" (Carless & Douglas, 2017). Storytelling is also meaningful because it follows a portion of the storyteller's lifespan. Sociocultural context is provided through this method which provides sense of understanding how an individual's story is shaped by the dominant narrative/s within their culture. Narrative studies "reveal how bodies and stories impact, shape and constitute each other" (Carless & Douglas, 2017). Relationships matter between the researcher and participant. Over time participants should feel safe to express emotions and vulnerabilities. As researchers our role is to "examine and understand how human actions are related to the social context in which they occur and how and where they occur through growth" (Moen, 2006). A Narrative Methodology can be used to analyze can be used to make sense of the behaviors of others. This method reveals "how human beings experience the world, and narrative researchers collect these stories and write narratives of experience" (Moen, 2006). Through this process, participants from this study will share their stories and experiences of being members of HWGOs.

The narrative approach allows for a rich description of these experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences (Wang, Geale, 2015). By using the narratives format to present findings, researchers can access rich layers of information that provide a more in-depth understanding of the particulars of the participants'

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point of view (Wang, Geale, 2015). Specifically in this study, it is the hope that through conducting interviews themes emerge that address the sense of isolation and connection between students of color and their decision to join a HWGLO. This could examine the dynamic between race and sense of belonging. CBFOs were established during a time of racial segregation and the isolation of students of color on college campuses, and by using a narrative approach, not only are we creating space for students of color that have joined a HWGLO to be seen, heard and validated, but we are also addressing if CBFOs are serving their purpose which is to uplift and bring their communities together.

Data Analysis Procedure

A narrative analysis is how stories and storytelling make meaning in our lives. It's based on the premise that any one person's story, analyzed in sufficient depth, represents a larger collection of social experiences. Once the interviews are conducted, I would begin to transcribe the interviews. Following that process would include merging stories and experiences to describe patterns of behavior or how people connect, but specifically looking for key words or phrases that surfaced from participants Using the coding and constant comparative method processes (Glaser & Strauss, 1976) allows for us to make comparisons among the data and determine what information is important to this study.

As a visual learner, I would create a visual aid to track themes found in the interviews using an excel spreadsheet to organize major codes and categories. These themes would be supported with source integration utilizing quotes from participants. Combining systemic data and coding results in constant comparative method, as I will be comparing the covert themes

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with one another. The video conferencing platform, Zoom, allows for an electronic transcription when recording. I would use this and make additional edits to correct spelling or grammar errors.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design

Recognizing that my study will be performed during a short timeline, that would be a limitation that would impact the research design outcome. I am aiming at interviewing ten individuals but based off the created timeline that might have to be adjusted. Another limitation would be if all my participants identified as the same gender or majority one gender over the other. That would limit the number of voices missing from the conversation and remain untold. To maintain credibility, each participant would be provided a pseudonym to remain confidential but would still use the name of their organizations.

Expected Findings

After the completion of my study, I am expecting to be provide context with supported data that answer my research question:

- RQ1: Why do students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations?
- RQ2: In what ways does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining a historically white Greek letter organization?

I am expecting to better understand the impact upbringing, race, proximity to their own culture and other factors that contribute to the selection of their organization. I am seeking to understand what recruitment practices appear to be the most effective for HWGLO and what aspects of CBFO needs to be addressed when trying to recruit. This study is intended to help campus based

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professionals understand how to best assist students of color from every path of life with options when it comes to involvement in sorority and fraternity life.

Ethical Issues of the Proposed Study

As a Student Affairs practitioner, I commit to ensuring that every ethical standard has been considered and that my participants feel valued while participating in the experiment. When recruiting participants for the study, I will be sure to use alias names or assign them a number as opposed to their birth names to protect their identities. An ethical consideration that should be factored into this study, is the individual's willingness to participate in the study. Along with creating pseudonym names for the participants, I should rename their affiliation as well. I do not want readers to view this as anti-students of color joining historically white Greek organizations, instead a true understanding of their experiences as a member. It is also important for me to reflect on my positionality to this study. I am a Black male that chose to join a historically Black Greek letter organization and should be aware of how my biases could arise when conducting interviews with participants. As a student affairs professional that has worked in Sorority and Fraternity Life for over seven years, primarily with culturally based fraternal organizations, I have to acknowledge my identities and how I approach this project. Understanding this, it is important to recognize how power dynamics connected to my identities might impact participant recruitment and involvement. It is my hope that those that volunteer will trust that their narratives will serve a greater purpose.

Summary

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This study will be using a snowball method to collect candidates to interview. Using social media and my professional organizations, I would share my flyer that address my topic, list requirements to be a participant and my contact information. Participants would complete a ten-question survey to obtain demographic data, which national governing umbrella organization their chapter corresponds to, their level of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations at the time of seeking membership, if their decision to join a Historically White Greek Letter Organization would change depending on their awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations and contact information for phase two. Phase two would include conducting interviews with participants that opted in to understand their narrative perspective. Once approved by the Institutional Review Board, I would begin obtaining participants. After the interviews were complete the transcription process would begin. This would highlight common themes, generate quotes that would answer my research questions and create new meaning to what it means to be a student of color when figuring out which path for membership is being considered.

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CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

This study utilized the narrative methodology framework along with referencing Critical Race Theory and Astin's Theory of Involvement. Since I interviewed participants, a narrative approach allows for storytelling to surface along with creating themes from participants. By using a narrative approach, to explore the experiences of membership in a traditionally, historically, and predominantly White collegiate social organization can explain how those experiences influence the Black racial identity development of Black members of White Greek letter organizations who attend different predominately White institutions (Ford, 2018). Coupling this methodology with critical race theory explains how race and upbringing contributes to research questions asked. Creating a sense of belonging through involvement is explained in Astin's theory of involvement and aligning that theory with critical race theory articulates the narratives of participants. Hagerty (1995) states that sense of belonging is the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment. Two components of this theory that relate to this study are feeling valued in the involvement or the experience of feeling valued, need, or accepted and fit the perception that the individual's characteristics articulate with the system or environment. Students who join sororities and fraternities or participate in extracurricular are more than likely to persist (Astin, 1984). This framework will reveal answers to my stated research questions: why students of color join historically white Greek letter organizations and how does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining a historically white Greek letter organization?

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While scholars produce findings on the ways membership in Historically White Greek Letter Organizations impacts racial identity, there is a lack of research addressing why students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and how awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations impact their decision to join a Greek letter organization. Through exploring these research questions, this study will help educate Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals, national leadership, parents and our very own Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors on what factors contribute to students of color joining Historically White Greek Letter organizations. The results from this study can impact recruitment practices from national organization leadership and local campus-based professionals. This study will utilize Narrative Methodology, Critical Race Theory and Astin's Theory of Involvement-to critically examine how race contributed to the participants' selecting and seeking membership in a Greek letter organization. It is important that as a profession we acknowledge the disadvantages our culturally based organizations are faced with from lack of visibility on campus, low membership and financial disparities. Through this study it is my hope that these themes emerge in the conversation with participants as a factor for their decision to join their organization.

Over the past few year's scholars have researched the phenomena of race and its role in sorority and fraternity life. What has been explored is how the fraternal recruitment process used by traditionally White sororities and fraternities are exclusionary to students of color (Gibbs, 2011), yet there are students of color who seek to join although they are sometimes the only member of their race. Another focus area that has empirical support behind it is race is at the core of why culturally based organizations were created (Kimbrough & Hutcheson, 1998). This study aims to present evidence that highlights the factors that contribute to students of color joining historically White Greek letter organizations and providing understanding their

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awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations. The combination of understanding the formation of Greek letter organizations and their exclusionary recruitment practices, impact on racial identity (Ford, 2018) and personal narratives from participants should answer the question: why do students of color choose to join historically white Greek-lettered organizations? And, further how does awareness of culturally based organizations impact students of color joining a historically white Greek letter organization? This study will address the gap that seeks to understand the contributing factors to a student of color's decision to join a historically white Greek letter organization. This chapter will highlight the findings, themes and nuances from participant questionnaires and follow up interviews. These included new thinking towards better understanding Greek choice through the following major themes: social and cultural capital, allusively complex, welcoming environment and altruism. These provide context of participation and will connect to overall recommendations and implications for future practice in higher education and beyond.

Description of the Sample

From the initial outreach that was conducted, there were a total of 26 individuals that completed the survey. This consisted of 13 female identifying individuals and 13 male identifying individuals. The age range was between 24 and 30 years old. The ethnic breakdown highlights 1 Asian identifying individual, 16 Black/African American individuals, four Latinx/Hispanic and four Two or More identifying individuals. The initiation year range was between 2010 and 2018. 13 individuals are members of the National Panhellenic Conference and 12 are members of the North American Interfraternity Council. From this initial data, the goal was to select 10 individuals to move forward in the virtual interview process. The final 10 are reflected in the below in Appendix A:

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| Participant # | Gender | Age | Ethnicity | Initiation Year | National Conference Affiliation | Level of Awareness of CBFOs in undergrad |
|---------------|--------|-----|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Female | 30 | Black/African American | 2010 | NPC | 3 |
| 2 | Female | 30 | Two or More | 2011 | NPC | 2 |
| 3 | Female | 30 | Two or More | 2014 | NPC | 1 |
| 4 | Female | 28 | Black/African American | 2015 | NPC | 1 |
| 5 | Female | 26 | Asian | 2016 | NPC | 3 |
| 6 | Male | 30 | Black/African American | 2010 | NIC | 5 |
| 7 | Male | 26 | Black/African American | 2014 | NIC | 2 |
| 8 | Male | 26 | Latinx/Hispanic | 2015 | NIC | 2 |
| 9 | Male | 27 | Black/African American | 2016 | NIC | 2 |
| 10 | Male | 31 | Black/African American | 2010 | NIC | 2 |

Data Analysis

In appendix A, the following data was obtained: gender expression, age range, ethnicity, year of initiation, umbrella organization, level of awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations, gauging if they knew about CBFOs at the time and would they have joined a CBFO versus a HWGLO. There were a total of 26 responses to the initial survey. The idea was to be intentional and have a diverse survey population. There were 13 women combined with 13 men that completed this survey. This initial survey data was filed away should more participants be needed to replace another participant. After the interviewing process was completed, the data analysis process could now begin. By launching a constant comparative methodology where excerpts of the raw data was sorted and then categorized into themes, it was able to support the storytelling of the participants and assist with answering the initial research

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questions. Once all ten interviews were completed, notes on repeated occurrences and patterns were transcribed. This was reflected in the interviewees tone, body language and responses to the questions asked.

It was important to ensure that there was a strong representation of diverse populations that moved forward to the interviewing process. A trend that was apparent was the fact that 65% of participants identified as Black/African American. The zoom interviews were intended to utilize a narrative methodology so participants could tell their stories. The narrative approach allows for rich description of the participants' experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences (Moen, 2006). It amplifies the voices that are often mute and silenced. By using this methodology to present findings, we can access rich layers of information that can provide a more in depth understanding of the participants' point of view. During the interviews, it was noticeable how participants were uncomfortable with the direct questions that centered around their overall experience of being members of HWGLO.

Turner (2022) states that constant comparison encourages the researcher to stay deeply entwined with the data, and the words of the participants, without relying on their own remembered interpretations. This was done by comparing responses from participants and generating themes. The idea is that comparison can show differences (and similarities) through the data, and the comparisons help you understand the story of why these differences arise (Turner, 2022). Using this constant comparative method for the ten participant interviews the following themes emerged: social and cultural capital, allusively complex, welcoming environment and altruism. Further along codes and supportive evidence outlined in charts will explain the connection between their responses and the initial research questions.

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Practical Application of Findings

The first theme could be summarized as Social and Cultural capital. Many of the participants articulated that their awareness of HWGLOs was due to already having former relationships with current members that they went to high school with or they saw them on campus involved in other leadership roles. Hagerty (1995) advanced the notion of belonging and how campuses function as a shared environment that all students want to be a part of, but do not negotiate it the same way. It was also made apparent that despite mainstream media and predominantly white depictions of Greek Life, it was a way to build community and make students of color on campus feel more at home in a HWGLO.

Social and Cultural Capital

| Code | Supportive Evidence |
|------------------------|---|
| Previous relationships | <p>“...the group that was actually being started by a lot of gentlemen who graduated from my area around the same major...”</p> <p>“I just started getting involved on campus ended up making some friends with a group of guys who were in the process of starting a new chapter of a fraternity at our school. That is really kind of what got me into it, just being with those guys all the time”</p> <p>“...a lot of folks that I was around like leadership wise, and camp were Greek and then I was also part of Student Government Association. So, I was a freshman representative for SGA and then after that, I went through the IFC recruitment process”</p> <p>“I was recruited to join my sorority by some women that I had actually gone to high school with...I’d known them for years, I trusted and respected them...they were just trying to foster a relationship with me”</p> <p>“I knew that CBFOs existed, specifically historically black organizations and IFC groups existed as well....I knew that I would want to use it in order to propel myself professionally</p> |
| White Cultural Capital | <p>“...I already got in with the Black people and communicated with them well, and network with them</p> |

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| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| | <p>well, and so I felt like, the next step was to kind of do it on the white side”</p> <p>“I wanted to do something different from my own community, my community growing up outside of Los Angeles was about 95% Mexican, my high school it was completely Mexican”</p> <p>“...typically White kids going to university and like that being the social piece of their college experience”</p> |
| Seeking “traditional experience” | <p>“...thinking about college and probably what you see on TV and growing up like it’s the very quintessential college experience...I think that’s sort of what I was looking to get out of it”</p> <p>“And I wanted to make friends so I thought the easier way was to join a fraternity or sorority. So I wanted to get involved in Greek</p> <p>Life, just because I didn’t know a lot about it going into it”</p> <p>“...because I was exposed to historically white Greek letter organizations early on, I had an understanding of the cost. Because I wasn’t exposed to Black Greek letter organizations, I didn’t know what I was potentially signing up for or what that experience would have looked like”</p> |
| Sociocultural Capital | <p>“...a lot of my friends went to school here in California or like other states, so I knew what they were in, like Panhellenic sororities and stuff like that. I knew a little bit about historically black sororities and stuff like that...”</p> <p>“A lot of people in my family are Greek. My dad is an Alpha, my brother a Kappa, and my aunt is an AKA...I think I know just a lot of alumni a lot of the notable people in each of those organizations”</p> <p>“So I knew that was the one I wanted to join based off of like how I saw them in the classroom and how I saw them represented on campus”</p> |

Allusively Complexity

The second major theme discussed is the idea of Allusive Complexity when it comes to new thinking towards better understanding Greek choice. This particular theme highlights the disparity in mental load and the invisible obstacles that students of color uniquely and unfairly negotiate. Students of color are met with a choice involving sacrifice and negotiating priorities of value and future, very different their White counterparts.

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It is not as simple for a person of color to negotiate their environment in the same way as their White peers. There are nuances to the decision making, and elements of mental load that Caucasian students never have to consider. This finding speaks to how students of color negotiate some of the invisible challenges towards choice and community in pursuit of belonging that Caucasian learners do not. Critical Race Theory continuously critiques claims of meritocracy that sustain White supremacy (Harper, et.,al., 2009) and in this study one might question how joining a HWGLO suppresses the participants salient racial identity to assimilate in whiteness.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Disconnection with Black community</p> | <p>“I just didn’t have very much interest in it I guess, going for pledging or rushing Alpha or Kappa, I think for me, where I felt most comfortable was probably in a more historically White fraternity, just because I don’t have a strong relationship with the Black community at UT” “...seeing another person that looked like me, that was actually a big part of it... once I saw another black male going through the same process was like okay, I can do this, this might be something that I’m actually interested in..”</p> |
| <p>Settling</p> | <p>“I went to the University of Hawaii at Manoa and there weren’t any options...there was maybe a Hawaiian sorority that you could join but as far as Panhellenic, there was only one option “And I think if I had more options I don’t know if I would have chosen the sorority that I was in like, I’m not an active member”</p> |
| <p>Proximity to Whiteness</p> | <p>“I talked to my RA who was an AKA and she kind of said that the reason she went through she had a bunch of reasons, but the one that stuck out to me was that she didn’t want to join an organization that not too long ago wouldn’t have allowed her mom to be in it. And I am mixed, but my mom is white and so to me, I like what she said but I didn’t resonate with me in that regard, because I was like if my mom had gone through, she would have gone to a historically white one” “I spent the majority of my time around, like white people and so it never seemed strange to me to continue to be in that space”</p> |

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Welcoming Environment

The third major theme discussed is welcoming environment that is presented with HWGLO. I was initially shocked that this was a theme that emerged. This theme highlights how HWGLO can be a space where people of color feel safe. Compared to CBFLOs, the HWGLOs were more visible and often were the first interactions for students of color when attending their university. It was also evident that there was a sense of appreciation that HWGLOs were forthcoming when it came to their recruitment information and cost of membership. There was also the component of chapter facilities that increased the HWGLOs presence on campus contributed to participants reasonings to join. Although some lacked ethnic diversity, when participants saw someone that looked like them, it presented a sense of being comfortableness. The research does inform us “students who join sororities and fraternities or participate in extracurricular are more than likely to persist (Astin, 1984).” Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is, different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times (Astin, 1984). Within this theme, a positive correlation can be concluded that welcoming environments can impact how a student of color perceives a HWGLO.

| Code | Supportive Evidence |
|------------|---|
| Relational | “...because of the embrace and the respect that they showed me...it was just a good familial type of relationship” “I found the people...this is like where I’m supposed to be like these are the people I’m supposed to know” “it just felt natural, it didn’t feel like I was being recruited to meet a quota recruited for the sake of recruitment. The women I was meeting were just trying |

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|-------------|---|
| | to get to know me and I don't think they would have been offended if I decided not to join or joined another group" |
| Accepting | <p>"there were some sororities, white sororities that were trying to literally have me in their sorority because I was Black, then they can call that like the token or meet their quota for diversity and that was not the case with Zeta"</p> <p>"it just felt a little bit more comfortable"</p> <p>"...they never made me feel uncomfortable or out of place or pressured to join them...I just felt comfortable"</p> |
| Siblinghood | <p>"...very impactful philanthropy...one of the members was actually diagnosed with osteosarcoma, which was cancer in his bone in the shoulder and just to see how the chapter quickly mobilized to raise money for him"</p> <p>"He was able to sort of look past that to continue to support me and show up to the best of his ability and be there for me"</p> |
| Visibility | <p>"I think it was the exposure that was at the University of Cincinnati. Those were the guys that I was exposed to"</p> <p>"...was the developed like rush week...I felt like it was marketed a lot more to me"</p> <p>"So I just think I also didn't have enough knowledge about them [Delta Sigma Theta] and their recruitment process to pursue that. Versus like the Panhellenic sororities they were out tabling and on social media and everything. So I just knew about when the recruitment time was coming a lot more and the steps to go through recruitment"</p> <p>"It kind of presented itself, you know, the other organizations [CBFOs] didn't present themselves"</p> <p>"...so the NPC ones had houses. The NPHC ones did not. I didn't really know anything about them, they'd put up fliers and they'd be taken down immediately...and the other one was just like easier, it just made more sense"</p> <p>"But I don't feel like I was as exposed to those women [CBFOs], had an opportunity to meet them, get to know them, learn what their recruitment process looked like to see if it was even an option for me to join one of those groups. So I think it was more a matter of exposure"</p> |

Altruism

The fourth theme that was evident could be labeled altruism, understanding that being a member of a HWGLO personified the idea that the concern for the well-being of others mattered. Being a member of a HWGLO prepared participants for life after college with the amount of professional

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development they experienced. It was also shared through service opportunities, members were able to understand the concept of selflessness which overall would impact them potentially finding ways to give back to their chapter in the future. According to Haggarty (1995) there are two defining attributes of sense of belonging: (a) valued involvement or the experience of feeling valued, needed, or accepted; and (b) fit, the perception that the individual's characteristics articulate with the system or environment. Through the various forms of being poured into as members of HWGLO, participants' involvement in their HWGLO created a meaningful and purposeful experience.

| Code | Supportive Evidence |
|----------------------------|--|
| Selflessness | “...like I love being a zeta because of the selflessness of other. And it encouraged me to be selfless” |
| Leadership opportunities | “When I went to UIFI as a junior, being able to represent sigma” “There were several people that were really in favor of me running for the position of president. And I’ve never considered being chapter president” “I was the ritualist...I was risk manager for two years” “I was voted sister of the year” |
| Living organization values | “So I was really interested in doing community work and the other sorority [Hawaiian sorority] didn’t really do a lot of that it was more like just like, oh we’re a sorority and we’re gonna call ourselves this and we’re all gonna hang out with each other because we’re cool. Like they didn’t really do anything other than that” |
| Professional Development | “And so that I like the professionalism aspect that came with it, because when I was joining, we were doing different things as well having our resume vetted by people who worked at Procter and Gamble and hiring managers” “...when you’re looking for a job that, you know someone on the other side of the table is probably either going to be Greek or understands what Greek life is and they you understand commitment” “We’re very similar in their career choice or their major. I was bio pre-med at the time. So there were a lot of girls that were pre-med” “...it’s really good on your resume” |

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Limitations of the Study

When this process began, it was assumed that it would be a smooth process and that the initial timeline for finding participants and conducting interviews was realistic. Initially, the desire to widen the selection of participants by having a national professional organization promote the seeking participants flyer through our networks, but they were unresponsive, and a grassroots approach had to be considered. This led to promoting on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, GroupMe, Instagram and LinkedIn. This journey to solicit participants began on May 13th and concluded on May 17th. Once the evaluation of the results, one person indicated they would not like to participate in an interview. It was at this point the first limitation was revealed, the sample population. It was anticipated for a larger sample population than 25. After a decent sample population was determined, an evaluation process was used to identify which ten would be contacted to conduct the interview. Originally, two weeks were outlined to conduct interviews and then the second limitation was revealed, time zone differences along with responses from participants. The two-week window was not enough time to conduct the ten interviews. This had to be extended for an additional week. More communication was also needed which looked like sending multiple follow up emails with participants to make sure they were still available. During one of the interviews, a participant informed that they did not meet the qualifications to be considered a participant, they were not a person of color. This meant another round of communication to participants that were not selected was needed to find one that would be able to commit and replace the participant that was no longer eligible. It was evident that the window for interviewing was during peak vacation season in the summer and with some participants being Higher Education professionals, they were unavailable, which led to extending my window for interviewing. The third limitation that was revealed was the amount

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of questions impact the depth of participant responses and the similarity of the questions. There were seven questions that were asked to each participant and had certain questions been replaced with intentional questions to seek support the research questions, it could have created more themes. During interviews some participants responded with “as I mentioned previously” or “like I said earlier” which informed that some questions sounded similar. Lastly, a grassroots approach was needed to find participants. There was outreach to the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors, AFA, to share the survey, but that did not happen and a grassroots approach was implemented to gain participants.

Summary

The responses shared were able to answer my research questions: why do students of color join historically White Greek Letter organizations and how does awareness of culturally based fraternal organizations impact students of color joining a historically White Greek Letter organization. There were many reasons why the participants joined a HWGLO, which can be categorized in the following themes: social and cultural capital, allusively complex, welcoming environment and altruism. In conjunction with previous research and a framework that centers a sense of belonging, coupled with Critical Race Theory and student involvement, provided qualitative data to answer the initial research question. For many of the participants, awareness of CBFOs came after they had already become members of their HWGLOs. Based off the conversations that were had, the findings will influence best practices that campus based professionals can implement at their institutions.

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CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

After working in Sorority and Fraternity Life for almost a decade and as a strong advocate for the fraternal experience, I wanted to examine what factors contributed to students of color that joined Historically White Greek Letter Organizations. As someone who has worked with the women's organizations in the Panhellenic community during recruitment, you can count how many students of color start the recruitment process and how many complete it. What has always been interesting to me is the "why" and how students of color learn about the process of what it means to seek membership in fraternities and sororities. From an organizational standpoint, this study will unpack the understanding of the recruitment best practices being utilized by Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and how potential new members level of awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations influenced their decision to join their organization. Through exploring these research questions, this study will help educate Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals, organizational national leadership, parents and students what factors contribute to students of color joining Historically White Greek Letter Organizations. Through this chapter, the results will be discussed along with the implications of what findings mean for the future of the fraternal experience.

Discussion of the Results

This study is based on the following research questions: Why do students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations and how does awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations impact students of color joining a Historically White Greek Letter Organization? The results from the participants' responses answered the initial research

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questions of this study. Through their stories shared, the following themes surfaced: social and cultural capital, allusively complex, welcoming environment and altruism.

- RQ1: Why do students of color join Historically White Greek Letter Organizations?
 - Social and cultural capital
 - Allusively complex

When examining the decision to join a HWGLO, participants discussed their reasoning being they knew the current members previously or had a friendship with them in high school. One participant was quoted saying “I was recruited to join my sorority by some women that I had actually gone to high school with...I’d known them for years, I trusted and respected them...they were just trying to foster a relationship with me”. While relationships contributed to some participants, the idea of infiltrating another racial community was the motive for others. A few participants explained it as “...I already got in with the Black people and communicated with them well, and network with them well, and so I felt like, the next step was to kind of do it on the white side” and “I wanted to do something different from my own community, my community growing up outside of Los Angeles was about 95% Mexican, my high school it was completely Mexican”. To that end, participants also expressed how joining a HWGLO fulfilled their desire to obtain a traditional experience. This was conveyed when a participant articulated how they were, “...thinking about college and probably what you see on TV and growing up like it’s the very quintessential college experience....I think that’s sort of what I was looking to get out of it”. On the other hand, there were limited options to choose from. As one participant revealed how they, “went to the University of Hawaii at Manoa and there weren’t any options...there was maybe a Hawaiian sorority that you could join but as far as Panhellenic,

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there was only one option”. One could conclude that the lack of CBFOs would result in a student of color feeling forced to choose a HWGLO.

Another factor that was highlighted as a factor in the selection of HWGLO was how they assist with professional development. The idea that students were joining an organization to elevate them into upward mobility was evident as a participant stated, “... I like the professionalism aspect that came with it, because when I was joining, we were doing different things as well having our resume vetted by people who worked at Procter and Gamble and hiring managers”. As a result of students of color that joined a HWGLO versus a CBFLO, the primary factors that contributed to this decision was due to a social and cultural capital and allusive complexity.

- RQ2: How does awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations impact students of color joining a Historically White Greek Letter Organization?
 - Welcoming environment
 - Altruism

One of the survey questions that was asked referenced participants level of awareness of CBFOs during their undergraduate term. Of the ten participants, three rated their level of awareness as a one, meaning they had no level of awareness of CBFOs, five rated their level of awareness as a two, meaning they knew CBFOs existed, two indicated their level of awareness as a three, which meant they had some form of understanding. Only one participant indicated their level of awareness as a five, meaning they were extremely aware of CBFOs in undergrad and decided to join a HWGLO. Even with some understanding of CBFOs, two themes emerged while answering the question “how does awareness of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations impact students of color joining a Historically White Greek Letter Organization?” The first theme that

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was referenced was welcoming environment. Many of the participants spoke to how the HWGLOs were more visible on their campuses as opposed to the CBFOs. A participant was quoted saying “so I just think I also didn’t have enough knowledge about them [Delta Sigma Theta] and their recruitment process to pursue that. Versus like the Panhellenic sororities they were out tabling and on social media and everything. So I just knew about when the recruitment time was coming a lot more and the steps to go through recruitment” and another similar comment was shared by a participant referencing the physical visibility of HWGLO with housing facilities “...so the NPC ones had houses.

The NPHC ones did not. I didn’t really know anything about them, they’d put up fliers and they’d be taken down immediately...and the other one was just like easier, it just made more sense”. The lack of visibility of CBFOs was an apparent reasoning for participants joining a HWGLO. Even though the participants might have been the minority in their HWGLOs, the theme of acceptance contributed to their decision to become members. A participant shared “...they never made me feel uncomfortable or out of place or pressured to join them...I just felt comfortable” coupled with a response from another participant “I had someone else who looked like me going through the process. I feel like if it was the other way around, and I didn’t have anyone that looked like me, I probably would have dropped to be honest”. It is important to highlight how upbringing contributes to this decision as well. One participant mentioned “I just didn’t have a very much interest in it I guess, going for pledging or rushing for like Alpha or Kappa. I think for me probably where I felt most comfortable was probably in a more historically white fraternity just because I don’t have a strong relationship with the black community”. The idea of not being “the only one” contributed to several of the participants joining a HWGLO even with awareness of CBFOs. Lastly, another theme that surfaced was the idea that HWGLOs

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were living out their organization values through altruism opposed to CBFOs. A participant stated how they were “...really interested in doing community work and the other sorority [Hawaiian sorority] didn’t really do a lot of that it was more like just like, oh we’re a sorority and we’re gonna call ourselves this and we’re all gonna hang out with each other because we’re cool. Like they didn’t really do anything other than that”. A lack of presence, combined with creating a welcoming environment and showcasing altruism contributed to students of color joining HWGLOs.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

This study was grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT), Astin’s Theory of Involvement and a sense of belonging. Most of the literature suggest that there is some relationship between race, community and connectedness, but have not articulated how these factors contribute to a student joining a HWGLO. A tenant of Critical Race Theory gives voice to the unique perspectives and lived experiences of people of color. Using the concept of storytelling, participants were able to share their experiences from pre-membership in their HWGLO to becoming initiated. The narrative approach allows for rich description of the participants experiences and an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences (Moen, 2006). CRT also normalizes that racism is a common experience of most people of color in American, which was apparent in a participant’s experience.

Another claim from CRT continuously critiques claims of meritocracy that sustain White supremacy. Some participants shared they joined their HWGLO because they wanted to venture outside of their dominate racial community. While it could be viewed as strategic, meaning that joining a HWGLO would provide them with more upward mobility and access to a different type of class system as opposed to joining a CBFO, what does this truly mean? A component of

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Astin's Theory of Involvement positions a positive correlation with the amount of student learning and personal development is related to the quality and quantity of student involvement in the program. In this study, when participants were asked about a proud moment of being a member of their HWGLO, it is apparent that time, commitment and growth was attributed to being a member of their HWGLO. One participant shared how they loved "being a zeta because of the selflessness of other. And it encouraged me [them] to be selfless" while others marveled about them holding leadership positions such as "the ritualist" and being voted "sister of the year". This growing body of evidence supports the notion of the more involved in a organization the more student learning and personal development they will witness.

Finally, two components of sense of belonging that relate to this study are feeling valued in the involvement or the experience of feeling valued, need, or accepted and for the perception that the individual's characteristics articulate with the system or environment. Hagerty (1995) advanced the notion of belonging and how campuses function as a shared environment that all students want to be a part of, but do not negotiate it the same way. The result of these components is establishing community. A participant shared to them joining is where "I[they] found the people...this is like where I'm supposed to be like these are the people I'm supposed to know" and others referenced how it felt natural for them to join a HWGLO.

Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy and Theory

It is important in the world of Higher Education we acknowledge the disadvantages that CBFOs are faced with from lack of visibility on campus, low membership and financial disparities. Through this study it is the hope that these themes referenced from the conversations with participants as a factor for their decision to join their organization shape the future of the fraternal experience. In the world of sorority and fraternity life there is inequitable approach to

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how campus based professionals navigate this political entity. For many people of color that advise Greek organizations, we are met with challenge of only being hired to work with CBFOs and not our White counterparts. This violent hiring practice creates a deficit for the longevity of that professional because they are being tied to working with one specific community and not gaining a holistic experience that expands their knowledge and practice. It creates a constant battle of having to prove they are knowledgeable and capable of working with HWGLO where as our White counterparts are not challenged in the same duality as people of color are when being vetted.

There can be limited experience working with CBFOs and because they are members of HWGLO they are afforded an accelerated experience that allows for more access to upward mobility. It is crucial that supervisors are aware of the habit and find solutions to support their staff of color. Not only does this impact overall job satisfaction, but can minimize high turnover.

Practice

Visibility and awareness of HWGLO was an evident component that articulated from participants' responses. A participant shared “But I felt like I did not see them marketing themselves as much as like the IFC organizations” followed by another similar response “...because I was exposed to historically white Greek letter organizations early on, I had an understanding of the cost. Because I wasn’t exposed to Black Greek letter organizations, I didn’t know what I was potentially signing up for or what that experience would have looked like”. For campus-based professionals, the findings of earlier studies appear to be in general agreement with those students of color are more exposed to HWGLO as opposed to CBFO. What was also revealed in interviews was that some self-identified as first generation, meaning they are the first in their immediate household to attend a university. Students of color need to be exposed from a

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holistic standpoint, all that Greek Life has to offer. In practice this looks like mailers sent to incoming students displaying information about the type of Greek organizations that are active on the campus they are attending.

As a former campus based professional, it is important to ensure that equitable programming that puts all chapters on an equal playing field should be addressed as well along with council specific recruitment events. For example, hosting a Sorority & Fraternity Life Open House event would introduce first year and current students to all active chapters of the community. Educating is the charge campus-based professionals are responsible with executing. Marketing is another area that can be detrimental to students of color joining a HWGLO. As referenced in the results of interviewing, some participants did not see anything that represented CBFOs on their campuses. Not only is this problematic, but it is also erasing the presence of a form a community for students of color. How is the Greek Life leveraging their office budget to ensure that marketing represents the full community? These are some of the critical questions that must be asked if we are practicing centering equity in our work.

Policy

The concept of policy within Greek Life is a complicated one. The national umbrella organizations have rules that the collegiate chapters must follow and institutions assist with the implementation. In my almost ten years of experience, what is apparent is the amount of support the National Panhellenic Conference and Northern Interfraternity Conference provide their members. This is including an area director along with a leadership consultant that visits chapters each semester. From a systematic and financial differentiation, Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations are not afforded the same organizational support. If a policy was to be changed or instituted, it would be the structural support that HWGLO receive and mirrored with

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CBFOs. As of now the role of a CBFO advisor is someone who is an alum of the chapter or an individual from the sponsoring graduate chapter and it is not enough. Structural support from the national organization is a policy change that is needed for CBFOs to foster and thrive on campuses.

Theory

Critical Race Theory examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (Delgado, Stefanic, 2012). It also emphasizes the importance of examining and attempting to understand the socio-cultural forces that shape how we and others perceive, experience, and respond to racism (Delgado, Stefanic, 2012). Students who join sororities and fraternities or participate in extracurricular are more than likely to persist (Astin, 1984). Communities are necessary for students of color and being involved in a Greek letter organization can foster a sense of belonging for students of color. The research informs that a sense of belonging impacts persistence with students when they feel connected to the environment they coexist in. In Greek Life, using these theories as a framework can cause meaning for the students and the staff members that are advising them.

Recommendations for the Further Research

This study was developed to address the research gap that explores why students of color join HWGLOs instead of CBFOs and how their level of awareness of CBFOs contributes to this decision to join a HWGLO. The results of this research identified several themes that answer the initial research questions. While this study is contributing to world of Higher Education, this work can be expanded, extended and strengthened to create new opportunities for research and learning. Investigating in the following areas would help expand this current research: instrumentation, interview questions and participants.

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Instrumentation

Reflecting over the initial participant recruitment survey, I realize that the age range identifying question should have been retooled. For this study, participants needed to be between ages 24-30, but in my recruitment survey I provided more options, which was unnecessary. I also noted that for the demographic option I did list “Caucasian” as an option, which is how I had a participant complete the form that was in fact not qualified being that I was specifically searching for people of color. Ensuring that my recruitment survey was in alignment with what I was seeking could be improved to obtain stronger data.

Interview Questions

In my participant recruitment survey, it references participating in a virtual interview that would be no longer than 60 minutes. I believe if I used stronger interview questions, I could have obtained information that would have correlated with the research questions. Although I had seven interview questions, more intentionality to include either additional or specific questions should be considered for future studies. Ten questions would suffice to answer the research questions posed. Majority of the interviews were on average 20 minutes and more questions could help reach that maximum time of 60 minutes.

Participants

My sample population consisted of 21 individuals that completed the survey and from there ten were selected to move forward with an interview. Although the desire was to have a diverse population in age, organization type, race etc. majority of my participants identified as Black/African American. This made we question should my study focus more on Black students instead of people of color. During the interviews some participants shared the name of their alma mater and that made we wish I obtained information about the type of institution they attended.

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A strong correlation could be argued knowing which type of institutions were mentioned, for example if participants attended predominately white institutions within the Big 12 conference. That should be explored for future research.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to explore why students of color joined HWGLOs and how their level of awareness of CBFOs contributed to their decision. Utilizing a narrative methodology along with Critical Race Theory and Astin's Theory of Involvement to exam the proposed research questions, the results can be inferred from participants sharing their stories. Students of color joined HWGLOs because relationships with current members had be had prior to college, they sought membership in an opposing racial community, there were limited options on their campus and these organizations emphasized career readiness. Further research revealed that the social and cultural capital, allusivity complex, welcoming environment and altruism lack contributed to their decision to join a HWGLO. Producing this research has been a joyous moment and believe it will add value to world of Higher Education.

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