

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

by

STEPHANIE M. MCCLURE

(Under the Direction of Reuben A.B. May)

ABSTRACT

This multi-method study analyzes the impact of membership in Greek organization as voluntary association on the success and satisfaction of students across race. Previous research has made little distinction by race on the impact of Greek membership although existing evidence indicates that this is important. The study first reviews the major historical and contextual factors associated with the emergence of black Greek organizations (BGO's) as similar to but distinct from white Greek organizations. Previous research on student involvement and integration overall has failed to engage literature on the impact of voluntary association membership and the generation of social capital and its ability to facilitate integration more generally. Analysis of survey data indicate that there is a strong impact of Greek membership on white student satisfaction which does not emerge for black Greek students. These same data do not reveal a differential impact of Greek membership for student college GPA and academic integration. Responses to open-ended questions and focus group interviews support the findings that race is a highly salient identity for black students on this predominantly white campus, and that Greek membership does not have the same impact on the satisfaction of black students as it does on white students. This is due to differences in the level of closure that exists in the organizations, as the boundaries of black Greek organizations are more permeable and benefits accrue to members and nonmembers alike. The existence of conditions for the emergence of bounded solidarity among black students on campus also mediate the ability of Greek membership to form any significant boundary within the black student population. Finally, black Greek membership seems to accentuate existing black student concerns with the campus racial composition. This may occur either through group attitude polarization effects or because organizational survival is contingent upon a ready pool of potential members. The need for an institutional focus on satisfaction as a minority student outcome is also discussed, as it impacts community collective memory regarding the institution.

INDEX WORDS: integration, college students, voluntary associations, social capital, collective memory

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DEDICATION

To Jeff Turner, my husband and best friend, whose presence in my life makes everything I have and do better and more beautiful.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s access and achievement in education have greatly improved for African Americans and other minorities. Prior to this era, access to education, specifically higher education, was available on a very limited basis, largely from private, religiously funded colleges or from less than equally funded segregated black institutions (Tollett 1982, Harvey and Williams in Turner et al. 1996, Massey et al. 2003). Garibaldi (1997) reports that the graduation rates for African Americans from high school, college, and graduate school have increased significantly over the last four decades. For instance, in 1975 the high school graduation rate for African Americans was 64.8%. In 1995 that rate had increased by over 12% to 76.9%. Similar increases have occurred for college graduation rates among African American students.

In spite of this obvious improvement, the disparity between enrollment rates and college graduation rates show a dramatic difference between the number of African Americans who start college and those who complete their degree (Massey et al. 2003; Price 2004). In 2000, 30% of 18-24 year old African Americans were in college, compared to 36% of same age whites (Massey et al 2003). However, only 15% of 25-29 year-old African Americans finish college, compared to 29% of whites. Massey et al. (2003), consistent with previous reports (Allen 1992), found that in their sample, black students have lower levels of almost all forms of capital when they come to college (Massey et al. 2003, 205). Their sample is of freshman class students at a large group of highly selective colleges and universities. The differences across all institutions are greater (Astin 1990). Recruitment and retention of minority students is an issue of

considerable importance for college campuses across the country. Attrition rates for non-Asian minority students are consistently higher than those of Asian and white students (Mow and Nettles, Zea et al. 1997, Massey et al. 2003; Price 2004). Even schools that have been successful at the recruitment of minority students still struggle with retaining these students to degree completion (Eimers & Pike 1997).

Black students have been attending predominantly white campuses for several generations, and yet understanding of the factors that contribute to the success of black students on campus remains incomplete and imprecise (Allen 1992). This lack of understanding is due in part to a lack of structural and normative change within the college system since integration to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body (Feagin & Sikes 1995). In order to increase minority enrollment and decrease attrition rates, more must be known about what experiences and circumstances enable black students to succeed on predominantly white campuses (Allen 1992).

My own thesis research involved in-depth interviews with 20 undergraduate members of a Black Greek organization on campus. These qualitative findings indicate that the experiences of these students are more positive and that their feelings about the university, the campus, and their place in it are consistent with those identified in the existing student development literature as necessary for both success and satisfaction. There is power in membership, potentially for both white and black Greek members. Some reasons why BGO's might be different from their predominantly white counterparts include size and sheer number of organizations (large v. small memberships, large v. small number of organizations, this from the voluntary association literature), similarity of mission and characteristics across institutions and across time in BGOs that is missing from PWOs (this from organizational and Greek life literature, both research and

history), and finally the different experience of life and campus for minority students versus students of the dominant racial group (this from the higher education history and research literature). This multi-method research project will make connections between previously unconnected literature to expand our understanding of the concept of social integration which is central to Tinto's (1993) model of college student persistence, by incorporating what is known about membership in voluntary associations and how structural contexts impact an individual's experience of their environment.

In the course of conducting this research, each year in the fall, a story appears in the local and student newspapers regarding black student admittance and subsequent enrollment. Every year, the institution would admit a relatively large number of black students, sufficient to maintain or increase its existing black student population. When it came time for those admittance numbers to be translated into an enrolled new class, a smaller and smaller number of black students would enroll. Even within a context of changing admissions policies (including the removal of race as a consideration), there were sufficient numbers of black students who applied and met the qualifications for acceptance. Many of these students made a decision to not enroll and that decision then has an impact on the racial composition of the institution, which is noticed by both white and minority students on campus (as will be discussed in the findings), and which contributes to a continued reputation of the university as a bastion of whiteness. This research takes place within that context.

While much previous work appropriately focuses on college student persistence, that is, those students who persist to degree completion, in the overall higher education environment, research which considers the recruitment, admittance, enrollment, retention circle discussed above indicates that this is not sufficient for predominantly white institutions who have a history

of racism and discrimination and a reputation for such within minority communities which they now hope to serve (Feagin, Vera, & Imani 1996). The work presented here focuses on one aspect of student involvement, looking at the way this involvement varies by race because of the structural and historical context within which this involvement occurs.

By focusing on Greek membership and its impact on both success *and* satisfaction, I hope to participate in a wider conversation about the accumulation of positive or negative experiences with an institution within a particular community. That is, focusing on student success, as defined by degree completion and thereby accumulating a more or less substantial body of minority alumni, is not sufficient for many historically white institutions. Attention to student satisfaction as a desirable outcome, important for all students, is particularly salient for a predominantly white institution's minority student graduates, as it is this body of graduates whose positive affect toward the institution can eventually lead to an accumulation of positive stories within the collective memory of a minority community. This accumulation will then impact the application and enrollment decisions of future potential students.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

In order to provide a common understanding of the research presented here, I would like to review some of the major concepts and terms utilized throughout. Several of these are associated with higher education, many with the specific fraternity and sorority context. All of them, like most labels, provide excellent shorthand for engaging in conversation about the issues of interest while at the same time seriously oversimplifying the diversity and complexity contained within the labels themselves. I refer to predominantly white institutions or PWI's. There is obviously variation across these institutions, with some having only recently removed barriers to minority student access while others have never had specific prohibitions but have

disproportionately served a predominantly white student population throughout their history. I choose to follow existing practice and use the commonly-employed descriptor PWI as opposed to one referring to the history of these institutions based on the limitations identified by Wallenstein (1999).

The short-hand term “historically white” is misleading in the sense that at most (perhaps all) so-called “white” institutions of higher education across the South, the only “non-white” group categorically excluded during the era of Jim Crow was African American. . . . The breakthroughs of the 1950s and 1960s did not bring non-white students to white campuses so much as they brought black students to non-black campuses (Wallenstein 1999, p. 125).

As a comparison I will sometimes refer to historically black colleges and universities or HBCU’s. This research focuses disproportionately on the minority student experience on a PWI, as the data collected are relevant to just that type of environment. Nonetheless, this often necessitates referencing the thick body of excellent existing work which either focuses on these minority-serving institutions or offers explicit comparisons between the two different types of institutions and the resulting student experience.

As it relates specifically to so-called “Greek life,” the Greek organizations founded on campuses by white students, many (but not all) of which contained explicit references to racial qualifications for exclusion or inclusion at some point in their history, are mainly represented by two national governing bodies. For men, this is the National Interfraternity Council or NIC. Most often on campus organizations affiliated with this group are known as IFC (Interfraternity Council) organizations. For women, this is the National Panhellenic Council or NPC, often referred to on campus as Panhel. Among those organizations which were historically organized

by and for black students those associated with a national governing body are known as National Pan-Hellenic Council or NPHC organizations, sometimes referred to on campus as “Pan-dash-Hel” organizations. Not all campus-level organizations are affiliated with one of these national groups, but on most large campuses many are.

While several other concepts will be utilized throughout, the concepts which form the core organizing ideas of this work include the concept of social integration, the concept of social capital, in this case as it relates to discussions of voluntary association membership, and the concept of collective memory. Social integration is a widely discussed idea in the field of higher education, in large part due to its centrality in the theory of college student persistence developed by Vincent Tinto (1993). Tinto hypothesized that student commitment to college graduation and to an institution is affected by their level of social and academic integration into the campus community. It has been used to describe a number of different student perceptions and experiences and refers to the “extent of congruency between the individual student and the social system of a college or university” (Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson 1997, p. 111). It is most often measured using questions which gauge student perceptions of college, including questions regarding their satisfaction with various aspects of the institution.

Collective memory is an idea developed and utilized by cultural theorists. While definitions vary, it is a group level phenomenon, connected to but distinct from individual memory. While collective memory has an impact on the ways that individuals think, it transcends the person and includes memories and interpretations of events, some of which took place long before the birth of any one member of a population (Schwartz 2000). The generation of collective memory through racial narratives, in the context of U.S. racial history, has a significant impact on the racial identity development of individuals and on the collective

perception of society across racial groups (May 2001; Olick & Robbins 1998). It has been shown to be particularly important as it relates to the relationship between racial minorities and institutions of higher education (Feagin, Vera, & Imani 1996).

The concept of collective memory can be connected to the idea of social capital, as it is through the social relationships that exist among people that this type of memory is generated and maintained. This term is widely debated and operationalized. Originally introduced by economist Glenn Loury (1977), the most commonly used definition is that offered by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), “social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 119). This form of capital, as the others, is significant primarily for its convertibility – membership in networks and institutions provides access to social capital, which can then be translated into other forms of capital and used to improve the position of the individual and/or the group (Aguilera & Massey 2003). Thus the level of social integration students experience within an institution is impacted by their types and levels of involvement, which impacts their experience at the institution through the resources they accrue and relationships they develop and therefore their satisfaction with the institution.

The overarching principle addressed in this work is that of individual integration into a group and the impact this has on a person’s perceptions of their social environment. The concept of integration in Tinto’s model has been critiqued for an underlying assumption of the need for minority student *assimilation* into the dominant group. As pointed out by Attinasi, that does not have to be the meaning ascribed to the term. It can instead be understood as the development of meaningful membership in a group. Within the sociological literature, beginning with

Durkheim, the importance and/or necessity of individual integration in some form is understood. As described and explored by Blau (1977; 1992), “some kind of social association is necessary for integration” (Blau 1977, p. 5). Integration requires individual-level interaction and a person’s social location influences the nature and type of interaction they will experience. An organizing assumption of this research is that the location and character of an individual’s integration will influence that individual’s view of the world and their place in it.

In the first few chapters, I provide a summary of history and literature relevant to the question of minority student success and satisfaction and Greek organization membership. In Chapter 2 I briefly summarize the history of African American participation in predominantly/historically white institutions of higher education. I focus in greater detail on this participation at the particular institution which is the site of the research presented here, as this history and its impact on the current institutional context are relevant for understanding the black student experience in the context of a collective memory of African Americans and their relationship with the flagship institution of the state.

Existing models of college student development and the impact of research on the minority student experience on those campuses in this area are reviewed in Chapter 3. This chapter describes in detail what existing work has to say about the impact of different student characteristics and experiences, in a predominantly white environment, on the outcomes of interest. The chapter also includes an outline of the college student persistence model developed by Tinto, within which the concept of social integration and the importance of student involvement are embedded.

As a form of student involvement, Greek organizations themselves have a long history in American higher education. I will trace this history in Chapter 4, focusing on the development

of Black Greek organizations, in a context which makes them similar to yet distinct from their predominantly white counterparts. This will include a review of the historical information available regarding BGO presence at this particular institution.

In the broader picture, stepping back from the higher education literature, we can also place Greek organization membership within the ongoing conversation regarding voluntary association membership and its impact on individual and societal level development of social capital. This much-discussed concept is associated with concerns for the development of community and the interplay of social capital with other forms of capital, economic and cultural. Chapter 5 provides a review of this work and the ways in which it can and should be connected with conversations about the student experience, the impact of Greek membership, and minority student enrollment in higher education.

Following these background chapters, which will provide a thick backdrop for the findings of the research presented here, I will briefly describe the sample and review the methods used to conduct this work. This will include a description of the sample and data upon which the study is based, the methods for data collection, including both the multi-mode survey and the supplementary focus groups. I will also briefly discuss some of the difficulties associated with these methods and the limitations of the data.

In Chapter 7, I present the results of the research, comparing the satisfaction level of African American and white students across Greek affiliation. The findings show evidence of similarities and differences potentially impacted by the experience of Greek membership. This includes a discussion of how Greek membership, with a certain depth of involvement, impacts feelings of connectedness and efficacy as well as satisfaction among students. In this chapter I also discuss the role of BGO's on the social life of all African American students on campus as

compared to PWO's on white student social life, a finding which is consistent with previous work.

Chapter 8 compares and contrasts the impact of Greek membership on white and black Greek and non-Greek students' academic outcomes, both college student GPA and the level of perceived academic integration. In this chapter I focus on how the findings compare with existing work on the impact of Greek membership and whether or not this varies by race.

Finally, chapter 9 provides a summary of the results, in the context of the history and literature reviewed previously. This includes a reflection of the implications of this research for discussions of student involvement, focusing on the concept of depth of membership and the role which research on social capital and voluntary association membership can play in furthering those discussions as well as what impact, if any, the work can have on policy discussions in higher education regarding minority student satisfaction and the efficacy and appropriateness of Greek organizations within the higher education environment. The final chapter will also include a thorough discussion of the limitations of this work and what types of future research can resolve some of those limitations as well as potentially expand the generalizability and applicability of this framework across institutional settings.

CHAPTER 2

BLACKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In order to place this research into proper context, a brief review of African American participation in higher education and a more thorough review of that same participation at the institution in question is appropriate. The 1961 desegregation of the University of Georgia is the most common and likely most correct starting place to trace the history of African American attendance at this institution. The historical relationship between the African American community in Georgia and the university may begin much earlier however, perhaps with the two attempted takeovers of the campus by freemen in Athens during the Reconstruction Era (Thurmond 1978/2001). Much appropriate attention has recently been paid to the story of Horace T. Ward, a lawyer in the 1961 integration case who had earlier sought admittance to the UGA Law School (see for example Daniels 2001 & Pratt 2002). Just these two examples illustrate the long and contentious relationship that black Georgians have had with the flagship institution of the state. It is in this local context that we can place the trends in African American attendance at the university. There is also the broader picture of the national trends in access to higher education for African Americans and other people of color who have been historically excluded from postsecondary education (Bowen & Bok 1998).

In this chapter I will attempt to trace the history of African American attendance and participation at UGA with attention to the national context, both political and economic, the legal context at the national, regional, and state level, the administrative and institutional context, and through information on the African American student and faculty perspective. I will pay special

attention at the national level to trends in financial aid, as research has shown minority students are particularly likely to be impacted by these changes (Bowen & Bok 1998; Heller 2002).

To complete this review I utilize institutional enrollment information, historical research, interviews, and other historical documents relating to African American students on campus. National legal and historical information was obtained through existing primary and secondary sources. Student and faculty perspectives, at the time of this writing, are primarily gleaned from a review of relevant articles from the student newspaper, the *Red & Black*, from 1969 to the present. Information on the institutional context was obtained through internal institutional files, interviews with two former University administrators who are currently on faculty at the University, and other secondary sources. The enrollment information (currently complete from 1978-2003) was obtained from the annual UGA Fact Book published by the office of Institutional Research. Complete enrollment data by race from 1962 to 1976 has not yet been obtained. This information did not begin appearing in the University Fact Book (first published in 1969) until 1976.

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Concerns over minority student participation in higher education have been ongoing within those particular communities (DuBois; Anderson 1988). Widespread concern and/or attention to this issue within the dominant society is a much more recent phenomenon, only one to two generations old. In their book, *The Shape of the River*, Bowen and Bok (1998) provide a brief overview of this history. Even within this short time span, the evolution of this concern through various political and economic cycles has varied dramatically, from a high in the mid-70s to stagnation in the early 80s through a decline in the 1990s. What follows is a more detailed review of this history which proceeds chronologically and with attention to the different contexts

described above. In conducting this review, it seemed significant to note who was president of the University at different times, as this person has a significant impact on the policies that shape the undergraduate experience, and seemingly on the public perception of the institution as well. As such, I will make note of these transitions throughout this discussion. Nonetheless, it is somewhat difficult to neatly connect these institutional changes to the economic, political, and legal changes taking place.

Prior to the mid-20th century Civil Rights Movement, African American participation in predominantly white institutions across the country was extremely limited. In the period between 1865 and 1895, approximately 194 blacks graduated from Northern colleges, 75 from Oberlin alone, with the other 119 attending 52 other schools, for an average of little more than 2 per school. There is also evidence of some blacks graduating from Southern colleges before their admittance was made illegal at the end of this period (Bowles & DeCosta 1971). This Southern restriction was relatively consistent through 1953, with the exception of some minimal movement among primarily border state universities after the Murray case in 1935 and the Gaines case in 1938 (Bowles & DeCosta 1971). However, Northern schools were not much better in this period.

The difference between the passive discrimination of the Northern colleges which, while permitting a few Negro students to enter, were by reason of financial requirements or social isolation, or both, discouraging to most Negro prospective students, and the active discrimination of the white Southern colleges was, essentially, only a difference in degree (Bowles & DeCosta 1971, p. 40).

Before describing the impact of the specific movement for equal access to higher education for African Americans, it is important to consider the national and state context

regarding education at the time. Georgia had historically been a state that resisted funding of public education (Anderson 1998; Bartley 1983; Dyer 1985). As Dyer writes, the 60s in Georgia saw a change in this trend. This included the 1962 election of pro-education governor Carl Sanders, an increase in the state allocations to UGA, and an increasing diversity (by geographic origin) of the University faculty, such that new faculty were increasingly likely to be from somewhere other than the South.

[A] revolution in the tax structure and the passage of the minimum Foundation Act under the administration of Governor Herman Talmadge combined with the proeducation decisions of Governor Marvin Griffin to suggest that the state had finally turned away from its regressive, anti-education past (Dyer 1985, 335).

Significantly, at the national level, the 1965 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act contained a section (Title IV) which emphasized increasing access to higher education through federal grant programs. The first paragraph contains the following commitment:

It is the purpose of this part to provide, through institutions of higher education, educational opportunity grants to assist in making available the benefits of higher education to qualified high school graduates of exceptional financial need, who for lack of financial means of their own or of their families would be unable to obtain such benefits without such aid (Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1965).

Beginning in the 1960s and influenced by the changing political climate of that time, universities also exhibited a rising concern over minority participation in higher education. This led to the development of various admissions policies directed at increasing the number of

minority students on campus and these efforts were relatively successful at increasing African American student enrollment.

Response by institutions of higher education to the Civil Rights Movement was abetted by unusually favorable conditions within higher education; public support for higher education was high, and colleges and universities were experiencing a period of continual expansion (Allen in Allen, Epps, & Hanniff 1991, p. 1).

However, this varied significantly by region of the country. In the post-Brown environment, many Southern states adopted a position of “massive resistance” to integration, including (anticipating Brown) the signing of the Southern Regional Education Compact on February 8, 1948 by fourteen states trying to avoid the desegregation of their institutions of higher education and the Southern Manifesto, signed on March 12, 1956 by over 100 southern senators, which denounced the Brown decisions (which overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*, declaring separate as inherently unequal). Georgia was one of five Deep South states which most fiercely resisted desegregation – states in which whites constituted the nation’s smallest majorities of the total population (Wallenstein 1999; Georgia was 69% white in 1950).

Although it often receives much less attention because the integration was (relatively) less violent than others occurring at the time (Pratt 2002), this resistance is revealed in the history of UGA. Any review of the desegregation process (Dyer 1985; Trillin 1991; Hunter-Gault 1993) reveals just how strongly (and in some cases, creatively) both the state and the administrators of the institution resisted integration and this is an important and often overlooked fact. In reading these histories, I am always surprised at how many of the names of people involved are now names of buildings on campus (e.g. Russell, Lenoir, Aderhold) and I do believe this is an important connection to make, as it says something about the “climate” of the

campus and the general ethos that this history contributes to creating (Hurtado 1992). O.C. Aderhold was president of the university at the time of desegregation, and continued in this position until 1967.

Wallenstein (1999) argues it is important to understand institutional desegregation as a process and not an event – the enrollment of the first African Americans in a school was followed by a range of other questions which were embedded in the social and cultural system of the time. Immediately after the enrollment of Holmes and Hunter, the participation of African Americans did not increase in any major way, as noted by Dyer (1985). Not one black student applied to UGA in the fall after Holmes and Hunter were admitted. The qualified African American students who could attend were disinclined to spend their college years on a campus that was incredibly unwelcoming, a cycle that continues today (Trillin 1966/1991). Dyer notes the continued influence of the segregationist mindset on the campus.

Over the next few years [post-1961] the number of black students gradually increased, but still remained quite small as the decade of the 1960s ended. Desegregation did not necessarily mean, of course, that *all facets of the segregation mentality* would immediately be erased from the university (Dyer 1985, 334 [emphasis added]).

He writes that as late as 1967 the Georgia Athletic Association was still resisting integrating intercollegiate athletics and that “many aspects of the social life surrounding the university remained segregated, most notably, perhaps, the activities of the white social fraternities and sororities” (Dyer 1985, p. 334). In spite of Deborah Williams being the first African American to rush a white sorority in 1968 (Baugh 1968), student attention to this particular problem continues today (Smith 2003). Nationally, total black enrollment in the fall of 1967 in formerly segregated Southern schools was only 38,000 out of a total black enrollment of 267,000; in the

eleven white 4-year public colleges in Georgia there were only 550 black students enrolled (Bowles & Decosta 1971).

Historical documents from this period indicate that the administration of the university continued to be very resistant to providing incoming African American students with on-campus housing. When they did do so, the administration kept careful note of the location and living arrangements of these students. An article in the April 8, 1969 issue of the *Red & Black* as well as notes from meetings between campus administrators and the Black Student Union (BSU) indicate clearly that the African American students on campus at that time had a very strong reaction to their experiences with the university. The student attempts at increasing African American representation on campus and on the faculty and staff were largely met with delaying tactics by campus administrators, including the president at that time, Fred C. Davison.

It was also in this year that the governors of ten southern and border states first received calls from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) that “their states were operating racially dual systems of higher education in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964” (Byrd-Chichester 2000). This letter would be followed by a 1970 suit by the NAACP against the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) for their failure to enforce this title (Adams v. Richardson 1972). The impact of this case would be felt for the next two decades at the University of Georgia, through the presidency of Davison into the presidency of Charles Knapp.

The decade of the 1970s also saw incredible variation in federal financial aid policies, as well as the statewide Georgia political climate, with some contradictory impacts. Early in the decade there was a dramatic increase in the need-based state aid programs in response to the federal State Student Incentive Grant program passed in the 1972 Higher Education

Reauthorization Act. However, the late 70s brought a decline of the federal Civil Rights era commitment to increasing student access for needy students.

These progressive ideals were soon eroded by the economic and political realities of the mid- to late-1970s, realities that radically altered the funding environment for higher education programs across the country. Marked gains in lower-income student access and persistence associated with Title IV were diminished as the need-based grant ideal was nudged toward the margin by more cost-effective and politically palatable loan programs (Thomas 2004).

This commitment was impeded between 1975 and 1985 as this period, “was a difficult one for many colleges and universities because of the financial pressures brought about by the oil crisis and stagflation” (Bowen & Bok 1998, 8). The 1978 *Bakke* case challenged the legality of considering race in admissions but also established a precedent for taking race into account. According to Bowen and Bok, African American enrollments overall did not decline during this period but they did stop increasing. There was a decrease in black enrollment in predominantly white 4-year institutions (Allen 1991).

Prior to this shift, however, was what has been identified as a major change in the state of race relations in Georgia, with the election of Jimmy Carter as governor in 1970. Pratt (2002) writes that this period is described as the “dawning of a new era in Georgia politics and is often referred to as the transitional period between Georgia’s departure from the Old South and its emergence into the new, especially in the area of race relations” (Pratt 2002, p. 133). This included Carter’s oft-cited inaugural address as well as his appointment of several white women and minorities to state boards and his personal staff. Carter’s administration also had an impact on the university, specifically in his refusal to reappoint segregationist Roy V. Harris to the

University Board of Regents and the appointment of an African American in his place (Pratt 2002).

In this context the university faced the aforementioned “Adams case” OCR mandate to reach a goal of having eleven percent of the student body be African American (Dr. Larry Jones, personal communication). In an interview with Dr. Larry Jones, Professor in the Institute of Higher Education and Associate Director of Institutional Research from 1974-1991, attempts to reach this goal included changing admissions requirements to include acceptance of both the ACT and the SAT (previously the ACT was not accepted). This was an important change, as many African Americans in Georgia opted to take the ACT instead of the SAT as it was accepted at most historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and many institutions in states contiguous to Georgia. It was also during this period, primarily under the monitoring of the OCR, that many major community outreach programs began, including increased recruiting events at predominantly African American high schools across the state. At this time the university hired Herman Smith as a special advisor to the president regarding African American student recruitment. In spite of considerable pressure from the Board of Regents, the eleven-percent target has never been reached, as most of these recruiting efforts resulted in modest applications increases that did not translate into enrollment.

Black student activism and visibility on campus continued to increase through this decade, as did the seeming acceptance of Black students’ presence on campus by their white classmates. A 1970 Red & Black article reports that, contrary to previous marches, an MLK-Day march by black students encountered little resistance (Leeet 1970). Reviews of the student paper at this time, however, continue to reveal the largely marginal position of black students on campus, as most photos of students not specifically dealing with race feature whites and the only

African Americans who appear in regular news coverage are celebrities making appearances in Athens (e.g. Dionne Warwick). Significantly, the article described above contains no quotes from the student marchers, only a description of the white student reaction, or lack thereof. A later front-page article, questioning the relevance of non-violent methods of civil resistance, does include several quotes from both black students and faculty (Walters 1970).

Beginning in the 1980s, federal commitment to social programs declined, which “devolved federal responsibility for a wide variety of public programs down to the state level,” creating the beginnings of the strain on state budgets that we see today (Thomas 2004). Increasing access to higher education for previously underrepresented populations was primarily driven by a projected demographic decline in the numbers of traditional college-age students. In this period the interests of these under served populations clearly converged with those of higher education officials, so that significant growth in higher education occurred within a period “that would otherwise have been marked by a major oversupply of classroom space” (Thomas 2002). In the latter half of the 1980s, economic conditions also improved and with them the participation rates for African Americans in higher education (Bowen & Bok 1998).

Late in this decade, the university was “prematurely released” from OCR monitoring under the Adams ruling but continued the voluntary use of race in their admissions policy (Vobejda 1987a; Byrd-Chichester 2000). After this release under the first Bush administration, a study by the Southern Education Foundation found that none of the 12 states released (under the wrong legal standard) at this time could demonstrate real success in desegregating its higher education system (Byrd-Chichester 2000). A 1987 report by the NAACP stated that of all the states under the Adams order, Georgia had made the least progress, in response to which University Chancellor H. Dean Propst said that the university had made “herculean” efforts at

recruiting African Americans. He stated, “we have implemented an enormous number of measures” (Vobejda 1987b).

As described by Dr. Tom Dyer, professor in the Institute of Higher Education and former Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Instruction, during this decade the university began a major effort to increase the numbers of black faculty. As reported in the Red & Black, this effort was directed through President Charles Knapp, although a key player was Bryndis Jenkins, Vice President of Legal Affairs (Colt 1990). In the academic year 1987-1988, the university went from 21 to 42 tenured or tenure-track black faculty. This change was acknowledged in the 1988 graduation address offered by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, who believed, along with university administrators, that increasing numbers of black faculty could have a potentially positive impact on the numbers of African American students who decided to attend UGA (Hunter-Gault 1993). Unfortunately, in spite of a recent report in Georgia magazine which lists UGA as second among flagship institutions in percentage of black faculty (Georgia Magazine 2004), the students have not followed.

Some understanding of why that might be the case was potentially available in the work of Jacqueline Fleming (1984) which included information on the experiences of 125 black university freshmen and seniors. Fleming found that these students showed significantly less intellectual growth from freshman to senior year, as compared to their counterparts at HBCUs. As reported in the Red & Black, the university was unhappy with the results of this research and asked not to be included in the final book (Phillips 1987b). In a visit to campus, Fleming emphasized the importance of student relationships to student development and growth. According the results of her research, these relationships were more likely to develop at HBIs (Phillips 1987a).

In 1984, the president of the Black Student Union (which became the Black Affairs Council in this year), Irving Dawson, stated that he felt the university was a great institution. However Dawson also believed that the black students on campus needed more support and encouragement to participate in programs available to them. A similar sentiment was echoed by Wendell Stills, a junior geography major, several years later (Stenger 1988). This participation was lacking in part because “many black students resent the Minority Support Services program because they feel the University began it just to comply with standards set by the Office of Civil Rights” (Corson 1984). This sentiment clarifies the importance of considering the intent of universities programs versus their impact on minority student perceptions.

In a 1987 piece, Jeff Cooper, director of minority admissions, identified another key problem for black students on campus, one which the university also identified in a subsequent study, namely that the “decreasing availability for federal financial aid” impacts the college-going decisions of minority students (Winfrey 1987; Hawk 1988). Nationally in the 1980s “black students lost ground, especially at traditionally white schools, suffering from massive cutbacks in financial aid funding and the anti-affirmative action/anti-minority tone set by the executive branch” (Willie 2003, p. 22). According to Deskins (1991), this is consistent with a broader political trend that began in the mid-70s, in part due to the prior success of the Civil Rights Movement.

Since 1976 . . . support for 'remedial action' – which once was dominant – lost ground to 'no preferential treatment,' evolved into 'undeserving advantage,' and finally culminated in the doctrine of 'reverse discrimination' (Deskins 1991, p. 37).

According to Bowen and Bok (1998), commitments to increasing diversity on campus through affirmative action programs and other means continued to decline in the 1990s. This decline is at least in part based on calls of “reverse racism” (a term said to have been coined by David Duke but adopted by the conservative mainstream), as well as economic downturns and the increasing importance of education in the market (Deskins 1991; Bowen & Bok 1998). This is evidenced by several lawsuits brought against the university by white applicants challenging the UGA admissions policy (e.g. Green v. UGA 1997; Johnson v. Board of Regents of University of Georgia 2000).

Strains on state budgets throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, combined with a serious economic recession in the early part of the 1990s ultimately led to cutbacks in state general fund expenditure directed at public higher education, which in turn fueled a run-up in tuition prices in the public postsecondary education sector” (Thomas 2004).

A mid-90s study conducted by the Southern Education Foundation reveals the impact of these policies on historically white institutions in the South. Most were more than 80 percent white, and over half of black first-year students attended historically black colleges and universities. Less than 10 percent of black first-year students were enrolled in their state's historically white flagship institution (Feagin, Vera, & Imani 1996).

Although a late 1990s economic boom temporarily eased tuition inflation, these economic and political changes have fueled a shift in national and state financial aid policy in which the state of Georgia figures prominently. This has been described as an almost complete turn away from need-based financial assistance for college-qualified but lower-income students (that is, increasing access) to one of subsidizing existing college-going behavior among middle-

and upper-middle class students (increasing affordability). The establishment of the Georgia HOPE scholarship in 1993 has been a model which others states have followed. Research by UGA faculty Chris Cornwell and David Mustard (2002) affirms this trend.

[O]nly 4 percent of the state's expenditure on the HOPE program resulted in increased college access in the state; the remaining 96 percent of the funds subsidized existing college-going behavior of students who likely did not need assistance to be able to afford college (Cornwell & Mustard 2002).

Merit-based aid has been shown to disproportionately go to higher income families, is regressive in its redistribution pattern, leads to cuts in need-based programs and state funding for higher education, and, as they are perceived as entitlements and not discretionary budget items, create a serious strain on state fiscal budgets (Heller & Marin 2002). Cornwell and Mustard (2002) have also shown that the HOPE program, while it has increased African American student enrollment in the University system, has also increased the segregation across institutions, as these students are not attending the flagship institution.

In 1991, the university administration engaged in a study of black student persistence and attempted to identify similarities and differences between the persistence and graduation rates of white and black students. The findings at this time indicate that financial concerns were more often cited by black students than white students as their reason for leaving the university. An internal memo from Dr. Dwight Douglas, Vice President of Student Affairs to President Knapp states that "scholarship erosion and changing financial aid requirements have hampered Black students more than students in general (Douglas 1991). This was also reported by Francis Rouschenberg, coordinator of Advising and Retention Services (Peterson 1991).

These differences continue to be seen at institutions across the country today. Based on differences in socioeconomic background, Massey et al. (2003) argue that “Latino and black freshman can thus be expected to be more vulnerable than their white or Asian counterparts to exogenous economic shocks and idiosyncratic circumstances that inevitably arise in the course of life” (Massey et al. 2003, p. 43). This is consistent with other research which found that changes in financial aid policy had a differential, more dramatic impact on African American students overall (Astin 1990; Hu & St. John 2001). Financial difficulties are particularly influential early in the academic career “when the goal of college completion is still quite remote” (Tinto 1993, p. 66).

More recently, the debate over who deserves access to higher education has become increasingly heated and the competition for coveted positions in selective institutions is extreme. Recent policy statements by the university express a commitment to improving “campus diversity” and the participation of African Americans at UGA. However, a report by an outside review panel released early in 2004 stated that most people see this as a *verbal* commitment with very little action behind it (McCarthy 2003). An *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article states that at the university, “Numbers lag despite efforts at recruiting” (Simmons & Jones 2003).

This finding affirms student feelings from the past and today. In 1991, Thomas Glanton, a university sophomore and BAC member, described his frustration with what he saw as administrative inaction after attending a forum discussion sponsored by a campus organization, “I’ve attended several of these forums over the past two years, and it bothers me that afterwards the administration doesn’t seem to do anything to change things” (Peterson 1991). Renita Ward, a university graduate student, in a 2001 NPR report, “I would like to feel like the administration really has a strong aggressive commitment to diversity. Why don’t you develop some of the

same recruiting techniques that you have for your sports program?” (Simeone 2001). A similar sentiment was echoed by Dr. Ron Miller, director of the Institute for African-American studies, in a 2001 Red & Black story (Ackerman 2001).

In 2003, the university had forty percent fewer black applicants than they had the previous fall (Reetz 2003). University officials emphasized the importance of student recruitment for successful increases in black student enrollment. A similar enrollment decline occurred in 2004, with the same emphasis from the university (Pauff 2004). However, current students led a protest concerning the low enrollment specifically of African American men, who made up only 1.9% of the student body. These students said they were committed to doing their part, but wanted to see increased funding from the administration to improve recruitment efforts (Gant 2003). Student Brandi Lattimore, a senior and president of the Black Affairs Council at the time she was interviewed, said that the 2004 enrollment numbers also likely reflect the feelings black seniors have about the university, which are not always positive. These students, like many others, are also likely to make decisions based on family tradition. “A lot of people tend to go where their families went. A lot of African-Americans don’t have that legacy [at the university]” Lattimore said (Pauff 2004).

The preceding review points to some likely trends in the institutional enrollment data presented below. It is expected that participation rates of African Americans will increase through the mid- to late 1970s, will stagnate through the mid-80s, increase in the late 80s to early 90s and decline in the mid-90s to the present. Again, as the variation is relatively small, these changes are subtle, but do seem to be present in the enrollment data.

Table 2-1. Fall Regular Enrollment of white and black undergraduate students at UGA

Year	Total Enrollment	White Enrollment (number/percentage)	African American Enrollment (number/percentage)
1978	15,817	14,650/92.6	695/4.4
1979	15,778	14,609/93	679/4.3
1980	15,639	14,456/92	697/4.5
1981	17,477	16,179/93	882/5
1982	17,602	16,232/92	945/5.4
1983	17,169	15,949/93	951/5.5
1984	17,604	16,112/91.5	1021/5.8
1985	17,963	16,369/91	994/5.5
1986	18,245	16,787/92	951/5.2
1987	18,763	17,184/92	946/5
1988	19,551	17,925/92	983/5
1989	19,501	17,724/91	1,101/5.6
1990	20,396	18,552/91	1,178/5.8
1991	20,450	18,413/90	1,252/6
1992	20,082	17,927/89	1,286/6.4
1993	20,600	18,281/89	1,313/6.4
1994	21,162	18,616/88	1,373/6.5
1995	21,877	19,098/87	1,523/7
1996	21,270	18,534/87	1,483/7
1997	22,913	19,989/87	1,476/6.4
1998	23,212	20,294/87	1,455/6.3
1999	23,711	20,689/87	1,372/5.8
2000	23,808	20,666/86.8	1,368/5.7
2001	24,421	21,258/87	1,298/5.3
2002	24,569	21,377/87	1,203/4.9
2003	25,000	21,713/87	1,194/4.7

INSTITUTIONAL DATA ON AFRICAN AMERICAN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

Table 2-1 shows total undergraduate enrollment, white student enrollment, and black student enrollment (along with percentage of the total student body for each racial group). There is a small increase in the percentage of African American students in the student body from 1979 through 1984, after which the percentage remained relatively stable around 5% through 1988. There was then another period of increase from 1989 through 1996, with a peak of 7%. After 1996 there is a continuous decline in total percentage of African American students through 2003, with a 2003 percentage of 4.7, the lowest level since 1981. What is most evident in this

information seems to be the limited variation across time, considering the large amounts of institutional conversation, legal negotiation, and public discussion.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

In order to place the contemporary experiences of African American students at the University of Georgia in context, it is necessary to explore the historical participation and experiences of black students who attended UGA in the past, as well as consider the attitudes, actions, and policies of the university administration in the political, legal, and economic context of the times. Previous and current trends in financial aid policy seem to be particularly important, based on the historic intersection of race and class in the United States. The 1990s shift away from need-based aid and increasing access to one that emphasizes affordability and subsidizing existing college going behavior has clear impacts on African American student participation at the University of Georgia (Cornwell and Mustard 2002). It is also clear from this review that the relationship between African American students and this university has never been an uncomplicated or comfortable one. This manifests itself in the levels of student enrollment, persistence, and graduation, as well as the actions of individual and groups of students and of administrators.

Trillin (1963/1991) conveys a recognition in the early 1960s from local activist Jesse Hill, who played a central role in encouraging African American students in Atlanta to apply to the University, that while these students may be able to gain academically from the programs available at UGA, they will still find considerably less socially. Trillen reports that Hamilton Holmes found Morehouse superior to UGA in every way except the science facilities (Trillin 1963/1991). In a Red & Black article from the mid-1980s, students report that, “There’s a feeling of not belonging. Racist attitudes here make black students feel like this isn’t their

school” (Jacki Bryant, a junior public relations major, quoted in Jones 1984). In a NPR report from 2001, Dr. Robert Pratt, a history professor at the University says, “There are still pockets of deeply entrenched segregation on this campus, and anybody who is honest with you will tell you that. There are bars in the town to the extent that that is an extension of the university, where black students simply do not feel comfortable and where they do not venture” (Simeone 2001; see also Mosely 2004). Or as one of my own former students most eloquently put it, “it’s not diversity, it’s the racism.” What was said by student activities advisor Eddie Daniels in the mid-80s is still true today. “The recruiting staff can only do so much. The best recruiters are students here. But if they go back and tell younger students negative things (about the university), it negates anything the recruiting officer does” (Daniels quoted in Jones 1984).

It is clear that, based in large part on the external monitoring of the OCR that was a result of the Adams case (1972), the university has spent at least the last several decades developing and working on recruiting efforts that may even be appropriately called “Herculean”(Vobejda 1987b). This includes extensive outreach into the African American community both in Atlanta and throughout the state (see, for example, “Desegregation at the University of Georgia” 1985). What has not occurred, as was recognized by Feagin and Sikes (1995), is any structural or normative change in the university itself, most particularly the social system and the attitudes of many white students.

Consideration of and knowledge about this history can inform policy decisions regarding the relationship between students and the institution. In reviewing the role of institutional mission in the admissions process, Bowen and Bok (1998) mention the importance of building multi-generational relationships between families and the institution (Bowen & Bok 1998, 24). These traditions often play a significant role in the enrollment decisions of white students on

these campuses (including UGA) and are an important aspect of retention. Family members are familiar with the structure of the campus and shared attendance creates a family bond that reinforces institutional commitment.

As Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) write, “a university’s reputation is generally a condensation of individual and group memories of experience with that university” (p. 23). Based on the history of higher education in the United States, African American students are much more likely to be first generation college students (Massey et al. 2003). Their parents do not have a prior relationship with the institution around which to build a sense of belonging. In fact, the opposite is true, as for many students at predominantly white institutions; their parents would not have been welcome on campus when they were college age. This is different from HBCU’s, who have a long tradition of providing education and training to the black community (Dubois 1995/1899; Tollett 1982). There is no cultural equivalent in the black community for a predominantly white institution (PWI) that matches the cultural value attached to being a “Morehouse man” (Bowles & DeCosta 1971). Therefore, fostering a sense of belonging and connection in minority students and in minority communities overall should be a particularly high priority for predominantly white institutions with a history of racism, as the collective memory of a community and it’s relationship with an institution can be very different across racial lines.

The university must focus on not only recruitment and retention of black students but on graduating African Americans who were satisfied with their college experience and return to their home communities encouraging other friends and family members to apply to the university. This reality is poignantly revealed in a quote from a mid-80s Red & Black article that is eerily similar to one I heard from a successful African American senior student at a panel on

campus in 2000. Monique Goodman, who at the time was president of the Committee for Black Cultural Programs, did not believe she would feel any loyalty to the University after she graduated. “I think you give what you receive. I don’t think I’ve received anything but an education here. The only thing I’ve gotten is how to survive in a dog-eat-dog world” (quoted in Jones 1984).

CHAPTER 3

THE COLLEGE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Research on the college student experience spans several decades and disciplines and focuses variously on student characteristics (both pre- and post-entrance), student experiences, institutional characteristics, and the impact of policy on the college-going and in-college experiences of various groups of students. This body of work is dominated primarily by very general “successful” outcomes including the retention of students from freshman to sophomore year and the persistence of students to degree completion. One central framework in the area of student persistence is the work of Vincent Tinto (1987; 1993), whose theory of college student departure has become “near paradigmatic” (Braxton 2000) within the field. Other work focuses on specific areas of the student experience within Tinto’s theory, such as social and academic integration. Several authors, Astin (1993) in particular, have emphasized the need to consider college student satisfaction as a central outcome variable which influences not just retention and persistence but also the continuing relationship of the former student with the institution and with higher education in general.

In this chapter I will provide a summary of several significant theories of college student development, paying particular attention to Tinto’s model and the concept of social integration as well as the importance of considering student satisfaction in research on the college student experience. This will include a review of those characteristics and experiences which have been shown to positively and negatively impact student success and satisfaction. Much of the original work in this area considered a relatively racially and economically homogenous student

population. While this was a somewhat more appropriate assumption early in the history of American higher education, it continues to become less and less appropriate as the composition of the student body, both by race and class as well as gender, age, and student goals continues to evolve and encompass a larger proportion of the U.S. population. Recent work has emphasized the importance of paying attention to different ascribed and achieved characteristics within the student population which interact with the institutional context to differentially impact the student experience. I will focus here on work which considers the impact of race on student experiences on a predominantly white campus.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Many of the original theories of college student development are stage theories which originated in psychology (Kuh 1995). These models focus on intrapersonal development and specific types of cognitive development which are presumed to emerge in a relatively orderly and linear fashion (see, for instance Chickering 1969). While these theories continue to play a significant role in the education of student affairs professionals and in higher education more generally, more recent theoretical work has focused on a contextual and interactional understanding of the college student experience, considering a wide range of impacts and potential outcomes, including but not limited to, cognitive development.

Alexander Astin's work follows what he calls the I-E-O model, where I is inputs, or student background characteristics and predispositions, E is the environment within which the student is embedded, and O represents the outputs associated with the interaction of student characteristics and their environments. These outputs include both intellectual and affective changes in the student and this work studies the impact of certain types of college experience and not the impact of college in general. Similar to the work of Astin, Pascarella (1985) offers a

model which is interactional in nature and considers learning and cognitive outcomes as a function of institutional characteristics, student background, student perceptions through interaction with peers and other institutional agents, all interacting with the amount of time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities (Kuh 1995).

The most fully articulated and sociologically grounded theory in this area is that of Vincent Tinto. In thinking about developing institutional policy to decrease student attrition, Tinto emphasizes an institutional definition of success which considers the whole student, writing that it is important to remember that, “education, the social and intellectual development of individuals, rather than just their continued presence on campus, should be the goal of retention efforts” (Tinto 1993, 145). Tinto hypothesized that student attrition is highly correlated with the level of social and academic integration of the student on campus. Related to Durkheim’s theories of social integration (specifically his classic study of suicide), Tinto argues that variations of levels of social and academic integration affect persistence at a college or university differently (Tinto 1993). A student who is highly integrated only academically or socially is at a higher risk of leaving college than a student who is highly integrated both socially and academically.

Academic integration is traditionally defined as the ability to meet the academic demands of the institution, perceptions of access to faculty, and the experience of intellectual growth (Braxton, Shaw, & Johnson 1997). Social integration refers to the fit between the student and the social environment of the institution (Braxton et al. 1997) and is typically measured through student perceptions. These two fields of integration are presumed to have a major impact on subsequent intentions and institutional and goal commitments, the level of which determine

decisions to persist or depart the institution, when considered in the context of external commitments and the external community within which the student is nested.

The theory takes into account the most commonly measured precollege factors, including family socioeconomic status, admissions test scores, and high school GPA, but gives greater significance to the importance of the levels of integration after coming to college. What a student does after entering college has a greater impact on their success (Pascarella & Terenzini 1991; Tinto 1993).

While external forces may influence one's decisions to go to college and greatly constrain choices as to which college to attend, once entry has been gained, their impact for most students tends to be dependent upon the character of one's integrative experiences within that college . . . experiences on campus are, for most students, paramount to the process of persistence (Tinto 1993, p. 129).

Importantly for this study, post-entrance factors that affect academic and social integration are much better predictors of black student success than traditional precollege measurements (Eimers & Pike 1997; Murguia, Padilla, & Pavel 1991). Eimers and Pike (1997) found that the experience of academic integration, more so than academic ability, positively impacted minority student freshman year achievement.

According to Braxton et al. (1997), the 1987 version of Tinto's theory implies 15 different testable major and minor propositions (Braxton et al. 1997). As the theory has been tested and applied across and within numerous institutional settings, it is possible to review the empirical support for each of these propositions and identify those that are strongly supported and those that are weakly supported. Unsurprisingly, they found vigorous support for the proposition that initial institutional and goal commitment influence subsequent commitments.

They also found support for the proposition that student entry characteristics influence both initial and subsequent goal commitment, that subsequent commitment enhances the likelihood of college persistence, that social integration enhances subsequent institutional commitment, that low goal *or* institutional commitment can be compensated for by high levels of the other, and that the influences of academic and social integration are interdependent and reciprocal (Braxton et al. 1997). Based on these findings, the authors identified areas of the theory in need of modification and expansion, including expanded understanding of the central concepts of academic and social integration.

While Tinto's is a theory of institutional departure it is intended to be useful in analyzing the current structure of the campus environment and in creating policy that "looks toward a restructuring and/or [modifying] of the social and intellectual conditions of the institution and the creation of alternative mechanisms for the integration of individuals into its ongoing social and intellectual life" (Tinto 1993). This can also mean analyzing existing campus organizations to discover if they are working to integrate students into campus life. Tinto believes that "positive experiences—that is, integrative ones—reinforce persistence through their impact upon heightened intentions and commitments both to the goal of college completion and to the institution in which the person finds him/herself" (Tinto 1993).

STUDENT SOCIAL INTEGRATION/INVOLVEMENT

The work of Braxton (2000) in reviewing the existing research on Tinto's theory, and the work of Astin have demonstrated the centrality of social integration and student involvement for successful college graduation (Braxton 2000; Thomas 2000). The experience of social integration, or "membership" within the campus community, is not just the result of interactions between the student and others within the institutional environment. Instead, it "depends on the

character of those interactions and the manner in which the individual comes to perceive them as rewarding or unrewarding” (Tinto 1993, p. 136). The need for integration to include an element of “belonging” indicates the importance of studying the impact of different types of student involvement for different types of students as “student subcultures provide a backdrop for students’ interpretation of the college experience” (Thomas 2000, p. 601).

From an analysis of interviews conducted, Attinasi (1996) concludes that social integration is important not just because it contributes to the development of shared values and norms, but because it provides the student with specific information to negotiate the institutional landscape. This makes their integration a more cognitive and less moral phenomenon (Attinasi 1996). This integration includes behaviors that allow the students to scale down the university into manageable communities from which to negotiate their engagement with the campus community. These smaller communities are what Tinto calls communal niches (Tinto 1993). These findings make integration less of a normative/assimilation process and more of an interactional negotiation for the minority student. This is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Murguia, Padilla, and Pavel (1991).

In their research on the ethnic identity of Hispanic and Native American students and the concept of social integration in Tinto’s model, Murguia et al. (1991) found that student organizations, specifically “ethnically” homogeneous groups, provide students with the ability to integrate into the larger university environment by creating what they called “social enclaves”. The authors believe that these enclaves should be supported to “promote enclave efficacy at integrating students both socially and academically” (Murguia et al. 1991). Tinto argues that there are multiple cultures present on any campus and that, while some are more central or dominant, “insofar as individuals are able to find some communal niche on campus, then it is

possible for a person to be seen as deviant from the broader college environment and still persist to degree completion” (Tinto 1993, p. 121-122). Still, he also leaves open the possibility that a “communal niche” that is too far from the dominant campus climate may be less successful at integrating students and supporting persistence than one that is closer to the center of campus life.

The idea that campuses are made up of a variety of different subcultures or communities and that it is these communities that are most effective at integrating different types of students into the life of the college leads to two important conclusions. One is that the more diverse campus communities that are available and efficacious the more likely it is that a greater range of students “will be able, if they so desire, to become integrated and establish competent intellectual and social membership” in the institution (Tinto 1993, p. 124). Second, efficacy of these various communities is supported by the attainment of a “critical mass” of diverse students, including students with different social class backgrounds, dispositions, and racial or ethnic membership (Tinto 1993; Willie 2003). Mallinckrodt found that involvement in extra-curricular organizations is clearly linked to higher levels of student satisfaction and retention, and this is particularly true for black male students (Chavous 2000; Jackson & Swan 1991).

Several studies found that participation in same-race organizations did not increase isolation for African-American and other minority students, as commonly believed, but actually made them feel more apart of the campus community (Taylor & Howard-Hamilton 1995; Moran et al. 1994, Murguia et al. 1991). Students use these enclaves to scale down a large campus in order to deal with it more effectively. It is in this function that the black Greek organization can most clearly be seen as unique from that of white Greek organizations. Based on the incongruence in the overall campus environment and the needs and experiences of African

American students, same-race organizations create a unique niche for these students. These organizations also entail a more formal type of involvement, which may be more important for minority students than white students (Tinto 1993).

BLACK STUDENTS ON PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CAMPUSES

The review provided in the last chapter reveals the long and complicated relationship between African Americans and white institutions which historically excluded them. Concern with the impact of a majority white environment on the development and success of black students has often led to studies which compared the black student experience at PWI's and HBCU's (i.e. Fleming 1984). These studies have disproportionately indicated that HBCU's offer more supportive social and academic environments for black students. A study by Hartnett (1970) indicated that there were differences between black students who chose PWI's and those who chose HBCU's – blacks entering PWI's were more independent, liberal, and concerned with social injustice and had a greater preference for the collegiate subculture. Also, as increasing numbers of black students began to enroll in white institutions, it was necessary to focus on the particular environmental characteristics across these institutions which contributed to greater success for these students (Bowles & DeCosta 1971).

Consideration of the influence of campus racial composition is also part of an overall increasing consideration of the role of environmental factors in shaping student experiences and institutional and goal commitments. These factors are assumed to “exert an influence in the socialization and academic experiences of the students” (Cabrera, Nora, & Casteñeda 1993). Numerous studies have reported the high levels of isolation, alienation, and hostility that black students feel on predominantly white campuses (Allen 1992; Davis 2004; Feagin & Sikes 1995;

Loo & Rolison 1986; Steward, Jackson, & Jackson 1990; Willie & Cunnigen 1981; Zea et al. 1997).

In spite of several decades of commitment to increasing black enrollments, black students on white campuses are less likely to feel a sense of fit with the institution (Davis 2004; Feagin, Vera, & Imani 1996; Tinto 1993). They consistently report higher levels of alienation and feelings of isolation from the student body (Allen 1992). This is particularly salient to the issue of retention as isolation is often cited as a primary cause of voluntary withdrawal (Tinto 1993). According to interviews done by Feagin and Sikes, black students come to white campuses from various backgrounds and feel pressure to become exactly like the white, middle-class culture, “with its distinctive white middle-class ways of talking, dressing, and acting—to become, as another black student put it, ‘Afro-Saxon.’”

These studies specifically addressed the students’ experience of racism and discrimination on predominantly white campuses. The experience of social integration may be virtually impossible for the minority student who has multiple experiences with discrimination while interacting with members of the campus community. It is difficult to come to share the norms and values of a community when those seem to include a lack of value for someone from your racial group background. In their study on the impact of expectations of rejection among African American students and their impact on student experiences with racism, Mendoza-Denton et al. (2002) write that experiences with racism lead to “doubts about one’s acceptance by members of these social institutions” (p. 896). Both the potential and actual experience of discrimination on campus negatively impact minority student success.

However, work by Nora and Cabrera (1996) indicates that perceptions of racism have less of an impact on minority student experience than academic performance and development,

and social integration. In general as it concerns student success, studies show that black students are more likely to succeed in college if they have previous educational experiences in majority white environments, if they did not transfer to the university, if they perceive the overall campus environment to be non-racist, and if they perceive high levels of access to faculty and staff (Nettles et al. 1986; Nettles 1991; Smith & Moore 2002). Higher levels of success are also associated with students who find their interests reflected in campus activities, and have strong support networks on and off campus (Allen & Haniff 1991; Allen 1992). Overall, college GPA is associated with background characteristics like race, gender, and socioeconomic status as well as post-entrance factors like major, study hours, work status and location, as well as organizational membership.

Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) emphasize the importance of considering the collective memory of a community when thinking about the minority student experience on a predominantly white campus. Their research involved focus group interviews with prospective students and parents of potential students in one community regarding their feelings and experiences with one predominantly white state institution. Collective memory within a minority community is very significant in the construction of a group racial identity, and provides information for individuals attempting to make choices about their education.

Parental and student judgments regarding the degree to which a predominantly white university will facilitate personal and cultural development are based on large part on reported experiences of other African Americans who have attended or attempted to attend that university, as well as on events involving the university reported in the media (1996, p. 29-30).

These experiences are particularly collected among the peer groups of young African Americans and an accumulation of accounts of negative student experiences, even from students who have successfully graduated from the institution can serve as a serious deterrent to future potential students. This impact makes it doubly important for universities to consider not just the success of their minority students (as defined by GPA or persistence to degree completion) but the student level of involvement and social integration as well as their satisfaction.

Research reveals that measures of satisfaction are probably the most important indicators of academic success. According to Astin, “Given the considerable investment of time and energy that most students make in attending college, the students’ perception of value should be given substantial weight. Indeed it is difficult to argue that student satisfaction can legitimately subordinated to any other educational outcome” (Knox et al. 1992). Students most directly benefit from gaining a college education; therefore their satisfaction with the experience is the most direct measure of the success of the institution (Knox et al. 1992).

Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and better pre-college academic preparation typically report higher levels of satisfaction. Post-entrance, student satisfaction has been shown to be associated with leaving home to attend college (as opposed to commuting) as well as the sheer distance between home and school. It is also positively associated with higher GPA’s, higher levels of faculty contact, time spent in student clubs and organizations, participation in intramural sports, time spent in religious activities, majoring in education, and living on campus. Having a part-time job off-campus and majoring in engineering have been shown to have a negative association with student satisfaction (Astin 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini 1991).

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This review indicates the importance of student experiences on student success and satisfaction as well as revealing the centrality of student involvement to the experience of social integration. Research still needs to be done which focuses on which types of involvement impact which types of students in what ways (Kuh 1995). Work on the minority student experience at a PWI indicates the need to consider student experiences and satisfaction as they directly impact the type of collective memory generated and stored up within a minority community. Several variables have been uncovered as influencing the outcomes of interest in this research, which will be explored more thoroughly in a subsequent chapter.

Using Tinto's (1993) theory as a framework, this study takes a focused look at one particular type of involvement, paying attention to the ways in which Greek organization membership, and the organizations themselves, vary across race within a predominantly white environment. As will be reviewed in the next chapter, both the history of these organizations and contemporary research on their impact indicate a need for this type of in-depth analysis, which treats race as part of a larger social and historical context which shapes individual lives and does not simply include it as a control variable, assuming this is sufficient.

CHAPTER 4

GREEK ORGANIZATIONS

While secret societies have been a part of the human cultural landscape for many generations, their genesis in American higher education can be traced through the Freemason movement to the founding of the first Greek-letter society, Phi Beta Kappa in 1776 (Kimbrough 2003). Race has long been significant in this movement, as the founding of the first African Masonic lodge by Prince Hall (a black Methodist minister from Barbados) occurred in 1787 (Kimbrough 2003). In this chapter I will briefly summarize the historical roots of Greek organizations in American higher education, and then provide a more thorough analysis of the history of the Black fraternal movement, which takes place in the context of the African American experience in higher education examined previously. This account will conclude with information on the history of BGO's specific to the institution that is the location for the analysis conducted herein. I will close by reviewing contemporary research on the impact of membership in a Greek organization on the college student experience, what differences have been identified between the white and black Greek experience, as well as reviewing research specific to BGO membership, including my own previous work in this area.

GREEK ORGANIZATION HISTORY

The student organizations which eventually evolved to become the Greek organizations we know today were literary and study groups which attempted to provide avenues for discussion, academic development and social outlets within a relatively restrictive higher educational environment (Jones 2004; Rudolph 1962/1990). Initially founded in the Northeast in

the 1820's and 1830's, Greek-letter organizations were always of concern to administrators and were also the target of the unsuccessful anti-secret society movement that began in 1834 (Rudolph 1952/1990). As these organizations grew the literary societies declined. This occurred because colleges began to fill some of the curricular needs initially met by the literary groups and because the fraternal organizations created a stronger sense of loyalty and fulfilled social and emotional needs as opposed to curricular needs as well as offering a break from the monotony of a "collegiate regime which began with prayers before dawn and ended with prayers after dark" (Rudolph 1962/1990, p. 146). As Horowitz writes, "the fraternity had great appeal. For those undergraduates with the wealth, inclination, and leisure to join, the new Greek letter organizations gave an arena of privacy away from college eyes. In colleges founded by Protestant denominations that demanded abstinence and self-denial, members could break the official codes among trusted brothers" (Horowitz in Kimbrough 2003, p. 21).

These organizations also provided students with housing, built-in study groups and social support, as well as the benefit of helping students find others who shared common interests and goals. Sororities organized for women along the same lines beginning in the early 20th century. The organizations were also always selective, at a time when American higher education itself was primarily, although not exclusively, the purview of a very select proportion of the U.S. population (Handler 1995). They were particularly not open to the small numbers of African Americans on predominantly white campuses at the turn of the century (Kimbrough 2003).

THE BLACK GREEK MOVEMENT

This was true for the African American students at Cornell University in 1906. These students experienced high levels of segregation and isolation on campus. At this time a black student on a predominantly white campus could go for days at a time without running into

another black student (Jones 2004). These conditions resulted in a serious retention problem. In the fall of 1906 all six African American students in the 1904-05 class failed to reenroll. This raised serious concern among the remaining black students, who decided to develop a study/support group for black students that was modeled after the literary societies of the time (Giddings 1988). Within this group were the students, many of whom worked in white fraternity houses, who would found the first college-based Black Greek organization, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity (Ross 2000).

The use of Greek letters for the naming of the group was not simply an imitation of their white counterparts, however. The founding of these organizations occurred at a time when the concept of education for African Americans was perceived by many whites as futile and even dangerous. The nature of what education, if any education, should be made available for young black students was also the subject of conflict within the black community. This context had an impact on the form and focus that the newly developing organizations took.

Black fraternal groups . . . had a decidedly liberal arts bent . . . [that was] calculated to strike a blow against proponents of industrial, nonacademic education for Afro-Americans. The latter included Blacks like Booker T. Washington, who believed the study of classical subjects was of little practical use (Giddings 1988, p.19).

Table 4-1. BGO Founding Dates, Location, and other Information

Organization	Founding Date	Location	Motto	Colors
Alpha Phi Alpha	December 4, 1906	Cornell University	First of All, Servants of All, We Shall Transcend All	Old Gold and Black
Kappa Alpha Psi	January 5, 1911	Indiana University – Bloomington	Achievement in Every Field of Human Endeavor	Crimson and Cream
Omega Psi Phi	November 17, 1911	Howard University	Friendship is Essential to the Soul	Purple and Gold
Phi Beta Sigma	January 9, 1914	Howard University	Culture for Service and Service for Humanity	Royal Blue and White
Iota Phi Theta	September 19, 1963	Morgan State University – Baltimore, MD	Building a Tradition, Not Resting on One	Charcoal Brown and Gilded Gold
Alpha Kappa Alpha	January 15, 1908	Howard University	Service to All Mankind	Salmon Pink and Apple Green
Delta Sigma Theta	January 13, 1913	Howard University	Intelligence is the Torch of Wisdom	Crimson and Cream
Zeta Phi Beta	January 16, 1920	Howard University	A Community-Conscious Action-Oriented Organization	Royal Blue and White
Sigma Gamma Rho	November 12, 1922	Butler University – Indiana	Greater Service, Greater Progress	Royal Blue and Antique Gold

There are now nine national Black Greek organizations under the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC); these are listed in Table 4-1. Black students on both historically black campuses and predominantly white campuses founded fraternal organizations to enhance their

college experiences and to deal with political and social issues facing the black community (Rodriguez 1995). While the major breeding ground for BGO's was clearly Howard University, where five of the nine organizations were founded, three of the nine were founded on predominantly white campuses. These include, along with Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity (Indiana University in 1911), and Sigma Gamma Rho sorority (Butler University in 1922).

The conditions for black students at Indiana University in 1911 were, unsurprisingly, very similar to those at Cornell. While African Americans were allowed to attend, they were not allowed access to the recreational, social, or housing facilities on campus. Two students who had transferred from Howard (where an existing chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha provided an example of black fraternal organization, although membership did not appeal to these particular men; Jones 2004) saw the establishment of a BGO as a way to provide for these needs (Ross 2000). These two students gathered several other men to organize Kappa Alpha Nu (the name was changed in 1914).

Sigma Gamma Rho is the only black Greek sorority founded on a predominantly white campus. The founders were all teachers who organized the sorority at Butler University in 1922. Here, the need for support was particularly great. At this time, Klan membership was on the rise nationally but particularly in Indiana where thirty percent of the male population belonged to the Klan (Ross 2000). The founders "wanted to create an organization that would provide service and fellowship opportunities as well as promote professional achievement through higher education" (Kimbrough 1995, p. 65).

Even those organizations which were not founded on predominantly white campuses were developed at a time in U.S. history around the turn of the 20th century which was

characterized both by high levels of discrimination, structural racism, and racial violence as well as increasing black activism and mobilization (Jones 2004). This timespan encompasses the beginning of the Niagara Movement, the NAACP, the Black Women's Movement, and the Urban League. This connection leads Jones (2004) to characterize black Greek fraternities as socio-political organizations, which, while they shared many characteristics with their white counterparts, developed within a specific racial and historical context (Giddings 1988).

The original members of BGFs seem to have had very similar goals as the members of these [activist] organizations, which is illustrated by a high frequency of cross-organizational membership. Hence, at their inception, BGF's were solidly political and belonged to the larger Negro social movement of the time (Jones 2004, p. 42).

This activism can clearly be seen in many of the initial major service programs that were established as the organizations grew to be national and international in scope. These include Phi Beta Sigma's Bigger and Better Business Program which was established in the 1920s and worked to empower black business owners, the Guide Right program established by Kappa Alpha Psi in 1922 which works to encourage academic achievement among high school seniors, the Voting Rights Program developed by Alpha Phi Alpha which worked to register African Americans to vote at a time of widespread disenfranchisement, the National Library Project created in 1937 by Delta Sigma Theta which helped to develop local libraries for African Americans, and the Zeta Phi Beta Housing project of 1943, where the sorority worked with the National Housing Association to locate housing vacancies for WWII war workers (Ross 2000; Berkowitz & Padavic 1999).

The activist and political orientation of the organizations can also be seen in many of the early statements and issues supported by the organizations, including those in support of anti-

lynching legislation, women's suffrage, and monetary support for the legal battles against Jim Crow segregation coordinated by the NAACP (Giddings 1998; Ross 2000). One such case was the Thompson Restaurant case, for which the organizations also filed an amicus curiae brief with the court in support of the plaintiffs (Giddings 1988). However, as has been noted by critics of these organizations, the very position which enabled members to found these organizations also meant that they were most likely to work for change within the context of the existing social structure and not to push for radical social reorganization (Jones 2004).

The organizations expanded slowly over the years, with most early growth taking place on predominantly white campuses where black student access to housing was severely limited, allowing the organizations to serve a specific and particular need (Graham 2000). The late 1960s through 1980 saw more rapid growth in Black fraternalism, including a proliferation of groups that took a "Blaxploitation" tone as well as those with a focus on the African roots of secret societies. Iota Phi Theta is the only current NPHC organization founded during the civil rights movement. All of the founders were older students, who had multiple family and job responsibilities. While the fraternity was organized at Morgan State College, several of the organizers were lifelong friends who liked the idea of fraternal commitment but needed an organization that was suited for their particular circumstances. This is reflected in the fraternity motto of "building a tradition, not resting on one." The fraternity was able to successfully expand as a college student organization in 1967, when a group of younger students pledged (Ross 2000). After 1980, multiple localized organizations have emerged which focus on specific identity themes like Christianity and sexual identity (Kimbrough 2003). While serving the needs and interests of smaller student populations, none of these smaller organizations has significantly challenged the dominance of the original nine.

Current membership in the NPHC is over 1.5 million. While the organizations continue to evolve with the changing historical context, as can be seen from this brief review of the early history of these organizations, their Greek-letter names and secret society structure of social support are what they most have in common with the original white fraternal movement. As will be discussed later in the chapter, more recent research reveals many of the differences between the two types of organizations. Contemporary work can also help to clarify the similarities and differences between BGO's and historically white sororities specifically, founded by and for women at a time when their small numbers on campus as well as the very paternalistic environment created a great need for bonding and organization among the white female students on campus (Kimbrough 2003).

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

At the time of the integration of the University of Georgia, which provides the setting for this research, the two students who would challenge the university history of racial exclusion would come to campus in 1961 having already gained membership in a BGO. Both students publicly acknowledged the significant impact that this membership had on their ability to survive and ultimately succeed in the hostile climate they faced as the first black students on campus. Charlayne Hunter-Gault described using her sorority motto as a means to withstand the racism and abuse she was subjected to by the university and her fellow students – “keep a calm mind, courageous spirit, and bar bitterness from my heart” (Kimbrough 2003).

As discussed previously, growth in the African American student population following integration was slow. It was in 1969, at the time of major black student organization and resistance, including the demand for a “moratorium on racism,” that the first chapter of a black Greek organization was established on campus. Seven African American students formed the

first pledge class of the Zeta Pi chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. At this time, white Greek organizations had been on campus since 1866 and news regarding Greek activities dominated the student newspaper.

That these organizations were completely white at the time is revealed in a 1968 story from that same paper regarding the experiences of Deborah Williams, an African American student who participated in sorority rush (the recruitment period for NPC organizations). Ms. Williams described the shock and surprise of the white members who greeted her at the various sorority houses. Although she was invited back to three sororities she did not receive an invitation to join any of them. Several of the sorority women did tell her that they “thought a black sorority would be good for the campus, that it would give black students the chance they wanted to identify” (Baugh 1968).

In the years following the establishment of the Alpha chapter, other NPHC organizations joined them on campus. Next was Delta Sigma Theta in 1969, Kappa Alpha Psi in 1971, Omega Psi Phi in 1972, Alpha Kappa Alpha in 1973, Phi Beta Sigma in 1974, Zeta Phi Beta in 1975, and finally Sigma Gamma Rho in 1988. There is no currently existing chapter of Iota Phi Theta at this institution.

These black Greeks were often featured in the student newspaper for activities sponsored by the groups and members also often appear as sources in articles regarding black students in general. A 1970 article on the relevance of non-violent protest methods includes two quotes from students who are identified not only by name, but also as officers in campus NPHC organizations (Walters 1970). A 1984 article on the status of black students in the context of a focus on desegregation cites BGOs as the only source of social events for black students on campus (Jones 1984). In a 1987 speech to students, interim president Stanford focused on BGO

participation in annual Greek Week programming as a specific area of race relations on campus in need of improvement (Phillips 1987c). In spite of relatively small numbers over the years, these organizations and their members are clearly very visible participants in the University community.

Participation and membership in these chapters and Greek life in general has varied over the course of the last 35 years. The charts illustrate the changing rates of Greek membership for black and white Greek organizations on campus (Figures 4-1 and 4-2). While white Greek organization membership is currently on the rise, it is declining for black Greek organizations. This decline is likely to impact the findings of the current research.

Figure 4-1. UGA White Greek Membership by Sex (1969-2003)

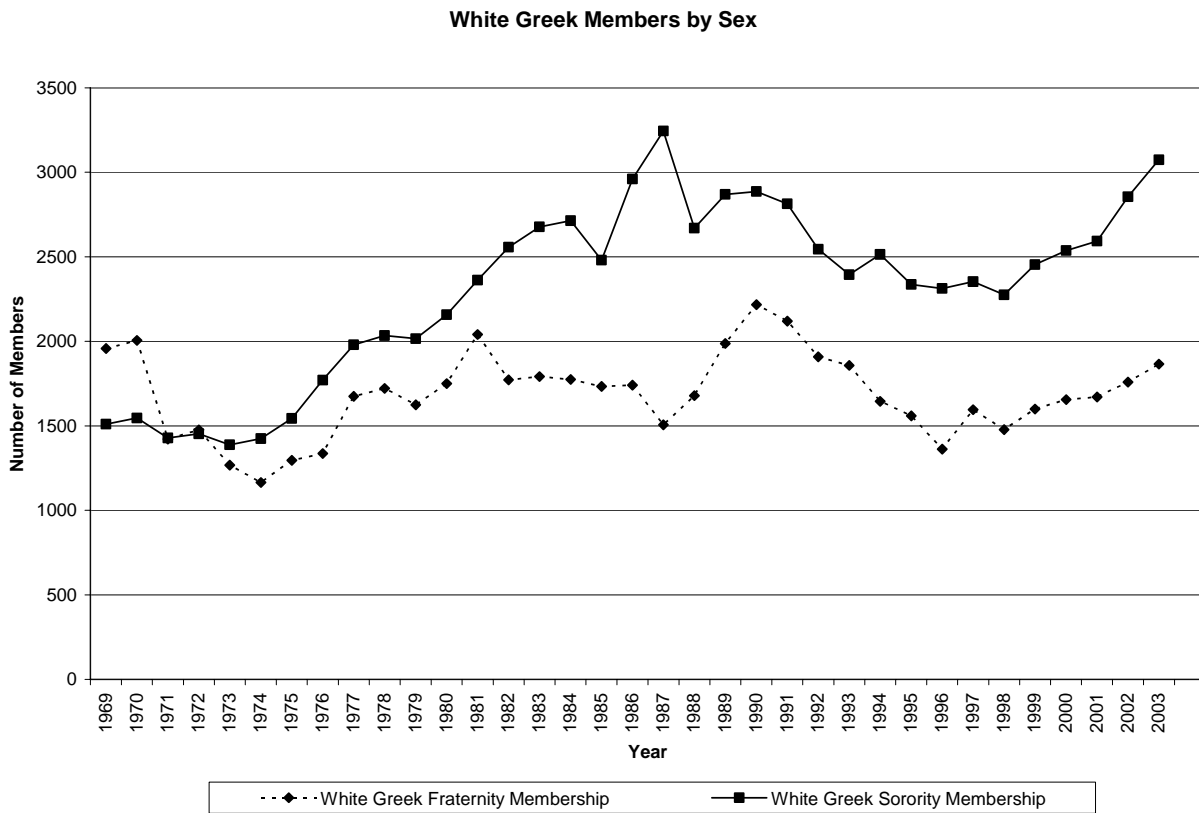
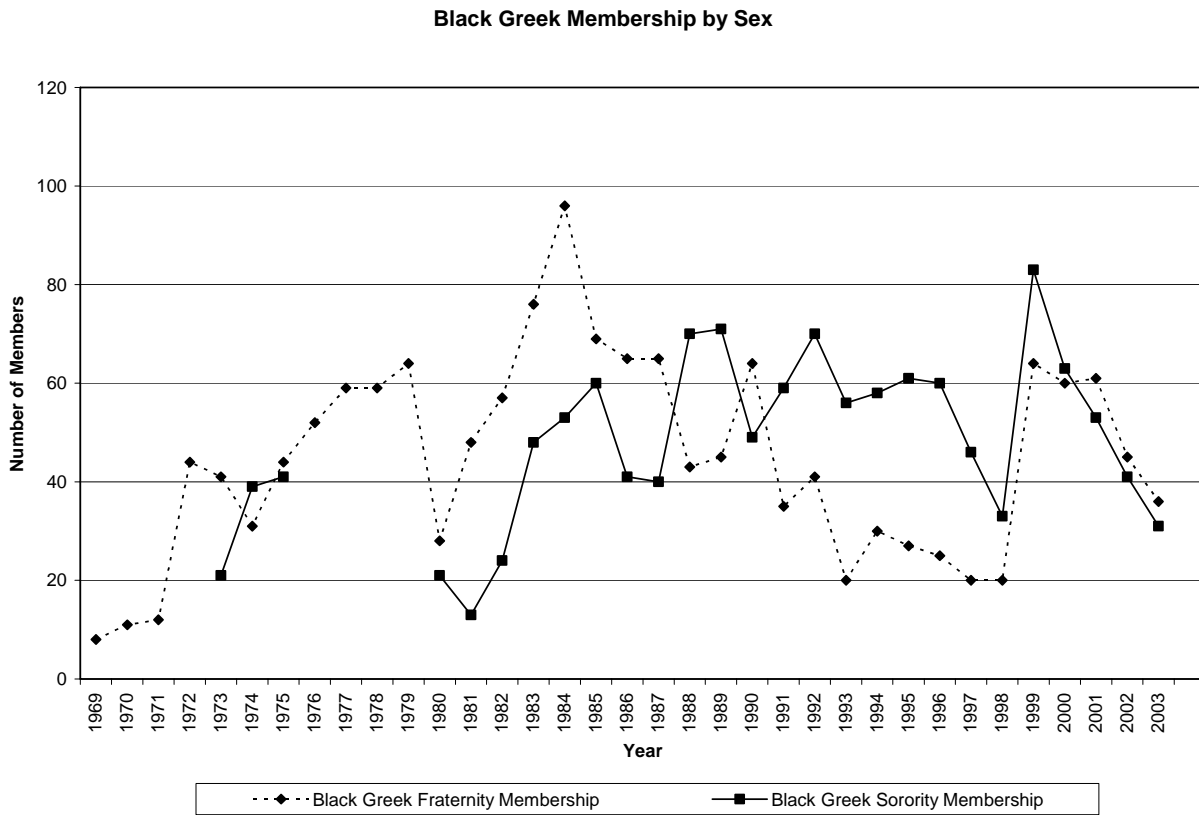


Figure 4-2. UGA Black Greek Membership by Sex (1969-2003)



CONTEMPORARY INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE OF BGO'S

As shown in the above tables, current participation in BGO's on campus is approximately 60 students across the eight organizations with chapters here. All eight chapters have specific requirements for membership eligibility which include a minimum GPA range of 2.5-2.6 and a required college enrollment period of between 12 and 24 credit hours. The organizations also often require evidence of campus and/or community involvement or service. Several specifically request letters of recommendation from current members.

These organizations continue to be very visible in the campus newspaper, both for events sponsored by the groups and for their participation in other student organizations and events. Events include local service efforts connected with national projects like the voter registration

drive of Alpha Phi Alpha and the “Stork’s Nest” early and prenatal care program of Zeta Phi Beta as well as chapter-level relationships with community groups like local Boys and Girls clubs, nursing homes, the county mentoring program and community center, and Habitat for Humanity chapter. Along with regular social events from formals to more informal parties, the organizations collectively sponsor an annual All-Greek Step Show which is open to chapters from other campuses and more recently have sponsored events open to black alumni during the university homecoming weekend in an attempt to encourage more minority participation in this annual celebration (Dorsey 2001).

Social events for these organizations often take place in private residences, a location on campus, or in a downtown venue. A recent student newspaper article on the level of segregation in the downtown area cited rising prices for venues as a difficulty facing black Greek fraternities whose smaller size limits their financial resources (Mosely 2004). The low level of minority student enrollment was also cited as a cause of the lack of racial diversity in downtown venues, an issue for which the president of one BGO chapter was sought for comment (Pauff 2004). This student also stated that the low numbers of currently enrolled minority students and their lack of visibility on campus made it difficult for prospective minority students to see themselves on campus. He described how members of his fraternity attempted to increase minority student visibility through their activities in the local community, in particular local schools (Pauff 2004).

RESEARCH ON GREEK ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP

Most of the research on the influence or impact of Greek membership on college students focuses primarily on the experiences of white students, with mixed results. A large proportion of this research points to deleterious consequences of Greek membership for college student development. These include findings on higher levels of rigidity in the attitudes of Greek

members, lower moral and cognitive development outcomes, less concern for social issues than their non-Greek counterparts, extremely high levels of alcohol use and abuse, increased incidences of rape and sexual assault in fraternity houses, less exposure to people of different races, less openness to diversity, increased incidences of academic dishonesty, and lower average grades (Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh 2002; McCabe & Bowers 1996; Pike 2000; Pascarella et al. 1996; Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport 1996; Wilder and McKeegan 1999). Negative cognitive and academic outcomes have led to the suggestion that freshman pledging be abolished and deferred until sophomore year (Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport 1996; Wilder and McKeegan 1999).

Other research has identified potentially positive outcomes associated with Greek membership, outcomes that are connected with the overall literature on student involvement, as well as some positive post-college outcomes (Thorson 1997; Pike 2000). These include increased opportunities for leadership development, higher levels of student involvement, and higher levels of post-college charitable giving and community involvement (Hayek et al. 2002; Pike 2000, Thorson 1997). Research findings focusing on student satisfaction, success, and persistence have been mixed (Hayek et. al 2002; Pike 2000). Astin (1993) found that Greek membership had no effect on student satisfaction and a negative effect on college GPA. Outcomes associated with Greek affiliation do vary by gender, with more negative outcomes generally associated with fraternity than sorority membership.

In a survey of college alumni, Thorson (1997) found that Greek student involvement was equal to that of non-Greek student involvement, excluding Greek membership itself. Greek alumni reported lower levels of self/academic satisfaction with their college experience, although this was significantly more true for fraternity than sorority members. Greek alumni were also

more likely to be involved in community organizations post-college, a finding which may or may not be associated with their specific Greek experience and will be discussed more thoroughly in a subsequent chapter (Thorson 1997).

The existing literature makes very few, if any distinctions between those Greek organizations that are predominantly white and have very few, if any, minority members, and those organizations that are historically black. This is described in Wilder and McKeegan's (1999) review of the literature on Greek-letter organizations and is exemplified in the following two quotes pulled from a 1996 article by Pascarella et al. that reviewed the impact of Greek membership on cognitive outcomes for freshman: "joining a fraternity during the first year of college has a significant negative impact on all four cognitive outcomes for men" and then, a few pages later, "Joining a fraternity had a strong negative effect on all four cognitive outcomes for White men, but a modest positive influence on all four cognitive outcomes for men of color."

A follow-up study to the 1996 study, which tracked students through their freshman year and beyond, found that the effects of Greek affiliation were much less pronounced after the freshman year. This article and its predecessor both control for "ethnicity" but do not make distinctions by organizational membership. This is salient to a secondary analysis conducted in the follow-up piece which found that the inclusion of people who joined Greek organizations later in their collegiate career "the negative [cognitive] effects of Greek affiliation diminished even further" (Pascarella, Flowers, & Whitt 2001, p. 293). As most BGO members do not (and cannot) join until after they have completed one to two semesters of coursework, this finding seems to indicate the importance of considering not just race, but organizational affiliation.

Thorson (1997) emphasizes that the findings of their national survey of Greek membership should not be generalized to black Greek organizations. Wilder and McKeegan

(1999), in their very thorough review of the existing body of comparative research on Greek membership, state that although more research needs to be done on black Greek organizations the existing literature shows that “black Greeks appear to differ substantially from white Greeks” (Wilder and McKeegan 1999). These differences have been established across studies and yet even research published as recently as 2002 fails to make a distinction between membership in the different types of organizations (see Hayek, Carini, O’Day, & Kuh 2002).

As stated above, an extensive review of the existing literature on Greek organizations shows very little attention has been directed specifically at understanding the meaning and function of historically Black Greek organizations and many studies directly state that their findings cannot be generalized to these organizations. Following is a review of what research has found regarding black Greek organizations.

RESEARCH ON BLACK GREEK ORGANIZATIONS

One of the earliest studies to look at fraternal participation among black and nonblack students in the southeastern region of the country found that prior to the establishment of BGO chapters on these campuses there was greater interest in rushing nonblack fraternities among black students (Tillar 1974). The establishment of BGO chapters significantly lowered the number of black students who attempted to gain entrance into these historically white organizations. In this relatively small study, Tillar (1974) found very little interest in BGO’s expressed by white students and was therefore unable to determine if the BGO’s were open to nonblack students. The relatively small numbers of black students on these campuses seemed to contribute to higher levels of racial solidarity, as the author stated, “the bonds of brotherhood among college blacks . . . run deeper than those in most nonblack fraternities” (Tillar 1974, p. 208).

In their research on the values held by black and white Greek and non-Greek men, Fox, Hodge, & Ward (1987) found that the attitudes and priorities of members of black fraternities were very different from those most commonly associated with white Greek membership, which therefore “creates a different Greek membership experience for Blacks and Whites” (Fox et al. 1987). In their study, BGO members shared similar peer and family dependence with their white Greek counterparts but were also more concerned with cultural activities than any other group in their study (Fox et al. 1987). The BGO men were also more socially conscious, more liberal, and more culturally sophisticated than white fraternity members. The authors conclude that their findings “indicate that characteristics most often associated with white fraternity membership may not necessarily be applicable to Black fraternity membership” (Fox et al. 1987, p. 533).

As mentioned previously, the institutional context also has an impact on the shape that organizations take. Whipple, Baier, and Grady (1991) review some of the major differences between black and white Greek systems on predominantly white campuses, differences that do not necessarily appear in a comparison between white Greek organizations on majority white campuses and black Greek organizations on majority black campuses.

“On most predominantly white college campuses, black Greeks provide the major social structure for most blacks on campus, both members and nonmembers alike, whereas white Greeks generally only provide social activities for their own members, guests, and members of other white Greek organizations. Black Greeks are also more service-oriented than are white Greeks” (Whipple et al. 1991).

Their sample also revealed several significant demographic differences across the two groups of students, including lower levels of parental education, higher dependence on student financial aid, and a higher percentage of first-generation college students among the black Greek students.

These students were much less likely to have affiliated with the organization as freshman, as compared to an overwhelming majority of their white Greek counterparts, who joined in the traditional rush period for these organizations, at the beginning of freshman year (Whipple et al. 1991). All of these differences lead the authors to conclude that the two systems, “differ not just in skin color but in their fundamental value orientations, family backgrounds, educational objectives, and purpose for existence” (Whipple et al. 1991, p. 7).

Berkowitz & Padavic (1999) noted many of these differences in their research comparing and contrasting the meaning and function of sorority membership for black and white women, including that in contrast to the black Greek sororities, the white Greek sorority social events were open only to other Greeks and had a very bar-like atmosphere. They also found that community service experience was a prerequisite for joining a black Greek sorority and that, “the black sororities were far more deeply involved in community service at the practical and ideological levels than were the white sororities” (p. 548).

The most significant finding of this work, however, was the general orientation of the organizations towards romance and career. White Greek women were primarily focused on the sorority experience as one which could facilitate heterosexual relationship formation and success while black Greek women described and thought of the sorority experience as one which could facilitate career success and advancement. This was particularly true as it related to a greater commitment to post-college involvement and connections among the African American sorority members. The authors attribute these differences to the significantly different gender experiences for white and black American women. Stompler and Padavic (1997) found similar differences across race for women who participated in fraternity little sister programs affiliated with either historically white or historically black Greek organizations.

Several of the major negative findings associated with Greek membership including lack of cognitive gains, negative influence of freshman pledging and Greek housing, and a tendency towards conservative values and less value for diversity have not been found to be present for Black Greek organizations, in part based on their different structure. They do not have freshman pledging, research has not shown evidence of negative cognitive outcomes, and at most large white universities they do not have Greek housing. They also do not show consistently more conservative attitudes than their non-Greek counterparts (Wilder & McKeegan 1999). There is concern about the occurrence and severity of hazing in black Greek organizations, an issue that has also been of concern for administrators regarding white Greek organizations and which will be discussed further in the final chapter (Ruffins & Roach 1997; Jones 2004).

Several studies which focus specifically on NPHC organizations (Kimbrough 1995; Kimbrough & Hutcheson 1998; Schuh, Triponey, Heim, & Nishimura 1992) found that participation in a black Greek organization contributes to student opportunities for leadership development and involvement in other collegiate activities and indicates significant support for a stronger emphasis on social support, community service and post-college professional networking among NPHC members. Black students on both HBCU's and PWI's who were members of BGO chapters perceived greater and earlier opportunities for leadership development within their chapters, especially in comparison to the opportunities available in white-dominated groups on predominantly white campuses (Kimbrough 1995).

Of the limited number of studies on the impact of membership in a BGO on the college student experience of black students on a predominantly white campus, very few have focused specifically on the impact of satisfaction, a variable of considerable importance for these campuses, as discussed in the previous chapter. As shown by research on white Greek

organizations, this type of involvement can have a positive impact on the overall level of student social integration. This type of integration is of particular importance for minority students at PWI's. My own previous research, involving interviews with twenty undergraduate members of one BGO chapter indicates support for increased integration and satisfaction among members, as described by several of the interviewees and illustrated by a few representative excerpts from those interviews.

It's great, I done met so many wonderful people I just, you kind of almost, if you really immerse yourself at this institution and [the fraternity] will help you do that. You know and it's just something where you kind of break out of that whole shell that you once were, you're almost like a totally different person.

I can say for certain that for a lot of the members in the brotherhood this is maybe one of the main reasons why they're still here, you know. Because they didn't like it at first either, you know. You gotta, UGA's one of those things that's got to kind of grow on you, you don't like it immediately, it's got to kind of grow on you. But I think it was one of the mainstays of why I'm here cause you know it's like instant family and you know, you become social and everybody gets, everybody knows you and even though everybody knew you before it's like a, I don't know . . . kind of like you feel I wouldn't say important to nobody or nothing like that but you feel . . . (S: Connected?). Yeah, you feel connected totally to the campus man you get to do a lot of stuff.

It's been real positive, like I said in high school I didn't do, hang out with a lot of people, whereas at UGA I've been really, like people say the best years of your life are college,

I'm pretty sure I'll be saying that for awhile. I've had a whole lot of fun at the same time I've done well academically and improved myself professionally, better speaking skills, better writing skills, just overall become a better person.

It definitely opened up the campus to me a lot more than I think, than I would, you know then I would have expanded by myself or just on my own . . . Most of my, most of my involvement has come from brothers telling me this is a good program to get involved in, or brothers encouraging me, hey this is something new, you might want to check it out.

[L]ooking back now I definitely see had I, had I not pledged, that I don't think college would have been as enjoyable as it, as I think it is . . . I think a lot of, especially a lot of minorities, they're going to have a negative opinion about UGA as far as what it has to offer minorities and in a certain sense I do agree, there, there really just aren't that many things if you go downtown there really just aren't too many places that cater to us. But that doesn't prevent me from going over to J's apartment and just hanging out and therefore that's fun, to me.

These responses indicate a need to explore more thoroughly the differences in Greek experience across race and by affiliation. This requires survey evidence which determines whether or not differences in success and satisfaction actually exist. Evidence of a difference across race would indicate a need for more research which explores how organizational and contextual differences play a role in creating different experiences.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Review of the history provides evidence of need to consider these organizations as a unique form of student involvement, distinct from, if not entirely different from, their predominantly white counterparts. “[T]he Tinto (1993) model allows for differential impact of integration into these subgroups based on the relative congruence between the values of the group and the values of the larger institution” (Thomas 2000, p. 593). There are currently very few cross-race comparative studies which make a distinction by system membership, even among those which control for race. While studies have analyzed a range of outcomes primarily associated with white Greek membership, very few of these studies or those on BGOs have looked specifically at the impact of membership on overall student satisfaction with their institutional experience (see Thorson 1997 as one exception).

Previous research supports the importance of considering variations in organizational involvement by race, particularly within an organizational context that differs historically and structurally, in order to understand variation within a specific type of involvement (in this case Greek membership) as is often overlooked in mainstream research. This brings to mind the oft-cited saying regarding much early mainstream race and gender research – that all the women are white and all the blacks are men. In this case, much of the research seems to assume that all Greeks are white and that all Greek membership is the same.

It is important to consider, in all Greek research, the “antecedent/subsequent” distinction described by Wilder & McKeegan (1999). That is, whether or not differences identified between students in the two systems and between Greek and non-Greek students are the result of differing characteristics the students brought with them to campus or are the result of the Greek affiliation experience itself. This issue will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 5

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

“That involvement and participation in groups can have positive consequences for the individual and the community is a staple notion, dating back to Durkheim’s emphasis on group life as an antidote to anomie and self-destruction and to Marx’s distinction between an atomized class-in-itself and a mobilized and effective class-for-itself” (Portes 1998, p. 2)

The concept of social capital, first introduced in the 1970s, has been utilized across a range of research topics, from employment outcomes, community development, and educational opportunity at the individual level, to the key force for the maintenance and cultivation of civil democratic society. The concept, while a powerful conceptual tool much like that of social integration in the higher education literature, is defined and operationalized differently by different researchers (Portes 1998). As it relates to this particular research project, the potential for the generation of social capital is a major reason for interest in voluntary association membership. Blau (1994) wrote about the role of voluntary associations in connecting members to each other and to society. Blau connects this part of his theory to Tocqueville, who emphasized the role of intermediate organizations in serving as links between the individual and the state. Voluntary associations can be defined minimally as any “formally organized named group, most of whose members – whether persons or organizations – are not financially compensated for their participation” (Knoke 1986, p. 2). Social engagement, including that which occurs through organizational membership, has long been considered an important

component in integrating individuals into society. This same phenomenon of engagement and integration is a centerpiece in discussions of college student persistence, making the association literature a particularly salient and appropriate context for understanding student experiences.

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the concept of social capital and summarize existing work on voluntary association membership and its impact on members as it relates to this concept. In this area I pay particular attention to work which focuses on variations in associational types and characteristics that influence what types of social capital can and are generated for members. This will be followed by a brief discussion of how the history of the BGO movement relates to conceptions of voluntary associations more generally and also how the contemporary experience of membership relates to outcomes associated with voluntary association involvement. I will conclude by summarizing the ways in which the existing work on associational membership can potentially illuminate our understanding of college student success and satisfaction through the mechanism of Greek membership across race and organizational affiliation.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is a multi-dimensional concept consisting of the possession of durable networks of institutionalized relationships or group memberships which increase in value relative to the exclusiveness of the group and the resources controlled by the group (Bourdieu 1986; Burris 2004). Importantly, it inheres in social structures and facilitates or constrains different actions of actors within their position in social space (Coleman 1988; Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993). It's first application by an American economist was in this context, as Loury (1977) focused on the way in which social contexts and social contacts made a lie of the idea of equal opportunity within the labor market (Portes 1998). As Portes (1998) states, "the consensus is

growing in the literature that social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures” (Portes 1998, pg. 6).

Conversations about social capital, and the name itself, clearly connect it to other forms of capital, namely economic, human, and cultural. Compared to economic capital, social capital as a resource is less liquid or convertible to other forms and more subject to context and attrition because the “exchanges” which take place among group members are characterized by uncertain time horizons, unspecified obligations, and possible violations of reciprocity expectations (Anheier, Gerhards, & Romo 1995; Coleman 1988; Portes 1998). Acquisition of or investment in social capital is less transparent and more uncertain than that of human or economic capital. While it is correlated with other forms, it does not always combine in an additive fashion with them and is also not simply the by-product of education (human capital) or income (economic capital) (Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000). Measured variously as community involvement (Thorson 1997), networks and skills (Eastis 1998), political engagement and civic trust (Verba, Schlozmann, & Brady 1995; Stolle & Rochon 1998), the connections it creates are hypothesized to increase happiness, community cohesiveness, and educational success, to decrease crime and political alienation, among other things (Putnam 2000, Stolle & Rochon 1998).

Two main types of social capital are regularly discussed. Bonding social capital is the level of trust that develops within groups that facilitates an increased capacity for cooperation and collective action which makes it easier for groups to accomplish shared goals. Bridging social capital is the level of generalized trust and cooperation generated by bonds among people which extend beyond their immediate group and encourage tolerance and collective action within communities and societies. The more inwardly-focused bonding social capital has been identified as primarily a private good while the more outwardly manifested bridging social

capital is often defined as a public good (Stolle & Rochon 1998). The level of correlation between these two forms is not established, nor is the boundary between a public and private good clear cut.

Bonding social capital accumulates most effectively within conditions of social closure. Closure is defined as the degree to which a collection of individuals forms a recognizable group with boundaries and identifiable shared membership, as opposed to being just an aggregate of people (Portes 1998). When group boundaries are clear cut and groups are able to offer, and communicate the availability of, resources unique to the group, social capital accumulates in the form of enforceable trust.

While social bonds between people are most often seen as positive, there is some discussion of a “dark side” of social capital which can increase feelings of in-group vs. out-group identification and competition. This most commonly occurs among groups with strong in-group bonds and an emphasis on bonding social capital and has led some researchers to emphasize those types of associations and interactions which “foster a cooperative spirit, norms of reciprocity, and collective thinking beyond the boundaries of the group itself” (Stolle & Rochon 1998, p. 49).

Portes (1998) describes several of the potential negatives associated with social capital including the exclusion of outsiders under conditions of bounded solidarity, excessive claims on group members which can limit individual success because of norms to help other group members (share the wealth idea), restrictions on individual freedoms including limited autonomy and definition of self/identity and potential downward leveling of norms because experience of oppression creates common/group identity – when individual members experience success it makes the oppression seem less real and creates divisions within group (Portes 1998).

The idea of bounded solidarity may be particularly relevant to the experiences of black students on predominantly white campuses. Bounded solidarity is the emergence of disciplined group-oriented behavior of a common class of people faced with adversarial conditions. According to Portes (1998), if the feeling of common circumstance and solidarity are sufficiently strong, they can lead to the emergence of norms of mutual support which will then be available to individuals as a resource (p. 1325). Most often applied to ethnic communities under conditions of extreme prejudice, it is strongest when the group is very distinct from the larger population, has low probability of exit from the situation, and there is an available set of common cultural practices (Portes 1998).

Social capital can potentially be generated in multiple ways, both formal and informal, including those necessary for the emergence of bounded solidarity. As indicated by the variety of ways it has been measured, some of these ways are more difficult to capture than others. One which is relatively straightforward is through measuring individual membership in voluntary associations. This has in fact become the predominant indicator utilized in the study of social capital formation and/or decline (see for instance how declines in traditional voluntary association membership form the core of Putnam's argument for America's declining social capital, Putnam 1995 and 2000).

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL GENERATION

Voluntary associations exist in the mid-range of groups associated with society, from primary groups like families and friendship networks to bureaucratic organizations like corporations and government organizations. Examples of different types of voluntary associations include neighborhood organizations, labor unions, business and trade organizations, church groups, and fraternal and sororal organizations. Most of these organizations emphasize

voluntary participation and relatively egalitarian principles, involve face-to-face contact at local meetings, facilitate important integrative tasks within a community, and also generate large amounts of political and economic activity within advanced industrialized countries (Knoke 1986; Popielarz 1999). Much of the research in this area focuses either on social capital generation and social integration and/or political participation (the two outcomes are connected with one another).

While Tocqueville (1961) identified the U.S. as a nation of joiners, participation in these types of organizations varies across time and place as well as somewhat by various individual characteristics, including some important variation in types of membership by gender, race, and level of education (Knoke 1986; Putnam 2000; Rotolo 1999). The level of engagement implied by identifying as a member of such an organization also varies considerably. Most memberships fall into the category of “nominal membership” or membership in name only (Knoke 1986).

Participation in associations has often been framed within the context of Olson’s (1965) work on collective action and an analysis of membership as a result of rational choice processes wherein individuals attempt to maximize their own benefits while minimizing their effort. However, after several decades of testing this framework, evidence suggests that individual motivations for participation are much more nuanced and multi-faceted than suggested by the rational-choice framework (Knoke 1986). Motivations for membership are connected with the positive outcomes which accumulate to individuals, and these are equally nuanced, impacted significantly by differences in level and type of involvement as well as with characteristics of organizations. For instance, leaders or officers in organizations may experience higher levels of satisfaction with their membership (Knoke 1986). Loyalty among members increases with an

association's age, as established groups develop traditions and techniques to foster members loyalty (Knoke 1981). In his work on social capital, Coleman (1988) emphasized in particular the idea of closure which is defined as the existence of a sufficient density of ties among members to ensure observance of group norms.

For many social researchers, the importance of voluntary associations rests in their impact on the generation of social capital as both an individual and collective good, including its impact on increasing social and political participation. Overall, "in contrast to nonparticipants, voluntary group members typically exhibit much higher levels of morale, self esteem, political efficacy, and community orientation and much lower levels of alienation, apathy, and social withdrawal" (Knoke 1981). Even nonpolitical organizations seem to positively influence the political engagement and participation of members, contributing to an increased salience of political issues, the development of important leadership and social interaction skills, and adding additional channels through which a person can exert influence on the political system (Erickson & Nosanchuk 1990; Olsen 1982).

Organizational membership can have an important economic impact as well, through social network connections created among members, particularly across geographic areas. This can be especially significant within ethnic minority communities (Aguilera & Massey 2003). Putnam states that, "research on the varying economic attainments of different ethnic groups in the United States has demonstrated the importance of social bonds within each group. These results are consistent with research in a wide range of settings that demonstrates the vital importance of social networks for job placement and many other economic outcomes" (Putnam 1995, p. 66).

Another area of research that has been of interest to researchers is the social ecology of organizations, something which Blau himself considers (Blau 1977; Rotolo 2000). In fact, some work in this area refers to the space within which organizations operate as “Blau space” (McPherson & Ranger-Moore 1991). This work focuses on how different environmental circumstances influence organizational structure and behavior and the impact of membership. This includes the demography and geography of particular areas and how they influences levels of membership and engagement. Rotolo (2000) studied the impact of town heterogeneity on number of memberships in voluntary associations and found that the more homogeneous a town, the more memberships held by individuals in that town.

VARIATION ACROSS AND WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

There is considerable debate over whether membership generates increased bridging social capital or increases social cleavages through homophilous affiliation and segregation (Glanville 2004; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook 2001). As implied by Blau’s theory, the impact of homophilous affiliation on social network diversity is dependent upon the level of correlation across various social characteristics, or what Blau calls consolidation (Glanville 2004; Blau 1994). Differences in the types of social capital generated (that is, bridging or bonding) typically vary broadly by whether the organization exists for expressive or instrumental reasons. These distinctions are ideal types, however, and many organizations have both expressive and instrumental goals and generate both bonding and bridging social capital depending upon the context.

Within homophilous organizations, there exists the possibility that membership radicalizes and isolates members from wider society and also fails to create high levels of generalized trust and community reciprocity which extend beyond the group (Stolle & Rochon

1998). Similar to concerns of self-segregation of minority students on PWI's, organizations in which members are very similar to one another, who share similar views and experiences, and who spend considerable time together can potentially create higher levels of dissatisfaction among members. While student involvement research indicates this is not the case for same-race student organizations, it is a concern within the field of voluntary association research and relates to Durkheim's idea of over-integration with a particular group.

Utilizing extensive cross-national survey data, Stolle & Rochon (1998) point out that organizations vary not only in the level of homophily within differing organizational types, but that variation also exists by associational purpose and form. They measure social capital in four ways – political engagement, trust in government, generalized trust, and civic attitudes. Dividing organizational memberships into what they call “associational sectors,” the authors provide evidence of considerable variation in the amount of social capital generated across these sectors. Their findings indicate strong support for the theory of social capital while also pointed to a need for further attention to variation across membership types.

Different characteristics within the same broad associational sector have also been hypothesized to influence the types of social capital generated for members. In a thick description of two different chorale groups, both voluntary, Eastis (1998) describes how the two groups vary by structure, recruitment strategies, skill and time requirements, content, and institutional affiliation. Utilizing a definition of social capital as networks, norms, and skills, she describes how these differences influence the types of networks generated by the groups, the norms and values that develop within the groups and how these are expressed, and the lower levels of organizational skills developed by members of the more structured group, whose institutional affiliation requires less member-coordinated activity. While clearly not arguing that

one organization is “better” than the other at the generation social capital, she emphasizes the necessity of specificity.

BGO’S AS VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

As stated previously, Greek organization membership functions as an intermediate association linking its members to the university, to the larger community, and also to society in general, serving to connect individuals to a group and lower their perception of isolation. Primarily conservative and integrative from the beginning, the history of campus-based BGO’s reveals the existence of both expressive and instrumental goals – providing support and encouragement and even housing for members while also working for social change at the institutional and societal level (Giddings 1988; Jones 2004). One of the first actions of Delta Sigma Theta was to create a “Vigilance Committee whose purpose was to enlighten the growing membership about political and legislative issues and thus prepare them to become agents of change” (Giddings 1988, p. 6).

While this focus seems to consistently distinguish BGO’s from their predominantly white counterparts (see, for example, Berkowitz & Padavic 1999) and is connected to Jones' (1999) characterization of black Greek organizations as socio-political movements, this focus is nonetheless similar to that found by McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001) for voluntary associations generally. They found that "discussing politics with at least one other member of a voluntary organization strongly boosted a person's political mobilization both inside the organization and in the larger community" (McPherson et. al 2001, p. 433). In a review of Lee’s recent book on mobilizing African American public opinion, Polleta describes the outcome of Lee’s review of letters written to the president from 1948-1965.

Where most letters from whites came from private citizens, almost half of the correspondence from African Americans in the 1940s and 1950s came from organizations – churches, women’s groups, and colleges, as well as chapters of the NAACP and other advocacy groups. That the proportion of individual and mass mailings increased only in the 1960s suggests that the institutions making up a black counterpublic were responsible for activating black public opinion – a finding in tune with studies that have pointed to the centrality of indigenous nonpolitical institutions in insurgency (Polletta 2002, 1057; see Lee 2002, especially pp. 141 & 160).

This type of group mobilization is likely at least partly a manifestation of the influence of voluntary association membership on creating feelings of efficacy in members. The racist American context within which it occurs also exerts an influence on these particular organizations. This effect is relevant to discussions of college student attrition as structural and contextual differences between the white and black Greek systems should influence differences in the impact of membership in these organizations for students across race. The average smaller size of chapters of black Greek organizations can contribute to increased feelings of commitment, efficacy and collective mobilization as smaller organizations allow individual members to exercise greater influence over the policies and goals of the organization (Knoke 1986; Berkowitz & Padavic 1999).

Increased commitment to an organization is also higher for organizations that have a long history and established traditions (Knoke 1981). Age and ritualized traditions are characteristic of both white and black Greek organizations. Stompler and Padavic (1997) found evidence of a continued influence of the historical legacy of black women’s movement organizations

(including BGO's) on the contemporary narratives of young Black women regarding their participation in these types of organizations.

Rotolo's (2000) work on the impact of town homogeneity can also be significant in thinking about the efficacy of BGO's on PWI's. Since, as Bean (1990) points out, heterogeneity "is becoming the rule rather than the exception" on college campuses across the country this finding points to the importance of Tinto's concept of the need for a critical mass of diverse types of students in order to facilitate individual integration (Tinto 1993).

As a voluntary association, the fraternity not only connects its members to the campus and the black community, but also functions in the creation and maintenance of social networks that connect members to each other and to society (Rotolo 1999; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook 2001). This phenomenon is likely a positive outcome associated with both black and white Greek membership but may be particularly salient for African Americans because, as Rotolo writes "young Black workers face a disadvantage in the labor market because they lack the social ties that allow otherwise capable workers to gain meaningful employment" (Rotolo 1999, p. 200). Common fraternal membership is one type of powerful weak tie that can provide its members with the social capital necessary for successful competition in the labor market (Granovetter 1973). This benefit is more central in explanations of involvement among black Greeks, particularly for women, than among their white Greek counterparts (Berkowitz & Padavic 1999; Graham 2000).

Membership in voluntary associations is most common for members of the middle and upper classes (Blau 1994; Rotolo 1999; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook 2001). This is consistent with findings about differences in social class background between Greeks and non-Greeks (Wilder & McKeegan 1999). Blau writes that organizations with multiple levels (like national

Greek organizations) allow members to exercise greater influence in society. Since members of the middle class are more likely to be members of voluntary associations, this increases their social and political power. This characterization is certainly consistent with common perceptions within the black community of BGO's as elite organizations for the upwardly mobile (Graham 1999). However, overall associational involvement within the black community may be slightly less-stratified by class compared to whites (Musick, Wilson, & Bynum 2000).

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The concern with integration in the area of voluntary associations and social capital accumulation research is one which is shared by researchers in higher education, particularly those focused on the post-entrance experiences of students and their impact on satisfaction and success. It is therefore clearly appropriate to consider the ways in which this research can inform the findings of the present study. As there are significant historical, structural, and contextual differences associated with the black and white Greek organizations commonly found on PWI's, it is appropriate to assume that the impact of these organizations will also vary.

While the existence of a high level of bounded solidarity among black students on a PWI may mediate the impact of BGO membership by making the identity of black student on campus highly salient to all black students, the idea of closure emphasized by Coleman (1988) may have the opposite effect. Within BGO's, the density of ties existing between chapter members is likely greater than those between black students in general. This would mean that Greek membership/organizations create higher levels of enforceable trust. This, combined with norms of membership for helping other members connect with other student organizations (McClure forthcoming), likely increases both the level of bridging social capital generated by the organization for members and therefore increases their overall satisfaction with the university.

Research on the impact of institutional context and of voluntary association membership can also contribute to ongoing work in the area of ecological studies which begins with McPherson's work using the Nebraska towns data. This work clearly connects with existing interests in higher education concerning student embeddedness in racially diverse settings (Pike & Kuh 2004). While the study presented here primarily takes note of differing organizational contexts – Greek affiliation across systems, future work will incorporate multiple institutional contexts, enabling a more thorough analysis of the impact of differing structural contexts on the experiences of students across race and Greek affiliation.

As discussed above, it is important to consider both the ways in which involvement in different types of organizations influences the minority student experience as well as how variations in organizational characteristics impact the experience of group membership within organizational type. Taking information from research on voluntary association membership and connecting it with work on the college student experience, within the context of the experiences of African Americans in higher education and the history of BGO's, provides considerable information with which to approach the findings of the research presented here. This will include a comparison of the levels of success and satisfaction with the university for black students who are in Greek organizations and those who are not, controlling for other types of involvement and a comparison of the impact of Greek membership for members of historically black and predominantly white Greek organizations.

CHAPTER 6

METHODS AND DATA

The research is based on a multi-mode survey administered to a sample of University of Georgia undergraduate students at the sophomore level and above in the Spring semester 2004. The University of Georgia is a large, flagship state institution with a predominantly white student population and a strong Black Greek system, making it an ideal environment in which to test the influence of Black Greek membership. Although not generalizable to a wider student population, the survey provides an initial test of expected variation in the variables of interest across Greek affiliation. The survey obtained data from 297 students, including information on background characteristics, student involvement, and college experiences, as well as Greek affiliation. This data was supplemented by focus group interviews with students across the categories of interest conducted in the Fall semester 2004. In this chapter I will describe the survey instrument and the data collection methods utilized in the administration of the survey and the focus groups. This is followed by descriptive information of the sample obtained including factor analysis of the scales utilized.

INSTRUMENT/MEASUREMENT

The survey instrument utilized many questions from the “Student Opinion Survey” (SOS), “which was designed to collect various personal, academic, demographic, and attitudinal data” (Nettles et al. 1986). The survey also contained a question about fraternity and sorority membership followed by a question that asks if the Greek organization is a member of the one of the three governing councils described earlier. The SOS, developed by Nettles et al. (1986) in

their research on college achievement and experiences, includes measures of other important determinants of student success and satisfaction.

The instrument was also informed by a qualitative study conducted by the researcher. This study involved 20 in-depth interviews of undergraduate members of an NPHC fraternity on campus. The subjects expressed high levels of satisfaction with their college experience and low levels of perceived discrimination. As is clear from the literature, these findings are extremely dissimilar to previous research on the minority student experience.

The survey measures two dependent variables: cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and student satisfaction. College GPA ranged from 1.08 to 4.0 with a mean of 3.01 (S.D.=.55). Using GPA as an outcome variable is consistent with research which “regards college grades as an outcome variable resulting from academic experiences and social psychological processes” (Cabrera, Nora, and Casteñeda 1993). It is familiar, easy to obtain, and a continuous variable, which lends itself well to data analysis. The substantive meaning of using GPA as a measure of student success is less straightforward, however. As any college graduate will tell you, after completion of their degree their GPA was essentially meaningless. There is also some variation in GPA across undergraduate majors, which is why undergraduate major is included as a control variable in the analysis.

The other dependent variable consists of a factorially confirmed student satisfaction scale. It includes, but is not limited to, questions about the quality of instruction, social life, the amount learned, and meeting new people with new ideas (Knox et al. 1992; see table for satisfaction scale questions). Satisfaction, within Tinto’s model, is then a predominant way to measure social integration, and is an intermediate outcome. “Tinto (1993) theorizes that successful integration yields satisfaction that enhances [institutional] commitments and

positively influences students' intentions to remain on campus" (Thomas 2000, p. 593). The satisfaction scale scores ranged from 25 to 60 with a mean of 47.42 (s.d. 7.3).

The key independent variable is Greek organization affiliation across race. Also included are other factors that account for some variation in the success and satisfaction of black students on predominantly white campuses as well as the success of white students. First, important demographic/background characteristics: parents educational experiences, high school GPA, high school racial composition, gender, study habits, and degree aspirations (Nettles et al. 1986, Allen 1992). The survey also measures important post-entrance factors, including feelings that the university is non-discriminatory, and academic integration, which is a measure of the perceived availability and level of interaction students feel they have with faculty. Nettles et al. found that higher levels of both of these factors were significant in explaining some variation in student success and satisfaction (Nettles et. al 1986). Perceptions of racial discrimination have been shown to indirectly influence the intention to persist of both white and non-white students (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn 1999). Based on the literature review and my own previous research it is possible that members of black Greek organizations will show higher levels of academic integration than their non-Greek counterparts and than white Greek students and will also possibly be more likely to express feelings that the university is non-discriminatory.

A complete list of variable definitions and coding schemes are shown in Table 6-1. Items constructing all scales (satisfaction, academic integration, and campus climate) with factor-loading information are included in Tables 6-2 and 6-3. A more thorough review of the variables included in each of the models will be provided in the subsequent analysis chapters, along with information regarding the rationale for the inclusion of each variable.

Table 6-1. Variable Definitions and Coding

Variable	Description
Greek status	1=Greek, 0=non-Greek
Race	1=white, 0=black
Gender	1=male, 0=female
HS GPA	High school GPA
Father's education	Did father attend college? 1=yes, 0=no
Mother's education	Did mother attend college? 1=yes, 0=no
Parents attend UGA	0=no parents attended, 1= one parent attended, 2=both parents attended
HS racial exposure	Exposure to a cross-race/multi-race high school environment; 1=yes, 0=no
Year in college	1=Freshman, 2=Sophomore, 3=Junior, 4=Senior/Other
Major	1=Social Science major, including business and education, 0=all others
Housing status	1=on-campus, 0=other
Semester hours enrolled	Hours student is enrolled in for the academic semester
Study hours	Weekly study hours; 1=0-1, 2=2-5, 3=6-9, 4=10-14, 5=15 or more
Weekly work hours	Job hours per week
Weekly involvement hours	Weekly hours in extracurricular activities
CGPA	College GPA
Academic integration scale	Summative scale of student's self-reported interaction with and perception of faculty
Campus climate scale	Summative scale of student's perception of the campus racial climate
Satisfaction scale	Summative scale of student's self-reported satisfaction with university

Table 6-2. Scale Reliability by Race (Alpha)

Scale	Number of Items	Reliability for black students	Reliability for white students
Satisfaction	12	.82	.88
Academic integration	9	.71	.83
Campus climate	8	.77	.72

Table 6-3. Question Items for Scale Variables

Scale	Items
Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with academic reputation • Happy with quality of professors • Had difficulty finding good friends • Satisfied with the sports/recreational facilities • Had opportunities to meet new people • Learned a lot at the university • Satisfied with the social life for students of my race • Pleased with my decision to come here • Plan to return as an alumni • Satisfied with student/faculty relations • Sometimes wish I'd gone somewhere else • Overall, I'd rather be home than here
Academic integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact • Sensitive • Impacted my development • Faculty are good teachers • University helps failing students • Close relationships with faculty • Socialized informally with faculty • Discussed personal problems with faculty • Discussed career plans with faculty
Campus racial climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University makes an effort to attract ethnically diverse students • Feel faculty discriminate • Little or no discrimination on campus • Administrative support for minority programming • Faculty are sensitive to minority issues • Feel students discriminate • Open discussion of racial issues on campus • Feel administrators discriminate against students of my race

The end of the survey includes several optional open-ended questions. Although open-ended questions often lead to unexpected responses, they provide respondents with an opportunity to provide more feedback on issues that are important to them. It is important that this section be optional because often open-ended questions put pressure on respondents to fill the open space and in this way can drive down response rates. The questions are “how would you describe your overall experience at this university?”, “What suggestions or recommendations would you make to improve the student experience on campus?”, and “Do you have any additional comments about the topics covered in this survey?”

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was conducted as a multi-mode survey. This provides the possibility for improved response rates, as individuals may have a mode preference (Schaefer & Dillman 1998). Research has indicated that there may be both advantages and disadvantages to the use of email/web survey formats, including both higher nonresponse rates for email surveys and more complete open-ended questions for email surveys. The multi-mode format covers these concerns. This method can be problematic, however, as variability in the conditions under which data are collected may cause variation in responses due to administration method (Kimbrough & Hutcheson 1998).

Student enrollment and contact information was obtained through the Office of Institutional Research. Purposive sampling, including all members of black Greek organizations, was necessary. Classifying students by race (based on IR classifications). From this a master identification list was created, which identified each student by a unique number. This allowed the researcher to track respondents and identify non-respondents for follow-up mailings. To maximize response rates, the administration of the survey followed many of the

recommendations of Dillman's Total Design Method (TDM). Following Dillman's example, this survey and its design are based on principles of social exchange theory. This theory "posits that questionnaire recipients are most likely to respond if they expect that the perceived benefits of doing so will outweigh the perceived costs of responding" (Dillman 1991, p. 233).

The students were emailed the survey web address along with a user id and password (the id was unique to each respondent but the password was the same). This was the initial form of contact both because of cost effectiveness and because a recent change by the institution required all students to have a registered email address to receive account activity and billing notification. College students are perceived to be a population with a high level of email/internet usage and simultaneously to be very transient as far as mailing addresses are concerned.

A listserv of potential respondents was developed using emails provided by the institution. This is the most appropriate form of mass contact, as the address which appeared in the students inbox was a personal one and the listserv format made it impossible for students to see or reply to other respondents, a necessary condition for maintaining confidentiality (Schaefer & Dillman 1998). Following TDM recommendations, a reminder email was sent. Non-respondents were sent a second copy of the survey with a slightly altered cover email after four weeks and after seven weeks non-respondents were sent a third copy. Each mailed follow-up was addressed to the specific student and individually signed and addressed. Follow-up mailings have been found to be the most effective means of increasing survey participation for both mail and email surveys (Dillman 1991; Schaefer & Dillman 1998).

A stamped (as opposed to postage paid) return envelope was included with the follow-up mailed surveys. Although many of the students will have access to campus mailing services that do not require postage, several studies indicate that a stamped envelope increases response rates

possibly because it engages feelings of social exchange. This design method was expected to maximize response rates and the characteristics of the group to be surveyed will also contribute to improved response rates. Unfortunately, response rate to the combination web/mail survey (32%) necessitated additional in-person data collection among black Greek members in order to provide sufficient respondents.

FOCUS GROUPS

As a supplement to the survey data collected, in the fall semester of 2004, four focus group interviews were conducted in the spring semester of 2005 with students from each of the four groups of interest in this study: black Greek and non-Greek students, and white Greek and non-Greek students. Students were contacted through sociology undergraduate classes and asked if they would be willing to volunteer. Students were then called and asked if they were at the sophomore level or above, a member of a Greek social organization on campus, if yes, if this organization was affiliated with the NIC, NPC, or NPHC, and given a date, time, and location for the interview.

These interviews were conducted by the researcher and an undergraduate volunteer who participated in the first interview and was interested in gaining additional research experience. This allowed the researcher to focus on observation and note-taking while the moderator guides the discussion (Patton 2002). Each interview took place at the Student Learning Center, a centrally located building on campus which contains study areas, meeting rooms, classroom, and lab space. Pizza and soda were provided to the participants during the course of the interview. Each of the participants was given a survey upon their arrival and asked to fill it out, unless they had already responded through the mailed survey. After reviewing, and in most cases, responding to the survey, students were asked to join each other at a small table at the front of

the room to respond to additional questions related to the topics covered in the survey. Each focus group lasted between 1 to 1.5 hours and followed a specific interview protocol. All groups were asked the same questions in the same order but there were some differences in follow-up/probe questions based on student responses.

The four interviews were then transcribed and analyzed for similarities and differences across respondent categories. Of the total respondents in the focus groups only three were also survey respondents. Survey responses from the focus groups allow for a comparison across characteristics with survey respondents, providing a better sense of the connection between the focus group student responses and those provided in the surveys. The focus group method was seen as appropriate for the topics of interest in this study, as there was a specific defined areas of interest, the questions were primarily on non-controversially topics (although this varied somewhat by race), and the question list was short (Patton 2002). As is often the case with focus group interviews, participants expressed enjoyment in participating. Patton (2002) states that focus groups are most effective if participants are similar to one another but do not know each other. Not surprisingly, this was largely the case for three of the four focus groups; members of BGO's on campus are part of a very small community and therefore these participants did have some prior familiarity with each other.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS/DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

A response rate of 32% (291/918) was obtained from the initial survey sample; this excludes one non-contacted individual who did not receive either the email contact or the mailed survey. Final data cleaning, with deletion of click-through respondents and inclusion of the additional surveys from NPHC members gained from attending the first council meeting of the year resulted in a total of 297 respondents. Respondents were fairly evenly distributed across

year in school. Due to oversampling for African American, the sample is 42% black. Consistent with previous surveys of undergraduates at this institution, the sample is disproportionately female (64% as compared to 57% for the student body as a whole). Comparison across variables of interest of the UGA student population, survey respondents, and the original IR sample are provided in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4. Comparison of UGA student population, respondents, and sample characteristics (N)

		Population	Respondents
Year in college	Freshman	24% (6072)	20% (58)
	Sophomore	22% (5487)	24% (72)
	Junior	25% (6342)	26% (78)
	Senior	28% (7069)	28% (83)
Race	Black	5% (1174)	42% (124)
	White	87% (21703)	58% (173)
Gender	Male	43% (10835)	36% (108)
	Female	57% (14135)	64% (189)
Age	17 and Under	0.2% (57)	0% (0)
	18-20	50% (12552)	38% (114)
	21-24	44% (10928)	57% (170)
	25-29	4% (889)	3% (9)
	30-34	1% (233)	1% (3)
	50-61	0.19% (49)	0.3% (1)
Transfer Status	Non-Transfer	74% (18461)	81% (239)
	Transfer	24% (6004)	19% (58)
Residency	In-state	90% (22448)	90% (269)
	Out-of-state	10% (2518)	10% (28)

A note on causality is in order regarding the limitations of the current data. In the absence of longitudinal data on the experiences of Greek members by organizational affiliation across race over time, conclusions about causality are limited. As a result, this research focuses on exploring relationships among race, Greek affiliation, and student satisfaction and success.

Based on the findings of this research, future work will more fully explore the causal connections between the variables explored here and more fully articulate the ways in which voluntary association membership variably impacts the student experience.

CHAPTER 7

SATISFACTION

In this chapter survey and focus group data will be analyzed with respect to the question of the impact of Greek membership on student satisfaction across race, in this case for black and white students. This question is significant for several reasons, which will be explored in more detail below. As discussed previously, much of the existing research on the impact of Greek membership generally does not make any distinctions by race in spite of evidence which indicates that this would be important. A review of the available historical and research information on historically black Greek organizations indicates that these organizations share some similarities with their predominantly white counterparts but also have important differences. When analyzed in the context of what is known about voluntary organizations and their impact on members, it is logical to expect the organizational differences to moderate the impact of membership on student satisfaction.

GREEK ORGANIZATIONS IN BLACK AND WHITE

While white Greek organizations were founded primarily as social organizations in the context of a limited collegiate environment, BGO's were founded in the context of a racist system of higher education set in a wider racist context. BGO's on predominantly white campuses were particularly multi-faceted, serving as a network for meeting basic needs and providing social and personal support within an often hostile environment.

Previous research on Greek organizations explores many positive and negative outcomes associated with Greek affiliation. This research has led some scholars to encourage an end to these organizations on campus, focusing on negative outcomes like increased drinking, lower

levels of openness to diversity, and potentially fewer cognitive gains associated with membership, while others emphasize the positive impact Greek affiliation has on student leadership development and social integration. This work rarely focuses on organizational differences across race, an oversight which this work attempts to correct.

Research on the role of voluntary association membership in the generation of social capital which may contribute to higher levels of satisfaction among members can also illuminate this study. While very little of this research focuses on satisfaction specifically, there is evidence to support the possibility for both positive and negative impacts of membership which vary by race and organizational affiliation. General research on voluntary associations indicates that membership can increase members' positive feelings for the organization and for the wider community. More in-depth research on group characteristics indicates that the mission of organizations and their structure can differentially influence the types of social capital generated and therefore the level of positive affect that members feel as well as its range. Three concepts related to group membership are relevant to this work, including bounded solidarity, social closure, and attitude polarization.

Bounded solidarity is an attitude which emerges in confrontational situations where group members experience similar levels of difficulty and are drawn together to create an alternative set of practices based on common cultural memory. It is defined as strong in-group solidarity and norms of mutual cooperation for group benefit in the face of negative external circumstances. The concept in this case is applied to the emergence/existence of a perceived "black student community" on campus.

The development of enforceable trust allows for the proliferation of obligations and expectations among members which benefit those individuals. This is most often created in

situations of social closure, defined by Portes (1998) as “the degree to which a particular collectivity forms a group at all, as opposed to a mere aggregate of individuals” (p. 1332). Closure requires the existence of strong boundaries defining in-group and out-group members and may be salient for both black and white Greek organizations, determining the degree to which benefits of membership which influence increased student satisfaction accrue primarily to organization members.

Finally, a concept which is typically applied to groups engaged in specific decision-making processes (most commonly with a focus on the occurrence of a “risky-shift”) is that of attitude polarization. In general, this phenomenon may apply to the degree to which a homogenous group (organizational members) has a high degree of interaction with one another and influences a polarization in group attitudes regarding particular issues, in this case attitudes towards the university.

DATA COLLECTION

The data used for the analysis presented below were collected as part of a multi-method study conducted at the University of Georgia over the spring and fall semesters of 2004 and are informed by an earlier study conducted by the author at the same institution. The survey data include student responses from 297 undergraduate students. Survey responses were collected through a web-based survey which students were directed to via email contact. Subsequent email, mail, and in-person follow-ups were conducted. The overall survey response rate was 32% (for additional information on the data collection methods see Chapter 6). Following the survey, focus groups were conducted with students in each of the four groups to gather additional information on the student experience.

The analysis conducted here includes statistical analysis of the survey responses using SPSS, coding of student comments on the open-ended questions, and comparative analysis of the focus group transcripts. All of this data was analyzed with a focus on student satisfaction, an outcome measure discussed in more detail below.

ON SATISFACTION

According to Hurtado (1992), student perceptions provide a more proximal measure (as opposed to distal) of the impact of the institutional environment on student experiences. On satisfaction as an outcome measure, as Astin writes, it “covers the students’ subjective experience during the college years and perceptions of the value of the educational experience” (Astin 1993, p. 273). Satisfaction is also “much less dependent on entering characteristics than other outcomes and more susceptible to influence from the college environment” (Astin 1993, p. 277). There is a “direct association between student satisfaction and retention in college. While we cannot be absolutely sure that satisfaction is a direct causal agent in the student’s decision to remain in or leave college . . . the strength of these associations and their prevalence across all measures suggest that one promising way to reduce an institution’s dropout rate is to focus more attention on student satisfaction as an intermediate outcome” (Astin 1993, p. 278).

Satisfaction may be particularly important for minority students. Eimers and Pike (1997) found that minority student satisfaction with the quality of the institution was a better predictor of student persistence than academic performance. They hypothesize that minority student sensitivity to satisfaction with quality was related to attenuated concerns among the community prior to entry. “Among some minority constituencies in the state, the university was perceived as being a difficult academic and social environment for minority students to be successful” (Eimers & Pike 1997, p. 93). The authors conclude that “attention to and enhancement of

perceived quality among minority students [at PWI's] may prove to be very important in to their persistence in college" (Eimers & Pike 1997, p. 93). These conclusions match up well with the findings of Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) regarding the reputation of a college within a particular minority community. The presence of these feelings and how they may be attenuated within the black student community on campus will influence just how much difference Greek membership makes regarding satisfaction among black students.

Specifically, a high degree of salience for racial identity and a strong sense of bounded solidarity among black students on campus, combined with the more permeable boundaries of Greek organizations socially (as compared to their white counterparts) would mean a much smaller difference between the satisfaction of black students across the Greek divide than for white students. Racial identity has low salience for white students, making the Greek difference more significant both symbolically and organizationally. For black students, closure potentially occurs along racial lines, for white students, along Greek lines.

Previous research (which makes no distinction across affiliation) has found that Greek organization membership increases student involvement, which is associated with higher levels of student satisfaction (Pike 2000); however, for the impact of Greek membership itself, results are inconclusive (Astin 1993; Pike 2000). Several possibilities emerge from a review of the voluntary association literature based on the characteristics of the different organizations as well as their embedded context in a predominantly white environment.

Table 7-1. Sample Descriptive Information by Race and Greek Status (S.D.)

Variable	Black Students		White Students	
	Greek (N=34)	non-Greek (N=90)	Greek (N=83)	non-Greek (N=90)
<u>Dependent variable:</u>				
Mean satisfaction scale score	46.6 (6.5)	44.69 (7.1)	51.8 (5.5)	46.5 (7.6)
<u>Control variables:</u>				
Male	56%	30%	30%	41%
Parents attended university (one or both)	3%	14%	34%	27%
HS Racial Composition Exposure (yes)	71%	71%	33%	34%
Year in school				
Freshmen	3%	29%	22%	14%
Sophomore	12%	28%	31%	19%
Junior	26%	19%	31%	29%
Senior/Other	59%	23%	16%	38%
Social Science Major (including education & business)	71%	60%	69%	53%
Live on-campus	38%	54%	22%	18%
Mean semester hours enrolled	14.3 (1.7)	14.3 (2.8)	13.8 (2.1)	13.5 (2.6)
Mean weekly involvement hours	15.4 (13.3)	8.97 (7.4)	9.1 (7.1)	10.12 (9.4)
Mean weekly study hours	3.27 (1)	2.98 (.95)	2.75 (.9)	3.1 (1.1)
Mean weekly work hours	10.7 (8)	9.9 (7.9)	4.3 (7.1)	8.9 (8.8)
Mean college GPA	2.8 (.44)	2.9 (.57)	3.2 (.47)	3.2 (.55)
Mean academic integration scale score	28.9 (5.2)	28.3 (5.2)	27.6 (6)	28.3 (6)
Mean campus climate scale score	21.7 (5.6)	25.1 (4.7)	29.9 (3.8)	29.7 (4.5)

DESCRIPTIVE DIFFERENCES ACROSS GROUPS

In order to better illuminate each of the groups of interest, Table (7-1) contains information on their demographic characteristics. Black Greek students are more likely to be male and to be seniors than those in any of the other groups. Black Greeks are also less likely to have had parents who attended the university. Greek students, both black and white, are somewhat more likely to have majors in the social sciences, business, or education. Black students are much more likely to have gone to predominantly white or racially mixed high schools.

In looking at the significant mean differences across several of the control variables included in the model (Table 7-2), there is evidence that black Greek students are more like their non-Greek counterparts of either race than they are like white Greek students especially when it comes to working during school. White Greeks as a group work fewer hours per week than any other group. Black Greeks also have the highest number of weekly involvement hours. In a separate analysis of self-reported weekly fraternity or sorority hours, black Greek students also reported spending much more time per week in Greek-related activities (14.6 versus 9).

There are also differences across groups in their perception of the campus racial climate, a variable which has been shown to impact the satisfaction of both white and minority students. Black students have a more negative perception of campus climate than white students, consistent with previous research. The results also indicate that black Greek students have a more negative perception of the campus racial climate than black non-Greek students.

Table 7-2. ANOVA Mean Differences of Interest; $p < .05$ (mean)

Variable	
Weekly Involvement hours	Black Greek (15.4) > all others
Weekly work hours	White Greek (4.3) < all others
Campus climate	Black Greek (21.7) & Black non-Greek (25.1) < White Greek (29.9) & White non-Greek (29.7)
	Black Greek (21.7) < Black non-Greek (25.1)

REGRESSION MODEL SPECIFICATION AND RESULTS

Before exploring the relationship between race, Greek membership, and student satisfaction in greater depth, it is first necessary to determine if there are gross-level differences in the mean levels of satisfaction across the four groups of interest. In other words, it is necessary to test for a significant interaction between race and being a member of a Greek organization. If there is no interaction, the effect of race on satisfaction will not depend upon whether the student is or is not Greek. These results are presented below.

For student satisfaction, the interaction hypothesized was examined using analysis of variance (ANOVA; see Table 7-3). The results indicate (1) that the “main” effects of both race and Greek status are statistically significant at the 0.001 level, and more importantly, (2) that the interaction term is significant at the 0.05 level. This is strong evidence suggesting the contingent nature of the effects of race and Greek status on satisfaction.

The group mean levels of satisfaction are presented in Table 7-4. These means vary in the expected directions, with white Greek students having the highest level of satisfaction (51.78) and black non-Greek students having the lowest (44.69).

Based on the results of the ANOVA, post hoc tests were conducted to determine precisely which groups differed. The results of the Scheffe test for mean differences are presented in Table 7-5. Based on these tests there is statistically significant evidence of a gross level difference between white Greeks and black Greeks in their level of satisfaction with the university (difference = 5.24, $p < .001$). However, there was little evidence of a statistically significant difference between the satisfaction of black Greeks and black non-Greeks.

This analysis has demonstrated that the effect of race on satisfaction is contingent upon whether the student is in a Greek organization or not — specifically, these results suggest that being a Greek only affects the satisfaction of white students. While it does not appear that being a Greek has a significant effect for black students, it is possible that the relationship between Greek status and satisfaction is more complicated for Black students. That possibility will be explored in a more detailed analysis.

Table 7-3. ANOVA for Satisfaction as a Function of Race and Greek Status

Source	Df	MS	F-ratio	P
Satisfaction				
Race	1	764.7	16.45	.001
Greekstat	1	789.5	16.99	.001
Race* Greek status	1	182.3	3.92	.049

Table 7-4. Group means on Student Satisfaction by Race and Greek Status

Group (N)	Mean	S.E.
Black non-Greeks (90)	44.69	.719
White non-Greeks (90)	46.49	.719
Black Greeks (33)	46.55	1.187
White Greeks (82)	51.78	.753

Table 7-5. Differences Between Groups on Student Satisfaction

Comparison	Difference	S.E.	P
White Greek vs. White Non-Greek	5.24	1.04	.001
Black Greek vs. Black Non-Greek	1.86	1.39	.182
White Greek vs. Black Greek	5.24	1.41	.001

The variables included in the regression model include important student demographic and background information, student college characteristics, and student college experiences. These variables have been shown in previous research to impact either student satisfaction specifically or student persistence generally. Demographic and student pre-entrance controls include gender, parents' attendance at the university, and self-reported exposure in high school to a mixed race or cross race student body. Student college characteristic controls include year in school, major (dichotomized by social science majors vs. other majors), housing status, semester credit hours enrolled, college gpa, and average weekly study hours and work hours. Student post-entrance experience control variables include a measure of weekly student involvement hours across a range of extra-curricular activities (excluding hours of fraternity or sorority involvement), and students' perception of their academic integration and the campus racial climate.

While several control variables are included based on their overall relationship to the student experience, others have specifically been shown to impact satisfaction. Prior exposure to an interracial environment like the one to be experienced on campus has been shown to positively influence satisfaction, as has a social science or education major. Positive perception of the campus racial climate is also related to higher student satisfaction for both minority and

non-minority students. College GPA and academic integration are also directly related to student satisfaction.

Table 7-6. Student Satisfaction on Race and Greek status (equation 1) with interaction (equation 2) controlling for various background and college experience variables.

Variable	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Greek status (1=Greek)	4.980*** (.718)	.331	2.740* (1.259)	.182
Race (1=white)	.239 (.919)	.016	-.706 (1.013)	-.047
Race * Greek status interaction			3.481* (1.613)	.213
Gender (male=1)	.143 (.729)	.009	.463 (.739)	.030
Parents attend university	1.168 (.628)	.089	1.079 (.625)	.082
HS Racial Composition (exposure=1)	.439 (.721)	.030	.444 (.717)	.030
Year in School	.253 (.365)	.038	.467 (.376)	.070
Major (Social science=1)	.709 (.717)	.047	.646 (.713)	.043
Housing (on-campus=1)	1.015 (.890)	.065	1.042 (.885)	.067
Semester credit hours enrolled	-.098 (.142)	-.032	-.095 (.141)	-.031
Weekly involvement hours (excluding Greek hrs.)	.043 (.040)	.053	.056 (.040)	.068
Weekly study hours	.057 (.351)	.008	.184 (.354)	.025
Weekly work hours	.048 (.044)	.055	.055 (.044)	.063
College GPA	.871 (.687)	.065	.827 (.682)	.062
Academic integration	.466*** (.064)	.357	.461*** (.063)	.352
Campus climate	.505*** (.077)	.369	.481*** (.078)	.351
Constant	13.618		13.7	
Adjusted R ²	.416		.424	

Note: N=293, b = unstandardized regression coefficient w/ standard error in parentheses; beta = standardized regression coefficient. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p <.001 (two-tailed tests).

As mentioned previously, the dependent variable is a scale score for student satisfaction. The scale is based on student responses to twelve items ($\alpha = .86$). The independent variables of interest are student race and Greek status. All students in the sample are either white or black, based on information obtained from the campus institutional research office. The students' Greek status was also obtained from IR, with information on their organizational affiliation confirmed through membership lists obtained from the office of Greek life. These variables are both dichotomous, so that the coefficients obtained can be understood as adjusted mean differences (Allison 1999).

Results of the ANOVA indicate the presence of an interaction between race and Greek status. Based on these results, the table above presents two equations, first without the interaction of race and Greek status and the second with the interaction, both controlling for other student characteristics. In the first equation, Greek status has a positive impact on student satisfaction. Greek students have a 4.98 increase in their level of satisfaction over non-Greek students, after controlling for many possibly salient factors. Comparing across the standardized coefficients within equation 1, this effect is smaller than those for the student's self-reported level of academic integration and the student's perception of the campus climate, but larger than any of the other control variables.

In the second equation, an interaction term between race and Greek status is introduced into the regression. In this regression both Greek status and the interaction are statistically significant. Consistent with the unrefined ANOVA results presented previously, these coefficients indicate that, net of the other factors, being a Greek has a positive impact on black student satisfaction (2.74, $p < .05$) but an even greater positive impact on white student satisfaction (3.481, $p < .05$). These results support the contention that Greek status has a

differential impact on the college student experience across race. The difference between the satisfaction of white students who are Greek and non-Greek is much greater than that for black students across Greek affiliation. Benefits for Greek membership seem to accrue more significantly for white students than for black students.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Student responses to the open-ended questions provided on the survey were also analyzed for content across the four groups. Responding to these questions (as all others) was voluntary and therefore not every student in each group responded. Students were asked how they would describe their overall experience at the university, any suggestions or recommendations they would make to improve the campus, and if they had any additional comments about the topics covered in the survey. Responses were grouped by race, gender, and Greek status and coded for similarities and differences within and across groups. Particular attention was paid to the salience of race across categories as well as the level of overall satisfaction expressed by students within each group (see Table 7-7).

As all students responded to the same survey questions, the written responses indicate that the issue of racial diversity and race issues on campus is, as expected, much more salient among black students. This is not universally true but disproportionately so. Among black students, mentions of race were typically about the need for greater diversity on campus and more support of those minority students already on campus. In her response, one black Greek female wrote in response to her level of overall satisfaction that the university was, “Interesting but lacking in diversity.” In response to the question of any suggestions she would make she wrote, “Make ALL teachers take racial sensitivity training and improve minority recruitment. They don’t use the facilities open to them.” Among white students, comments about race were

somewhat mixed as some students shared the concerns mentioned by black students while others expressed frustration with ongoing discussions of race on campus.

Comments that were negative regarding the issue of race and diversity on campus were somewhat more likely to come from white Greek than non-Greek students (11% versus 4%). As an example, one white Greek male wrote, “I would suggest the university stop trying to entice blacks to come here with biased admissions. If they don’t want to, why would you want them here. There are 3 black colleges in Atlanta. The admissions policy to encourage diversity should be scrapped. It is discriminatory against whites and Asians.” A white Greek female wrote, “After 3 years at this university, I’m getting tired of the diversity issue. I feel that we make a bigger deal of it than it is.”

White Greeks did not universally express frustration with the “diversity issue.” One white Greek female wrote, “Because of the HOPE scholarship, diversity is greatly lacking. Although HOPE is a wonderful program, the people who really need it are unable to get into the University. Whatever can be done to increase diversity would be helpful.” This student believed that Greek organizations could play a role in this area. She continued, “I think if the Greek orgs [organizations] did not feel so shunned by the heads of the university, they would be more willing to make an effort at diversification.” This comment seems to express that a lack of willingness to change the racial composition of predominantly white Greek organizations comes from a feeling that they are looked down upon by the administration, perhaps leading the groups to live down to these expectations.

Consistent with the mean differences in perceptions of campus climate between Greek and non-Greek black students, there is some evidence to support the idea that members of black Greek organizations have increased perception of the need for greater racial diversity and

minority student programming generally, as 16 of the 24 black Greek students who responded to the open-ended questions mentioned race, in particular the need for greater diversity on campus, as compared to 26 of the 65 non-Greek black students. The black Greek student comments were also more likely to be general comments on the status of black students at the university and were mainly brief and non-specific. A few examples include one black Greek female who wrote, “More diversity. Make it more welcoming to minority students,” and several who just wrote, “diversity,” “more diversity,” and “diversity, diversity, diversity.”

Student responses to the question of their global satisfaction were generally positive for all four groups. One black non-Greek male wrote, “It’s definitely been a learning experience!! I learned more outside the classroom just by interacting with various people than I did from my instructors!! Overall if I had a chance to go back and change something I wouldn’t change a thing!!!” A black Greek female wrote, “I’ve enjoyed my experience at UGA. I’ve had the opportunity to become very involved. I’ve met new and exciting people and have also been able to experience various educational activities that have helped me develop as a person.” There was some variation in the responses to the follow-up questions, however, which indicates a need for caution in interpreting their overall responses. For instance, the student just quoted wrote the following in response to the question regarding recommendations – “I would recommend that the University make a stronger effort to recruit minority students as well as making more facilities and activities available to the minority student.” The responses were coded across level of satisfaction expressed as well as for content of student suggestions. This general information is presented in the table below.

Several summative statements can also be made regarding these responses. Within the black Greek category, men were more likely than women to say they were very satisfied (6

versus 2). White Greek students had comments covering a wider spectrum of campus issues and were more likely to make positive comments, consistent with their overall higher satisfaction with the university. This included positive comments about several issues that drew negative comments from the other three groups, for example, money spent on landscaping and UGA football. For instance, one student wrote, “This place is awesome. More people should come to Sporting events. That is what makes this University stand out from others in the state. Part of the biggest decision to go here was that Sports were a major part of the social life.” The emphasis on sports was mentioned negatively by one Greek student but multiple times in the other groups.

Table 7-7. Responses to Open-ended questions

Variable	Black Students		White Students	
	Greek (N=26)	non-Greek (N=65)	Greek (N=54)	non-Greek (N=65)
Level of overall satisfaction				
High	31%	51%	85%	60%
Neutral	50%	34%	15%	37%
Low	15%	29%	0%	6%
Mention of race	62%	40%	13%	15%

Following survey data collection, focus groups were conducted with students who were members of the groups of interest (for more information on the administration of the focus group interviews see Chapter 6). The questions of interest here include student responses to why they decided to attend the university and what they knew about it previously (to address the question of existing variation in reputation across race) as well as how their experiences since coming to campus had impacted their initial view and how satisfied they were overall. In order to speak to the question of how these experiences would impact their subsequent relationship with the

university, students were asked if they planned to return as alumni and if they would recommend the university to friends and family members.

The transcripts of the focus groups were analyzed for similar themes within and across the four groups as well as for significant differences in content regarding issue salience. The results of these interviews support the findings presented above regarding the differing salience of race. They also indicate the need for additional research and policy attention regarding variations in the collective reputation of the institution among minority students and their families. Both Greek and non-Greek black students said that they had heard very negative things about UGA before coming here and that they decided to come anyway because of the good academic reputation of the school and because their own previous experiences had prepared them for a predominantly white environment. A black non-Greek student said she picked the university because it was a good one for pre-medicine and it was close to home. She continued, “I didn’t really have any misconceptions. I knew what I was getting into racial wise. Simply because my father always pointed out the fact that the G was always flown right next to the confederate flag . . . I knew what I was getting into but I don’t regret choosing this school.” A black Greek female said, “[T]he perceptions that I’ve heard from other people were just like, you know, it’s an all white school, you know they are racist, or whatever. But it didn’t really bother me because my high school . . . was mixed so I was more prepared for it I guess.” Similar comments were made in response to the open-ended survey questions. One black non-Greek female wrote, “When I first came here as part of a freshman summer program I was unsure about what the racial atmosphere would be like. I did not want to be here at all because I had heard so many negative things about the lack of diversity and the racial tension.” This student believed the university should take action to change this reputation. She continued, “I would recommend

that the Department for Public Relations committee or whoever is in charge of publicity at the University put more effort into changing/improving the reputation of UGA with respect to cultural and racial diversity.”

White Greek and non-Greek students either had neutral or positive information about the university before coming to campus. Many had family members who had or were currently attending the school. One student said, “My sister went up here so I was kind of, I got to come up and visit and go to a couple of classes with her, and see what it was kind of like and it seemed, I don’t know, I didn’t really put a lot of thought into it.” White non-Greek students reported not knowing much about the university other than its large size, which was a positive for some and a negative for others. White Greek students had a positive perception of the surrounding community, mentioning the location of the college as one of the main reasons they were interested in attending. A white Greek male said he chose the college for the HOPE scholarship but also for the music scene in Athens. Another said that she thought Athens was more cosmopolitan than the rest of the state. Not surprisingly, both groups of students mentioned being motivated by financial concerns, something that was also mentioned by black students.

White students in the focus groups did discuss the campus racial composition. Several mentioned knowing before coming to college that UGA was a relatively white school on some level. In spite of this, they were often quite surprised at just how pervasive this whiteness was once they came to campus. The students did believe this was something the university should attempt to do something about and should even be embarrassed by. However, when it came to their own college experience, the racial composition did not make them feel less satisfied with

the university and they had intentions to return to campus as alumni (if they could afford the football tickets) and to recommend it to others.

For black students, many initially felt positively about the campus, even while they were somewhat surprised by just how many white students there were. This changed for these students as they spent more time on campus and experienced racism from faculty, students, and within the community. Many of the students mentioned hearing stories from friends but reserving judgment until their own experiences confirmed this reality. Based on the stories shared by focus group participants, these students showed remarkable resilience and optimism in the face of these experiences. Several reported still liking a lot about the university and trying to take the good with the bad but the racism nonetheless influenced their feelings about college. One black Greek female said that she had generally had a positive experience on campus until a recent experience with racism made her see the university differently. She said, “Now I’m just kind of like, oh okay, now I see where you know, the racism comes into play every now and then. Whereas it doesn’t happen everyday, it has kind of skewed my vision of the university. But overall I still like it.” This response is similar to one offered in the open-ended questions by a black Greek male student. He wrote, “I’ve had a good experience. I’ve had to endure adversity but I am not bitter about it. I am content with who I am and I know that the adversity has strengthened me as a person.”

For black Greek students, loyalty to their chapter offered either an alternative or additional reason to want to return and to have family members attend. One student said of his son, “My little boy is going to be a Sigma [chapter name] and a Bulldog.” In response to whether or not they would recommend the university to friends and family members, another black Greek student said, “I would definitely. I mean, I would try to make sure they get money

to come here but, I would. I'm trying to encourage my little sister, she wants to go to Albany State. I really need her to be here, I need to watch over my little sister, so hopefully she'll be at the University of Georgia." Another student said, in response to whether or not she planned to return as an alumni, "I think, us being Greek, that would draw me back, I don't know, just probably to support my sorority. But as an alumni? I mean, I hope by the time I leave here, the alumni relations will be better. Cause it just seems like when I see UGA football game days, it's not really targeted at minorities. I don't know if the alumni just aren't interested or if it's just not an environment that we can, I don't know, feel welcomed in."

The question of supporting the university as alumni was a contentious and complicated issue among both Greek and non-Greek black students. Black Greek students disagreed over whether they would be willing to donate money to a general fund or if they would prefer the money be directed specifically at minority student scholarships. For black non-Greek students, the question of alumni support sparked a long conversation about the appropriate goals and strategies as well as the possibility of effecting change. When one student mentioned that it was important to join the minority alumni association, another countered that this would just continue the marginalization of black alumni. A third student responded by saying that one individual black person joining the general alumni association would not be able to have much of an impact on the decisions made but that joining with a larger group would give them a voice. When compared to the relatively straightforward responses to this question offered by white Greek and non-Greek students, which were primarily positive but conditional on having the money to be able to afford football tickets, the thought and concern centered around this question for black students shows just how complicated their relationship to the institution is.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The first important finding of the research comes with the comparison of differences in student characteristics across the four groups. Two conclusions can be offered from this analysis. First, it is clear that there are different types of students in Greek organizations across race. This in and of itself indicates a need for clarity in research on the Greek experience. White Greek membership varies systematically from black Greek membership and this evidence is available to researchers through both previous work and general information about the systems associated with these groups.

The evidence regarding student time usage also indicates a potentially dangerous pattern for black Greek students, which may be related to the types of students who chose to join and may be simultaneously exacerbated by the organizations themselves. These students seem to be very heavily committed across the spectrum of involvement and may in fact experience over-integration, over-programming, and burnout based on the amount of time they spend in fraternity and sorority events, working during school, and other forms of involvement.

Controlling for these differences in student characteristics there emerges a differential impact of Greek membership on student satisfaction across race. As predicted by the differing history and mission of these organizations, as well as their embedded context within this specific institution, Greek membership does not have an identical impact for students no matter what organization they are affiliated with. This is likely due to several factors, including the different size of the organizations, the existence of fraternity and sorority houses for white Greek members, and the length of time the organizations have been on campus. Membership in a Greek organization has a very strong positive impact on the satisfaction of white members. The results from the open-ended questions indicate that this extends to many aspects of the campus

life, and includes positive feelings about things which are sometimes seen as negative by other students. This difference may be an indication of attitude polarization, in a positive direction, and likely is related to high levels of efficacy and a sense of belonging associated with membership.

The racial composition and racial history of the campus also likely influence the way in which Greek membership affects the student experience. The findings indicate the importance of racial salience for students. Race is rarely salient for white students in their day-to-day life on campus. This allows organizational affiliation to be more significant. Race is highly salient for black students, both Greek and non-Greek. This salience overshadows organizational affiliation and facilitates the creation of a sense of community among black students.

The reality of a racialized campus where racism is experienced by students of color in multiple environments and is part of the history of the institution itself creates conditions necessary for the emergence of bounded solidarity among black students on campus. Over 65% of black non-Greek students reported attending BGO events in the past. While there was not a comparable question for students attending white Greek events, information on the basic functioning of white Greek organizations and previous research on the role of BGO's on predominantly white campuses support the idea that BGO's offer social events and support for both members and non-members in a way white Greek organizations do not. These organizations and the regular events they offer provide an alternative culture for black students to participate in.

While the data are less clear on this point, there is also evidence to suggest the potential for a polarization effect in a negative direction, for black Greek membership, based on results of mean comparisons on the campus climate scale. This is also revealed in the ubiquitous, almost

obligatory, presence of comments on the need for increased racial diversity in responses offered by black Greek students to open-ended questions. Black students in general show high levels of concern for the status of minority students on campus. This is, at least in part, something that these students come to campus with as they have not heard positive things about the university within their communities prior to coming to campus. Members of BGO's have more opportunities to get together and discuss this problem as well as to offer programs focused on ameliorating it for current students.

At the same time, black Greek students were more likely to plan to return to the university as alumni and to support the university in part by supporting their chapters and activities sponsored by their chapters. The outcomes of this research indicate a need for more attention to be focused on student satisfaction as an outcome for black students. The existing collective memory of students when they enroll means that these students have a more attenuated concern for their potential to be satisfied. If they leave the campus having had the presupposition of a negative experience confirmed, they are that much less likely to support the institution in the future or to encourage other friends and family members to attend and will also contribute to the existing negative social memory of an institution within the black constituency.

CHAPTER 8

GPA

Tinto's model of college student departure focuses on two primary forms of integration, social and academic, which are predicted to lead to subsequent student commitments and degree completion. The previous chapter focused on student satisfaction as a proximal measure of social integration. This chapter analyzes the impact of Greek membership on student academic outcomes, primarily through student GPA. Results of previous research on this topic are mixed, with some evidence for a negative effect, some for a positive effect, and some showing no relationship at all after controlling for other student characteristics. Most critiques of Greek organizations and questions about their appropriate place in higher education center around concerns for their impact on student academic outcomes. Based on the differences in Greek organizations by race discussed previously, it is appropriate to explore whether or not GPA is uniformly affected by Greek membership across race.

In this chapter, I will begin by reviewing what the existing literature has predicted for this outcome and discuss what might be expected based on differences between the organizational types. This will be followed by analysis of undergraduate survey data on the topic. While student GPA is one important measure of the student academic experience, Tinto's model places primary importance on the student's level of academic integration. After a brief discussion of the operationalization of this concept, the data will be analyzed with a focus on student academic integration across race and Greek status. The open-ended questions and focus group data also

provide information about students' feelings and experiences in the classroom and with faculty and will be explored for similarities and differences across the four groups of interest.

GREEK RESEARCH

Greek organizations began to appear on university campuses in the early 19th century, primarily in response to the limited social opportunities available in institutions of higher education at the time (Rudolph 1962/1990). These exclusive and secretive groups provided opportunities for social interaction as well as support for their members. Their impact on students, including on academic achievement, has been of concern to administrators and researchers since their founding (Rudolph 1962/1990; Wilder & McKeegan 1999).

Previous research on the impact of Greek membership on student academic outcomes is inconclusive. Some studies have shown negative cognitive outcomes associated with Greek affiliation and while others find no relationship after controlling for background/pre-college characteristics like parents' education and student high school GPA (Pike & Askew 1990; Wilder & McKeegan 1999). There is some evidence for variation across gender, with more evidence supporting a negative impact for men in fraternities which is not present for women in sororities. There is also evidence for lower levels of cognitive development among Greek freshmen compared to their non-Greek counterparts but these differences seem to disappear over the course of the college career (Pascarella et al. 1996; Pascarella et al. 2001). Other research shows a positive impact of Greek membership on the likelihood of completing college and on subsequent educational attainment (Whipple, Baier, & Grady 1991).

There is currently little distinction by race in the literature, although several researchers have indicated this is appropriate and have results supporting these statements (Thorson 1997; Wilder & McKeegan 1999). This is particularly important as it relates to consideration of

organizational differences which accrue across racial lines, as is revealed when considering the negative cognitive outcomes uncovered for Greek freshmen. Black Greek organizations have very different member recruitment processes and rarely initiate freshmen into the organizations (Whipple, Baier, & Grady 1991).

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

There are, in fact, several differences in these organizations across race which may influence how membership impacts academic success, including differences in mission, size, and organizational resources. Different structural characteristics of the same type of voluntary association are associated with different outcomes for members (Eastis 1998). While this research does not speak specifically to college student outcomes, the differences between white and black Greek organizations fit within this framework.

There were historically different reasons for the founding of the organizations across race. While the primary mission for white Greek organizations was focused on social opportunities for students within a restrictive higher education environment, black Greek organizations were founded with socio-political goals which included student concerns with the retention of black students on predominantly white campuses (Jones 2004; Berkowitz & Padavic 1999). This difference in mission could mean that Greek affiliation has a more positive influence on black Greek members and a negative influence on white Greek members in the academic field.

Much of the concern regarding Greek organizations generally is based on a perception that their focus on social activities takes students' focus away from their studies. This is facilitated by the existence of off-campus Greek housing which provides a location for activities separate from campus. Black Greek organizations have no off-campus housing, hold chapter

meetings at locations on campus, and often hold social events on campus as well. The physical separation of white Greek activities from campus, which is not possible for black Greek organizations, may create additional distance from the college classroom in the minds of members.

Differences in size also play a role in what social resources are generated for members (Stannard & Bowers 1970). In this case, this may involve information and academic assistance available through the social relationships which exist among members which can be utilized to improve academic outcomes including information on courses and professors as well as test files (Stannard & Bowers 1970). As white Greek organizations are as a whole significantly larger than their black counterparts (a difference due to both the student population composition and the different recruitment methods of the organizations) their larger membership likely means they can generate more mutual information available to be utilized by members.

DATA

As described previously, the data used for this analysis were collected as part of a multi-method study conducted at the University of Georgia over the spring and fall semesters of 2004. This includes survey data with information from 297 undergraduate students (for additional information on the data collection methods see Chapter 6). Following the survey, focus groups were conducted with students in each of the four groups to gather additional information on the student experience.

This chapter includes statistical analysis of the survey responses using SPSS, as well as coding of student comments on the open-ended questions, and comparative analysis of the focus group transcripts. All of this data was analyzed with a focus on college student GPA, an outcome measure discussed in more detail below.

USING GPA

College student GPA is often used as an easily obtainable indicator for student success. It lends itself well to analysis but is not without critics. As Astin (1993) writes, “although the college GPA has been subjected to a great deal of criticism over the years . . . it should be pointed out that undergraduate GPA is positively related to nearly all measures of cognitive and academic growth . . . even after the effects of all other input, environmental, and involvement measures have been controlled. What this tells us is that GPA, despite its limitations, appears to reflect the student’s actual learning and growth during the undergraduate years” (p. 241-242).

Astin also points out that, “poor grades are still sufficient grounds for dismissal at most colleges, and high grades are necessary for admission to most graduate and professional schools. For these reasons, college grades continue to represent an important index of student accomplishment in college” (Astin 1993, p. 187). Nonetheless, there are other indicators of student academic success which may be significant across race and Greek affiliation, as will be discussed subsequently.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Table 8-1 contains information on the characteristics of the four groups. Most of the control variables are the same as those included in the previous analysis, with a few changes. In this case, three pre-entrance factors are included, which are whether or not the student’s mother and father attended college and the high school GPA. Consistent with the results of previous research, white students are more likely to have fathers who attended college, while most students’ mothers attended college across all four groups (Pike & Askew 1990; Whipple, Baier, & Grady 1991). The mean high school GPA is similar for all four groups, falling between 3.5 and 3.7.

Table 8-1. Sample Descriptive Information by Race and Greek Status (S.D.)

Variable	Black Students		White Students	
	Greek (N=34)	Non-Greek (N=90)	Greek (N=83)	non-Greek (N=90)
<u>Dependent Variables:</u>				
Mean college GPA	2.8 (.44)	2.9 (.57)	3.2 (.47)	3.2 (.55)
Mean academic integration scale score	28.9 (5.2)	28.3 (5.2)	27.6 (6)	28.3 (6)
<u>Control Variables:</u>				
Male	56%	30%	30%	41%
Father attended college	56%	64%	89%	79%
Mother attended college	74%	64%	90%	79%
Year in school				
Freshmen	3%	29%	22%	14%
Sophomore	12%	28%	31%	19%
Junior	26%	19%	31%	29%
Senior/Other	59%	23%	16%	38%
Social Science Major (including education & business)	71%	60%	69%	53%
Live on-campus	38%	54%	22%	18%
Mean HS GPA	3.57 (.34)	3.6 (.36)	3.7 (.31)	3.5 (.47)
Mean semester hours enrolled	14.3 (1.7)	14.3 (2.8)	13.8 (2.1)	13.5 (2.6)
Mean weekly involvement hours	15.4 (13.3)	8.97 (7.4)	9.1 (7.1)	10.12 (9.4)
Mean weekly study hours	3.27 (1)	2.98 (.95)	2.75 (.9)	3.1 (1.1)
Mean satisfaction scale score	46.6 (6.5)	44.69 (7.1)	51.8 (5.5)	46.5 (7.6)
Mean climate	21.7 (5.6)	25.1 (4.7)	29.9 (3.8)	29.7 (4.5)

FINDINGS

Before exploring the relationship between race, Greek membership, and student success in greater depth, it is first necessary to determine if there are gross-level differences in the mean levels of success across the four groups of interest. In other words, it necessary to test for a significant interaction between race and being a member of a Greek organization. If there is no interaction, the effect of race on success will not depend upon whether the student is or is not Greek. These results are presented below.

Table 8-2. ANOVA for CGPA as a Function of Race and Greek Status

Source	Df	MS	F-ratio	P
CGPA				
Race	1	9.157	33.701	.001
Greek status	1	.353	1.301	.255
Race*Greek status	1	.275	1.011	.315

The ANOVA results for college GPA are presented in Table 8-2. As indicated in the table, the main effects of race are significant at the .001 level. This impact is revealed in the group means listed in Table 8-3. However, neither Greek status nor the interaction term are statistically significant. There is no evidence at this level for a differential impact of Greek status across race on student GPA. However, a more in-depth analysis will follow.

Table 8-3. Group means on College GPA by Race and Greek Status

Group (N)	Mean	S.E.
Black non-Greeks (90)	2.93	.005
White non-Greeks (90)	3.24	.005
Black Greeks (33)	2.79	.089
White Greeks (82)	3.23	.057

The variables included in the regression model include important student demographic and background information, student college characteristics, and student college experiences. These variables have been shown in previous research to impact either GPA specifically or student persistence generally. Demographic and student pre-entrance controls include gender, whether or not either parent attended college, and high school GPA. Student college characteristic controls include year in school, major (dichotomized by social science majors vs. other majors), housing status, semester credit hours enrolled, and average weekly study hours and work hours. Student post-entrance experience control variables include a measure of weekly student involvement hours across a range of extra-curricular activities (excluding hours of fraternity or sorority involvement), and students' perception of their academic integration, the campus racial climate, and their overall satisfaction with the university.

As mentioned previously, the dependent variable is college student GPA. The independent variables of interest are student race and Greek status. All students in the sample are either white or black, based on information obtained from the campus institutional research office. The students' Greek status was also obtained from IR, with information on their organizational affiliation confirmed through membership lists obtained from the office of Greek life. These variables are both dichotomous, so that the coefficients obtained can be understood as adjusted mean differences.

While the ANOVA results do not show evidence of differential impact of Greek status across race, a more complete regression analysis was conducted. These results are presented in the following table, with the second equation including the interaction term for race and Greek status. These results support the initial conclusion drawn from the ANOVA regarding the impact of race. In both equations, consistent with previous research, race has a significant impact on college GPA, controlling for other variables, as white students have a higher adjusted mean GPA. The issue of minority student underperformance has been explored in some detail in other research, the most recent and thorough of which is the work of Massey et al. (2003). These authors found that differences in prior academic experiences, sources of social and economic capital, and the potential influence of stereotype threat were most significant (Massey et al. 2003). Greek status is also significant and negatively related to GPA in the first equation, and as the interaction term is not significantly different from zero (equation 2), there is no evidence that this impact varies across race.

Other variables which are significantly related to college GPA include gender, high school GPA, whether or not a student's father attended college, and their perception of the campus racial climate. Being a male and having a father who attended college have a negative impact on GPA while students who have a more positive perception of the campus racial climate also have a higher college GPA. Not surprisingly, the strongest relationship exists for high school GPA.

Table 8-4. College GPA on Race and Greek status (equation 1) with interaction (equation 2) controlling for various background and college experience variables.

Variable	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Greek status (1=Greek)	-.133* (.066)	-.119	-.129 (.109)	-.115
Race (1=white)	.229** (.073)	.206	.231** (.083)	.208
Race * Greek status interaction			-.007 (.140)	-.006
Gender (male=1)	-.155* (.063)	-.137	-.156* (.064)	-.137
HS GPA	.385*** (.079)	.276	.385*** (.079)	.276
Father attend college	-.163* (.077)	-.124	-.164* (.077)	-.124
Mother attend college	-.059 (.077)	-.044	-.059 (.077)	-.044
Year in School	.031 (.031)	.063	.030 (.032)	.062
Major (Social science=1)	-.043 (.060)	-.038	-.043 (.060)	-.038
Housing (on-campus=1)	.031 (.076)	.026	.031 (.076)	.026
Semester credit hours enrolled	.014 (.012)	.062	.014 (.012)	.062
Weekly involvement hrs. (excluding Greek hrs.)	.006 (.003)	.099	.006 (.003)	.098
Weekly study hours	.004 (.030)	.007	.006 (.030)	.011
Weekly work hours	-.007 (.004)	-.105	-.007 (.004)	-.099
Academic integration	.011 (.006)	.116	.014 (.005)	.145
Campus climate	.015* (.007)	.145	.017* (.007)	.173
Satisfaction	.006 (.005)	.076	.006 (.005)	.077
Constant	.704		.702	
Adjusted R ²	.281		.278	

Note: N=281, b = unstandardized regression coefficient w/ standard error in parentheses; beta = standardized regression coefficient. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p <.001 (two-tailed tests).

While GPA is an important outcome in itself, student academic integration is a central construct in Tinto's theoretical model and while it has sometimes been operationalized in

previous work as GPA, most researchers have defined it using a more nuanced measure of student perceptions of their relationships and experiences with faculty. It is calculated as a composite score of responses to nine question items ($\alpha=.78$; for more information see Chapter 6). These include feeling that faculty are sensitive to students needs, developing personal relationships with faculty, and having the opportunity to discuss both personal and career issues with faculty members (Nettles et al. 1991). This may in fact be a more appropriate outcome to analyze in relationship to the possibility for organizational differences to influence student outcomes, as previous research on voluntary associations indicates that membership increases member efficacy and engagement overall.

Prior to regression analysis, an ANOVA was conducted to identify any gross-level mean differences across groups. The ANOVA results do not show evidence of an interaction effect for race and Greek status. There are no significant differences in the means for academic integration for black and white Greek and non-Greek students.

Table 8-5. ANOVA for Academic Integration as a Function of Race and Greek Status

Source	Df	MS	F-ratio	P
Academic integration				
Race	1	25.069	.786	.376
Greek status	1	.954	.030	.863
Race*Greek status	1	25.959	.814	.368

Table 8-6. Group means on Academic Integration scale by Race and Greek Status

Group (N)	Mean	S.E.
Black non-Greeks (90)	28.33	.595
White non-Greeks (90)	28.34	.595
Black Greeks (33)	28.85	.968
White Greeks (82)	27.58	.620

The regression equations for student academic integration are presented in Table 8-7. In the first equation race and Greek status are significant, with both white students and Greek students having lower levels of academic integration after controlling for several background characteristics and college experiences. The race effect is an unexpected outcome, based on the more negative perception of the campus racial climate held by black students as well as their lower overall GPA. Since the interaction term in the second equation is not significantly different from zero, we can ignore the interaction component and focus on the main effects of Greek status and Race. As is seen in equation 1 both Greek status and Race have significant negative effects on academic integration. Being a member of a fraternity or sorority lowers the student's academic integration, as does being white. In these data, black non-Greeks have the highest levels of academic integration after controlling on these extraneous factors.

Student responses to the open-ended questions provided on the survey were also analyzed for content across the four groups. Responding to these questions (as all others) was voluntary and therefore not every student in each group responded. Students were asked how they would describe their overall experience at the university, any suggestions or recommendations they would make to improve the campus, and if they had any additional comments about the topics covered in the survey. Responses were grouped by race, gender, and Greek status and coded for similarities and differences within and across groups. These data do not bear directly on the question of student GPA but can be analyzed in relationship to the findings on academic integration.

Table 8-7. Academic Integration on Race and Greek status (equation 1) with interaction (equation 2); controlling for various background and college experience variables.

Variable	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Greek status (1=Greek)	-1.432* (.699)	-.124	-.622 (1.160)	-.054
Race (1=white)	-2.041** (.787)	-.178	-1.677 (.891)	-.147
Race * Greek status interaction			-1.302 (1.488)	-.104
Gender (male=1)	.167 (.681)	.014	.059 (.693)	.005
HS GPA	-.957 (.872)	-.067	-.889 (.876)	-.062
Father attend college	.779 (.821)	.058	.750 (.822)	.055
Mother attend college	-.162 (.821)	-.012	-.143 (.822)	-.010
Year in School	.434 (.327)	.086	.359 (.338)	.071
Major (Social science=1)	-.408 (.642)	-.035	-.378 (.644)	-.033
Housing (on-campus=1)	-.564 (.805)	-.047	-.587 (.806)	-.049
Semester credit hours enrolled	-.079 (.124)	-.035	-.077 (.124)	-.034
Weekly involvement hrs. (excluding Greek hrs.)	.068 (.035)	.110	.063 (.036)	.102
Weekly study hours	.329 (.314)	.058	.269 (.322)	.047
Weekly work hours	.042 (.040)	.062	.039 (.040)	.057
College GPA	1.278 (.652)	.124	1.272 (.652)	.124
Campus climate	.010 (.075)	.009	.016 (.075)	.015
Student Satisfaction	.335*** (.049)	.435	.341*** (.050)	.443
Constant	10.805		10.420	
Adjusted R ²	.229		.228	

Note: N=281, b = unstandardized regression coefficient w/ standard error in parentheses; beta = standardized regression coefficient. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p <.001 (two-tailed tests).

White students, both Greek and non-Greek, were somewhat more likely to voluntarily mention problems or concerns about faculty or faculty/student relationships and to mention academic reasons as a cause for their lack of overall satisfaction with the university. Based on their higher level of satisfaction overall, it was surprising how many white Greek students mentioned problems with faculty, with faculty/student relations, or with the overall academic environment of the university. While comments like this did come up in the other three groups, they appear with much more frequency in white Greek student comments (30% of white Greek open-ended responses contained some mention of a need for better faculty versus 12-15% in the other groups). These include three students who mention that they believe that the faculty are too liberal or that conservative social thought is discouraged, and two who mentioned problems with teaching assistants whose first language is not English and who were difficult to understand. Most of the comments related to class or campus size and the lack of personal contact or relationships with faculty. One student wrote, “Just because we go to a large university doesn’t mean we should be just a number. Professors should make more of an effort to get to know students. They should emphasize a willingness to help.” Many of these comments fit with a model of students as consumers of a product, which these students saw as somewhat deficient.

The final question in the focus group interviews attempted to tap into students’ feelings of efficacy and level of support from faculty and administrators on campus. This question potentially extends the academic integration question to one of institutional integration, although most students who responded affirmatively mentioned a faculty member as the person they would most likely go to with a concern. This question asks students to think specifically of a person connected to the institution who they feel a sense of closeness too or support from. Students were asked if they felt they knew someone on campus who they could go to with a

particular issue and if they did know someone to go to, did they feel this person would be willing and able to help. Responses to this question varied across the four groups and in the case of black non-Greek students, the subsequent conversation hinged not on their feelings of being able to access help (which they were somewhat cynical about) but on the burden of race for minority students on a predominantly white campus.

White non-Greek students were the most negative in response to this question. Several indicated that they could talk to someone but doubted that the person would care or be able to take action. One student specifically mentioned that although he had enjoyed his time on campus overall, at the end of the day he was just a number to most people on campus and he doubted any administrator would really take the time to listen to his concerns. He said, “I don’t know if the university is or isn’t listening to us but I don’t feel like they are I guess. And like I said, I only say that because of what I tend to observe when like thousands of students voice their opinion about something and you know, the administration goes another way . . . even if I knew someone with whom I could speak, I don’t think I’d feel like it was really doing anything.”

Both white and black Greek students indicated that they did feel they knew someone who would be willing to listen and would do what they could to help, although their influence might be somewhat limited. A white fraternity member responded, “I don’t think I know who I would go to off the top of my head if I really had an issue but I do think that I could be heard if I did probably a minimal amount of research and contacting. I don’t think it would be a problem.” A white sorority member mentioned several potential avenues through which she felt she could contact someone who would be willing and able to help, including her church and through her membership on the Dean’s advisory board for the College of Arts and Sciences. One black Greek student mentioned that she had always felt some concern for the issue of a living wage for

custodial staff on campus but had not ever taken the time to talk to anyone about it. She mentioned a professor who was “with the public outreach. It’s something I’ve never pursued but I know who I could contact, I don’t know if they would be interested but I’m sure they would listen.”

The issue of taking personal action on an issue was the major topic discussed among black non-Greek students in response to this question. One student said she thought she knew someone she could talk to but she did not feel she had the time or energy to take the issue up. This was followed by a discussion of the issue of diversity on campus, both racial and otherwise, in which students’ described feeling frustrated because fewer black students on campus seemed concerned about this issue and frustrated because white students did not seem to share any of this concern. It was a choice between studying and focusing on academics or embracing a cause, a choice they did not feel white students had to make. One student said, “We have to make that choice . . . right, you have to decide where you’re going to spend your energy. It’s not like, am I gonna spend it partying or am I gonna spend it studying. It’s am I gonna spend it studying or am I gonna spend it trying to make things better? Whereas white people probably come to campus, party or study.” While it can be argued that many white students have other choices to make beyond party or study, this sense that there exists the necessity to chose between just being a student or being a student activist creates a burden of race for minority students on predominantly white campuses (Feagin, Vera, and Imani 1996).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The survey data indicate that, consistent with other research, there is a negative impact of Greek status on the two academic outcomes analyzed here. This is true for members of both black and white Greek organizations. Significantly for the research questions addressed in this

project, Greek membership does not show evidence of having a differential impact on student academic success or integration across race.

While discussions on the role and future of Greek organizations on campus must consider the whole picture, including other outcomes associated with Greek membership, these negative relationships offer cause for concern. The race difference and the fact that race was significant in both models means that Greek membership adds to an existing negative relationship for both white and black students. In the case of black Greek members, this is true for their college GPA. In the case of white Greek students, this is true for their level of academic integration. As both of these outcomes are important indicators of student success, future research should explore the mechanisms through which Greek affiliation negatively affects student academic achievement. While differences in organizational characteristics do not lead to opposite outcomes in these areas, it is still possible that different mechanisms are operating in the different organizations to lower student academic achievement.

The qualitative findings shed additional light on white students' lower levels of academic integration. In responses to the open-ended questions, this seems particularly true of white Greek students. These students have a high level of satisfaction with the university overall but seem to have more concerns about the quality of their relationships with faculty. At the same time, results from the focus group interviews suggest that these students feel relatively efficacious with regards to finding help and support on campus with an issue of concern to them. This feeling was shared with black Greek students. White non-Greek students were most cynical in this regard, while black non-Greek students responded to the question in a way which affirmed findings discussed in the previous chapter about the salience of race on campus and the differential impact this has on the minority student's college experience. There are several

possible reasons why white students have lower perceptions of their relationships with faculty and lower levels of academic integration. This may be a result of their higher average GPA's, as students who are having are not having difficulty in a class will be less likely to go and see their professor and therefore have fewer possibilities for developing relationships with them. It may also be related to a more developed concern among white students that the "product" of higher education is not meeting their expectations as consumers. Several researchers have commented on the emergence of a consumer/customer orientation among students. Whether or not this is different across race is a question that cannot be answered in this research but should be explored in future research.

A note on methodology is also in order regarding this chapter. Student experiences with faculty and suggestions for change seem more accessible through qualitative data. The multi-method approach of this research project allows for a snapshot view of student differences in feelings about faculty while the focus group conversations not only provide more in-depth information on student feelings but also allow students an opportunity to dialogue with others and trade ideas about possibilities for improvement and change as well as feel less alone in their concern about particular issues (Patton 2002).

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This multi-method research study focuses on one specific area of student involvement across race within the higher education environment. It is nested in a wider concern for student success and satisfaction, particularly for minority students on predominantly white campuses. Attention to understanding not just that race matters, but when, where, and how it matters can offer much more fruitful research outcomes which will be beneficial to addressing concerns with minority student retention. Much of the existing research in higher education focuses on race as a control variable with little additional exploration or explanation of how it operates. All social phenomena, especially the socially constructed reality of race in the United States, occur within a particular historical and institutional context. Consideration of this context must be made a priority if conversations about the role of race in student life, and social life, are to move beyond essentializing statements of difference which reify race and foreclose discussions about possibilities for change.

Research on college students, like much other social science research, also often seems to occur within a vacuum, isolated from other research programs and discussions which could offer insight into the questions and problems addressed in this literature. The concept of social integration is a central concern across a wide spectrum of social research, including that of social capital researchers looking at voluntary association membership and social isolation or cohesion.

In this chapter I will summarize the major findings of this project and their connections with previous research as well as their implications. I will also address the limitations of the

research including sample size, questions of causality, and potential future research suggested by the results of this work.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The overall results of this research indicate that there are important differences between the impact of black and white Greek organizations as well as continued cause for concern regarding the impact of Greek membership on student academic outcomes. As is the case for other discussions of voluntary association membership, the effects are both positive and negative. Greek membership for white students in this study is associated with dramatically higher levels of satisfaction, a finding which is not present for black Greeks. To the degree that satisfaction is an important student outcome for institutions of higher education, white Greek membership is clearly positive. Black Greek membership seems to have a polarization effect as well, although in this case it is to raise the level of concern among members regarding the campus racial climate. These same data do not reveal a differential impact of Greek membership for student college GPA and academic integration. However, negative relationships between Greek membership and GPA and academic integration that exist for both white and black students should provide cause for concern. As race matters in both of these outcomes, Greek membership adds to this. For black students, the negative impact of Greek affiliation on GPA exacerbates an existing negative association with race. For white students, the negative impact of Greek affiliation on academic integration exacerbates an existing negative association with race. Responses to open-ended questions and focus group interviews support the findings that race is a highly salient identity for black students on this predominantly white campus, and that Greek membership does not have the same impact on the satisfaction of black students as it does on white students. This is due to differences in the level of closure that exists in the

organizations, as the boundaries of black Greek organizations are more permeable and benefits accrue to members and nonmembers alike. The existence of conditions for the emergence of bounded solidarity among black students on campus also mediates the ability of Greek membership to form any significant boundary within the black student population.

This research furthers the literature on student integration and Greek membership in several ways. First of all, it establishes through statistical analysis what had primarily been available through descriptive comparison previously – that is, that membership in a Greek organization does not have a uniform effect on students across race and therefore any discussion of Greek membership must take race into account. Secondly, it focuses attention on the ways in which Greek organizations across race differ historically and contextually. These organizational differences are a manifestation of the history of race in higher education. Thirdly, the research expands discussions of student integration through extracurricular involvement by linking these conversations with those taking place among scholars of voluntary associations more generally. It draws attention to the need for clarity in exploring different types of student involvement by race, organizational type, and institutional context. A more specific review of the research findings is presented below.

Descriptive analysis indicates that the first area in which black Greek students can be distinguished from white Greek students is their overall characteristics, particularly in the area of time usage. Black Greek students are much more similar to both black and white non-Greek students than they are to their white Greek counterparts. The students who self-select Greek affiliation differ somewhat dramatically in the time they have available to commit to the organization and in other characteristics which are associated with student success and

satisfaction including their weekly work hours, their involvement in other extra-curricular activities, and their perception of the campus racial climate.

In the area of satisfaction, there is strong evidence of a polarization effect associated with white Greek membership. While these students are likely predisposed to higher levels of overall satisfaction with their college experience, their Greek affiliation seems to magnify this predisposition. The organization and the opportunities it offers as well as the feelings it generates seem to extend beyond good feelings about the group and into the realm of all aspects of college life. This polarization is revealed in student comments about the campus physical environment, the social life available, and the community in which the college is located.

The same polarization to the positive is not associated with black Greek membership. While black Greek members in this sample have a slightly higher mean level of satisfaction than their black non-Greek counterparts, this is not a substantive or statistically significant difference. Analyses of black student feelings about the campus racial climate in fact indicate a potential polarization in the opposite direction. While, not surprisingly, black students overall have a less positive view of the campus racial climate, this is particularly true of black Greek students. In this case, organizational affiliation seems to accentuate the student's perception of problems with race on campus. This is revealed in the pervasiveness of black Greek student comments about the need for increased racial diversity on campus, as well as suggestions for more minority student programming and anti-racist workshops for white students and faculty.

SATISFACTION AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The concept of collective memory focuses on the social nature of memory itself, which is a central part of identity formation and takes place within a social context. "It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and

localize their memories . . . (Halbwachs 1992, p. 38 as cited in Olick & Robbins 1998).

Recognition of the social nature of memory and how it is transmitted and preserved over time as well as how it can be transformed, is a necessary component of the process of transformation for institutions of higher education with histories of racism and exclusion.

As discussed, black students come to campus with less than positive information about the university. This is likely true for other large state institutions with a history of racism and segregation which impacts the overall campus racial climate (Eimers & Pike; Feagin, Vera, & Imani 1996; Hurtado 1992). While these institutions cannot change the past, they can work to change the current perception of minority communities. The collective memory of a community impacts what type of experience is even possible for students, as racial issues are forefront in their minds. One student in the focus groups discussed noticing many things that needed to be changed while she was on campus but not always having the energy to take them on and feeling frustrated because of that. Another student responded by saying, “Which is exactly why I think African American students come to campus with a much larger burden, then most of the dominant group members.” Changing the content of community’s collective memory requires focusing on the content of student experiences and being aware of possibilities for positive experiences (Olick & Robbins 1998). Campus-based BGO chapters have a vested interest in this issue as their continued viability and existence is dependent upon the continued and even increasing presence in a ready pool of potential members. The recruitment possibilities for voluntary associations are very dependent upon the social composition of the population within which they are embedded (Blau 1990). This organizational interest likely explains the high level of awareness and concern for the issue of minority student recruitment and retention expressed in black Greek responses to the open-ended questions as well as comments offered in interviews

conducted for a previous research project and in focus group interviews conducted for this research. Notably, these comments were almost universally focused on the group level.

Black Greek students in this project did have a slightly higher level of satisfaction than their non-Greek counterparts. This difference, combined with an attenuated organizational concern with the increased presence of black students on campus makes them a ready resource for institutional administrators who share these goals. Successful alteration of the reputation of the institution among minority constituents requires the generation of positive information about the campus within these communities.

This goal points to the importance of considering student satisfaction as an outcome separate from student persistence to degree completion. As has been described in previous tests of Tinto's theory of college student persistence, a student may be successfully integrated into the academic environment and persist to degree completion without a similar level of social integration. These students will then leave campus with a degree but will not have positive feelings about the institution, which will influence their feelings about recommending the university to other friends and family members and about returning to campus as alumni, as well as their desire to make contributions to the institution. Specific analysis of student responses to the survey question asking whether or not they plan to return as an alumnus show that black Greek students are more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement. This was supported in the focus group interviews and what was particularly important was that members of black Greek organizations mentioned being likely to return in part to support their chapter. This chapter loyalty can have an indirectly positive effect on their institutional loyalty.

COLLEGE CONTEXT – THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

The similar experiences of black students on campus make race a highly salient identity which mediates the impact of the boundaries between Greek and non-Greek students in a way which does not exist for white students. This includes experiences with racism from fellow students, faculty, and the wider community. The conditions for the emergence of a situation of bounded solidarity potentially exist. These common experiences combine with the alternative history, culture, and activities offered by black Greek organizations to all black students. Further research on the conditions which exist at different institutions and the existence of a perceived “black student community” which is connected through BGO activities must be conducted in order to confirm this finding.

New admissions policies which come after the Supreme Court’s decision in the Michigan cases are designed to take into account race along with a wide spectrum of other characteristics which influence the pre-college experiences of students. Black students in this research commented on the changing demographics of the black student body on campus, based on the increasing emphasis on test scores which has resulted from the HOPE scholarship. This change may also explain the declining participation in BGO’s which was illustrated in Chapter 3. The need to consider more than just skin color, when making admissions decisions which attempt to create a student population which will be maximally beneficial to all who are present on campus, is key to realizing successful integration possibilities for all students, but is particularly important for minority students. Tinto makes this point so well in the conclusion to his book on student persistence, it is worth quoting at length.

Besides the important question of there being on campus a critical mass of persons of like backgrounds and interests from which viable communities can be

formed, there is the related question of the range of available supportive communities. Sharing a common racial origin – or any other single attribute for that matter – is no guarantee of the sharing of common interests and dispositions, it is the case that on all but the very largest campuses, students of color have relatively fewer options as to the types of communities in which to establish membership than do white students (Tinto 1993, p. 74).

This significant point connects with the current research in two ways. First of all, it affirms the prior discussion about the importance of supporting the efficacy of BGO's as existing communal niches on campus which provide an avenue for integration of students through their membership. Secondly, it is important to realize that BGO membership will not be a good fit for every student, even across the spectrum of organizations which have different personalities. Therefore, understanding what about different types of voluntary associations is more or less successful at integrating students can provide information which can be utilized in creating or supporting the creation of new organizations.

Consistent with previous research, whatever their experiences prior to coming to college, experiences with racism are a big part of the college experience of black students on a predominantly white campus (Allen 1992; Feagin & Sikes 1995). As reported in the focus group interviews and in responses to open-ended survey questions, they occur across a spectrum of settings, including the classroom, the dorm, downtown bars and restaurants, walking across campus, and at football games. This means, in addition to a focus on recruiting, which seems more or less present at the University, and the more recent emergence of institutionally-supported offices and programs which focus on the post-entrance experience of African American students, the University can and should turn its attention to the attitudes, actions, and

ideas of white students who have historically been and continue to be the majority of students on this campus. These students do not have universally identical negative attitudes towards people of different races and it would be absurd to assume so. However, the demographics of race on campus mean that if just one in ten white students do have racist attitudes and take action on them, that is more than sufficient to make the University environment an unpleasant one for the smaller numbers of students of color (African American and others) on campus. Much of the programming which focuses on issues of minority student retention centers on helping the minority student adapt to the majority environment. A legitimate commitment to student success must consider the possibilities for institutional change and take into account the impact that the institutions racial history and racial context have on the current climate (Hurtado 1992; Richardson & Fisk-Skinner 1990)

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Issues of causality and self-selection are always of concern in research on the impact of voluntary association membership. In order to correct for this, there is a need for longitudinal data which follows the student through their enrollment in college, the decision to join a Greek organization, and their subsequent experiences. Also, while the voluntary association/social capital literature has a lot to offer as far as illuminating conversations about student integration, the data collected for this project only allow for initial comparison. The results presented here provide ample support for continued exploration in this area.

The results of the research presented here are also from a very limited single-institution sample with a low response rate and therefore cannot be generalized beyond those boundaries. The extent to which the results of this research are consistent with and extend previous work

provide some support for the conclusions reached here but future work in this area must include a multi-institutional sample with several additional variables.

Future work will include different outcome measures previously shown to be products of voluntary association membership and significant in the college student experience, including feelings of efficacy and belonging and student civic and political engagement. In order to explore in greater depth the true impact of organizational characteristics on their members, including how the context matters, future work will also include multi-institutional data with both institutional and organizational measures as well as measures of individual experiences with the organizations, like length of membership and whether or not the students live in a chapter-owned house off-campus.

The findings indicate the existence of group boundaries under conditions which have previously been shown to contribute to the development of differing forms of social capital (for bounded solidarity – norms supporting the pursuit of group good; for closure – enforceable trust among group members). The data do not allow for the possibility of measuring the existence or levels of these specific forms. A third form of social capital, network generation, was found to be salient in earlier work and Greek organization membership can also be analyzed for its potential and potentially variable generation of valuable network resources for members. Future research will include measures of these types of social capital.

Several other variables which were not contained on the original survey instrument will be included in subsequent iterations of this work. Questions regarding student community service commitments should be added. This will allow for a more complete picture of student time commitments as well as address potential differences in organizational mission which manifest through member service participation. Based on the focus group interview results, open-ended

questions which ask about what students knew about the university before they arrived and if the students know of anyone on campus who they feel comfortable asking for help with a specific issue or concern will also be added.

This research focused broadly on differences in the organizational structure between predominantly white and historically black Greek systems on predominantly white campuses. While this is an important distinction to which little attention is paid in the current literature, there are certainly also differences *within* white and black Greek organizations based on their context, membership, history, age, and size. There are likely differences across campuses based on the overall level of Greek membership as a proportion of the student population as well, as was found to be the case in early work by Stannard and Bowers (1970).

Uncovering and understanding these differences and how they operate will require additional research at multiple levels. As was the case for this work, the first question to address is whether or not a difference actually exists, a question which is best answered using quantitative methods. More thorough and in-depth analysis will require the continued use of multiple methods including participant observation, in-depth interviews, social network analysis, as well as survey research.

The focus group findings presented here offer several possibilities for continued research. The discussions held by the students as well as their indication at the conclusion of the interviews that having the opportunity to discuss their feelings about the university was positive and even potentially therapeutic indicate that this type of research can be productive for both researchers and for institutions. However, in this research the focus group interviews were somewhat limited by their small size and number. The findings discussed are the general conclusions reached from analysis of the transcripts. As with any data, these generalizations are

not universally true for each and every participant. The findings discussed also only begin to tap the topics covered by students. One area which was not analyzed here was the different ways that different students and groups of students interpreted the meaning of identical questions. Nonetheless, the conversations with students across their organizational affiliation did clarify some of the differences identified in the survey results.

Utilizing the findings and frameworks provided by a grounding of this research in the literature on social capital and voluntary association membership will not only allow for a thicker theoretical understanding of how involvement functions to create student integration. It will also create the possibility for increased understanding of the mechanisms through which membership impacts students and therefore provide institutional administrators with information which will be useful in creating and facilitating the operation of organizations which most successfully create these possibilities for students.

Another important area for continued research which would pay attention to differences in organizations which are associated with ascribed characteristics is in the area of fraternity versus sorority effects across race. The statistical analyses presented here make very little comment on differences by gender across race and Greek status although previous research has indicated that this is important (Pike 2000). While the qualitative data allow for some preliminary comment on the impact of gender, this omission is in large part due to larger limitations with the available data and will be addressed in future work. Work by Berkowitz and Padavic (1999) found evidence of differences in mission, goals, and orientation of women in black versus white Greek organizations. This research can be expanded to look at how these differences influence outcomes associated with membership including those analyzed here and others of interest to

researchers in the areas of higher education and voluntary associations like civic, service, and political participation and engagement.

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Appendix A - Survey Instrument: Exploring the College Student Experience

This survey is designed to find out more about your college experiences. Your assistance is both needed and appreciated. Please **circle or provide** the best answer to each question.

A. College info

1) What are you majoring in? _____

2) Did you transfer to this university from another college or university? Yes No

3) Approximately how many hours per week do you spend studying?

0-1 2-5 6-9 10-14 15 or more

4) After completing college, do you plan to attend any type of post-college graduate program?

Yes No Don't Know

5) If yes, what type of graduate program are you interested in (place a check next to the appropriate category)? If no, please skip this question.

- Medical school
- Law school
- Business school
- Veterinary school
- Dental school
- Other graduate program (please specify) _____

6) Do you work during the school year? Yes No

7) Is this job on or off campus?

On campus Off-campus Both (e.g. a job on campus and a job off campus)

8) If yes, how many hours per week do you work?

1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21 or more

9) We are interested in what, if any, activities you participate in outside of class. Please identify any and all extracurricular activities you participate in by selecting one of the options below.

Activity	Do not participate	Participate 1-5 hrs per wk	Participate 6-10 hrs per wk	Participate 11-15 hrs per wk	Participate 16-20 hrs per wk	Participate 21 or more hrs per wk
A. Athletics – Intercollegiate						
B. Athletics – Intramural						

C. College Publications (newspaper/yearbook)						
D. College Productions or Performances (theater/music)						
E. Professional or Departmental Clubs						

Activity (continued)	Do not participate	Participate 1-5 hrs per wk	Participate 6-10 hrs per wk	Participate 11-15 hrs per wk	Participate 16-20 hrs per wk	Participate 21 or more hrs per wk
F. Hobbies or social clubs (e.g. hiking, dancing)						
G. Fraternity or sorority membership						
H. Religious organizations						
I. Residence Hall Activities (hall council, social activities)						
J. Student Government						
10b. Other – please specify:						

11) If you are a member of a fraternity or sorority, please indicate which, if any, national organization this group is a member of (if you are not a member, please proceed to question 12; if you are a member please answer and proceed to questions 14).

- NPC - the governing body for National Panhellenic sororities
- NIC - the governing body for National Interfraternal organizations
- NPHC - the umbrella organization for historically black fraternities

and sororities

The organization is not affiliated with any national umbrella organization

Other (please specify) _____

12) If you are not currently a member of an NPHC (historically black Greek) organization, do you ever attend events or parties sponsored by these organizations?

Yes No

13) If yes, how often in the last month have you attended such an event? _____

B. College experiences

The next set of questions is designed to get more information about your feelings about UGA. Please select the response that most closely matches your feelings on the subject.

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree N = Neutral D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

<u>Experiences with Faculty</u>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14) There is very little contact between professors and students outside the classroom.					
15) Most faculty members here are sensitive to the interests, needs, and aspirations of students.					
16) At least one faculty member here has had a strong impact on my intellectual development.					
17) Faculty members here are good teachers.					
18) If a student seems to be doing poorly, this university goes out of its way to help the student stay in school.					
19) It is easy to develop close relationships with faculty members on this campus.					
20) I have often socialized informally with a faculty member.					
21) I have often discussed personal problems and concerns with a faculty member.					
22) I have often discussed career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.					
<u>Perceptions of Campus Climate</u>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23) This institution makes an effort to attract students of diverse ethnic backgrounds.					
24) I often feel discriminated against because of my race by faculty members on this campus.					
25) There is little or no racial discrimination on this campus.					
26) There is administrative support of minority group organizations and programs on this campus.					
27) Faculty members on this campus are sensitive to issues that are important to students of my race.					
28) I often feel discriminated against by students on this campus whose race is different from my own.					

29) There is open discussion of racial issues on this campus.					
30) The administration on this campus discriminates against students of my race.					
<u>Satisfaction with the University</u>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31) I am satisfied with the academic reputation of this school.					
32) I am happy with the quality of the professors I've had here.					
33) I've had difficulty finding good friends at this school.					
34) I am satisfied with the sports and recreational facilities available to students.					
35) I have had plenty of opportunities to meet people with new ideas at this university.					
36) I feel that I have learned a lot during my time at this university.					
37) I am satisfied with the social life available on this campus for students of my race.					
38) I am pleased with my decision to come to school here.					
39) After graduation, I plan to return for alumni and other events at this university.					
40) I am satisfied with the student-faculty relations at this university.					
41) I sometimes wish I had decided to go to school somewhere else.					
42) If I had to choose, I'd rather be home than here.					

C. Background info

43) What high school did you graduate from?

_____ School Name City, State
44) Is this a public or private high school? [] Public [] Private

45) How would you describe the racial make-up of your high school student body?

Mostly white Mostly black Equally mixed Other _____

46) What was your high school class rank?

Top 10% 11-25% 26-50% 51-75%
Bottom 76-100%

47) What was your high school GPA? _____ out of 4.0

48) What is your father's occupation? _____

49) Did your father attend college? Yes No Don't know

50) If yes, did he attend this University? Yes No Don't know

51) What is your mother's occupation? _____

52) Did your mother attend college? Yes No Don't know

53) If yes, did she attend this University? Yes No Don't know

54) What is your current year in school?

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other (please specify)

D. Optional Questions/Additional Comments

How would you describe your overall experience at this university?

What suggestions or recommendations would you make to improve the campus?

Do you have any additional comments about the topics covered in this survey?

Appendix B – Web survey email notification text

Initial Contact:

Subject: Student Organization Research

Hello!

You have been selected to participate in a survey about the impact of membership in student organizations on the college student experience. In a few days you will receive an email that contains a unique id, a password, and a link to complete the survey online.

After completion of the survey you will have the opportunity to be entered in a drawing to win one of two \$50 gift certificates to local businesses. Your participation will allow you to provide feedback to the Office of Student Life Studies and the Office of the Dean of Students about your experiences at UGA and your feelings about faculty, staff, students, and the social life at the university. Your participation is important and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Stephanie M. McClure
Principal Investigator

First notice:

Subject: Let us hear from you!

As you probably remember, you have been selected to participate in a study of the impact of membership in student organizations on the college student experience. In this research project we are requesting information about your specific and general feelings about the university, as well as the activities, social and extracurricular, that you engage in. Your participation will be greatly appreciated but is completely voluntary. You can decline to answer any question, and can discontinue your participation at any time if you so choose.

Survey participants will be given the opportunity to win one of two \$50 gift certificates to local businesses, as a thank you for your help with this research. Winners will be notified before the end of the Spring semester.

To respond to this survey, go to the web site below (simply

click on the URL or copy and paste it into your web browser). Once there, enter the following ID and password (all lowercase). Please respond to the survey by March 15th. Students who do not submit the survey will be contacted three more times to encourage them to participate. Students who do not wish to participate may submit a blank survey in order to avoid being contacted further.

Your ID: 0003
Survey Password: esce
Site link: <http://sls.vpsa.uga.edu/surveys/ecse/consent.asp>

Thank you so much for your participation.
Sincerely,
Stephanie M. McClure
Principal Investigator

Follow-up contacts:

Subject: Don't forget; we want to hear from you
As you probably remember, you have been selected to participate in a study of the impact of membership in student organizations on the college student experience. We have yet to receive your important feedback and we don't want to miss out on hearing from you. In this study we are requesting information about your specific and general feelings about the university, as well as the activities, social and extracurricular, that you engage in. Your participation will be greatly appreciated but is completely voluntary. You can decline to answer any question, and can discontinue your participation at any time if you so choose. Also remember that survey participants will be given the opportunity to win one of two \$50 gift certificates to local businesses, as a thank you for your help with this research. Winners will be notified before the end of the Spring semester. To respond to this survey, go to the web site below (simply click on the URL or copy and paste it into your web browser). Once there, enter the following ID and password (all lowercase). Please respond to the survey by March 29th. Students who do not submit the survey will be contacted two more times to encourage them to participate. Students who do not wish to participate may submit a blank survey in order to avoid being contacted further.

Your ID: 0003
Survey Password: esce
Site link: <http://sls.vpsa.uga.edu/surveys/ecse/consent.asp>

Thank you so much for your participation.
Sincerely,
Stephanie M. McClure
Principal Investigator

Appendix C – Mail contact cover letter

April 1, 2004

University Student
111 College Way
Athens, GA 30602

Dear <<student name>>:

As you probably remember, you have been selected to participate in a study of the impact of membership in student organizations on the college student experience. In this research project we are requesting information about your specific and general feelings about the university, as well as the activities, social and extracurricular, that you engage in. Your participation will be greatly appreciated but is completely voluntary. You can decline to answer any question, and can discontinue your participation at any time if you so choose.

Your participation will allow you to provide feedback to the Office of Student Life Studies and the Office of the Dean of Students about your experiences at UGA and your feelings about faculty, staff, students, and the social life at the university.

Survey participants will be given the opportunity to win one of two \$50 gift certificates to local businesses, as a thank you for your help with this research. Winners will be notified by email before the end of the Spring semester (if you do not use your UGA account, please provide an appropriate email address at the bottom of the consent form).

Please complete the enclosed survey along with the signed consent form and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by April 29th. If the survey is not returned by this date, you may receive a second mail request.

Thank you so much for your participation.

Sincerely,

Stephanie M. McClure
Principal Investigator
114 Baldwin Hall
Athens, GA 30602-1611
smclure@uga.edu

Appendix D – Focus group interview protocol

Thank you all for joining me today. I appreciate your willingness to come and engage in a conversation with myself and some of your fellow students regarding your experiences at the University.

I will open by asking you to spend a few minutes looking over the following questions <<I will distribute survey here>> and responding to them.

We will then discuss these questions, paying particular attention to why you responded the way that you did and what other aspects of your experience here at the University contributed to your overall feelings about the campus and your time here.

Important survey questions:

How satisfied? Why?

What activities have you been involved with?

Do you plan to return as an alum? Would you encourage other friends and/or family members to attend?

Additional questions:

Why did you decide to attend UGA? What kind of information/opinion did you have about the university before you came?

How has your experience here changed that view, if at all? What experiences contributed to this?

What have been your most significant experiences here? Positive and negative (leaving aside for a moment the parking difficulties).

How much do you feel a part of general campus life, as far as student activities and government are concerned?

If you had a particular issue you felt the university should take action on, do you feel like you know someone you could contact who would listen and be willing to help?