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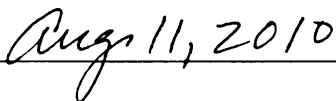
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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE MANIFEST FUNCTIONS, LATENT FUNCTIONS,  
AND DYSFUNCTIONS OF FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES**

By

Roderick D. Thomas

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **AN EXAMINATION OF THE MANIFEST FUNCTIONS, LATENT FUNCTIONS, AND DYSFUNCTIONS OF FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES**

By

Roderick D. Thomas

Fraternity and sorority members have been found to participate in activities that are indicative of their professed manifest functions as well as others that are contradictory to those goals. For these reasons, this research was done in an effort to identify influencing factors for members' activity. Past studies have reported evidence of deleterious activity without making conscious attempts to identify factors that may have influenced members to participate in such activity. This study suggests that dysfunctional activity occurs as a result of disregard for either manifest functions or latent functions. The concepts of pluralistic ignorance and false consensus are also proposed as potential contributors to dysfunctional activity. As a result of this investigation, statistical data has been produced which indicates relationships between fraternity and sorority members' attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, and activity. Odds ratio calculations indicate an increased probability of participating in latent function activity as fraternity or sorority members' latent function attitudes increase and also when they experience manifest function pluralistic ignorance. This knowledge deems prior expectations and perceptions of others' to be critical factors to consider when developing policies related to fraternities and sororities. The study concludes with a moral assessment declaring that fraternities and sororities have been immoral as institutions and the members have been immoral as individuals because they have all used people merely as means to their personal ends.

This research is dedicated to my late grandmother Luviner Billups. She nurtured my passion for research and was unrelenting in her support for my aspirations. I know she's looking down proudly upon her grandson—the doctor.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MANIFEST FUNCTIONS, LATENT FUNCTIONS, AND DYSFUNCTIONS OF FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES**

#### **Introduction**

This dissertation has been developed as a supplement to existing literature related to the observed activity of fraternity and sorority members. Rather than discuss manifest function activity and dysfunctional activity as distinct extremes, this study introduces the concept of latent functions as an explanatory factor to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of observed contradictions in members' activity. Collective patterns of activity were determined by investigating the relationship between members' self-reported attitudes and activity as they pertain to the manifest functions and latent functions of fraternities and sororities. The investigation was inspired by the notion that equal respect for members' personal values as well as the ideals of their respective institutions is conducive to increased functionality for the members and organizations. Concepts in social stratification, social psychology, and moral philosophy have been integrated to offer a holistic approach to the research. Theories in social stratification provide a framework for describing collective patterns of member activity; social psychology offers insight into members' impetus for engaging in certain types of activity; and moral philosophy serves as means for making an ultimate determination of functionality. The overall objective of this study is to suggest ideas to consider for implementing more practical organizational policies that could potentially result in more conforming member activity.

### **Manifest Functions as Publicly Professed**

When asked to provide some form of rationale, defense, or explanation for choosing to take membership in a fraternity or sorority, members tend to respond by declaring a manifest function—"commitment to service" ("Alpha Kappa Alpha," 1988). Although the provided services may take various forms, positive efforts geared to promote advancement or uplift for individuals and groups are verbally professed as principal motivations for joining these organizations. For instance, it is not uncommon for black fraternities and sororities to provide support for disadvantaged communities ("Sigma Gamma Rho," 1991) while their white counterparts, on the other hand, strive to facilitate the synthesis from high school to college for incoming freshmen (DeParle, 1988). The professing of manifest functions by fraternity and sorority members is often supported by recorded history indicating decades, even centuries in some cases, of group participation in activities such as blood drives, voter registration drives, charitable donations, scholarship assistance, as well as many other constructive projects ("Alpha Kappa Alpha," 1988; "Alpha Phi Alpha," 1989; "Fraternity to Remember," 1996; "Kappa Alpha Psi," 1990; Marshall, 1990; "Omega Psi Phi," 1993; "Sigma Gamma Rho," 1991).

### **Dysfunctions as Observed Activity**

Taking the above factors into consideration, it seems ironic that many people and groups are opposed to the existence of fraternities and sororities. Some people, in many ways, even consider them to be counterproductive to advancement or uplift (Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996). These controversies are sometimes explained as the result of fraternity and sorority members preaching one philosophy—emphasizing

manifest functions—while concomitantly participating in activity that has proven to be dysfunctional. It has also been assumed that fraternities and sororities have internal divisions amongst members and, therefore, some members act in accordance with the professed manifest functions while others tend to act in ways that are dysfunctional (Shea, 1994). There is support for this perspective when binge drinking, hazing, sexual assault, and deaths associated with fraternities and sororities are taken into consideration. There have been noted patterns that indicate that some members take part in these activities while others do not. Due to widespread concern and interest in restructuring fraternities and sororities, this phenomenon—manifest functions versus dysfunctions of fraternity and sorority members' activity—must be examined thoroughly in order to provide more insight as to why such contradictions exist within these organizations. Furthermore, there is a need to understand factors that influence members' activity.

Although published articles have provided evidence of deviant behavior amongst fraternity and sorority members, they have been, for the most part, one-dimensional. They have focused primarily on the dysfunctions that result from such behavior. This study does not intend to deny that this information is important for public notice. However, it does suggest that a deeper understanding of the facts is needed. This suggestion is grounded on the premise that having notice of existing problems without thoroughly understanding underlying causes is futile. Past research has provided the public with notice of problems that exist within fraternities and sororities. This study intends to extend earlier research by offering a thorough understanding of the underlying causes of those problems.

### **Latent Functions Proposed as a Middle Ground**

This study contends that earlier reports are less than thorough because they lack a pertinent perspective. It argues that they do not consider latent function attitudes and their relationship to fraternity and sorority members' activity. Latent function attitudes are connected to internally embraced ideals that tend to link members under some form of perceived commonality. Unlike manifest functions, latent functions are not usually professed in general public discussions (Farley, 1994). Nevertheless, latent functions tend to play a central role in members' perceptions and expectations of their fraternities or sororities (Biernat, Green, & Vescio, 1996). An examination of latent function attitudes and their relationship to fraternity and sorority members' activity could possibly offer internal insight, from the members' point-of-view, for understanding why they chose to take part in either prescribed or proscribed activity.

With manifest functions being those that are obvious and openly stated and latent functions being those that are informally embraced, it is apparent that a clear distinction must be made between the two types. Using education as an example, its manifest function would be teaching children about subjects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. On the other hand, the latent function of education would be baby-sitting: school relieves parents of the responsibility of taking care of their children. Thus, the parents are free to pursue other efforts or simply take a break from childcare. In other words, although the latent function of education is not publicly espoused, it serves a social need nonetheless. To elaborate further, take yard sales as another example:

A yard sale performs the important function of allowing things that would otherwise go to waste to be used and, for the seller, to be turned into a little extra cash. These are the functions of a yard sale that readily come to mind—in other words, its manifest functions. Consider, though, some latent functions of yard sales. For one, they offer people an enjoyable outing, an opportunity to get out of the house. In addition, they may perform the important social function of enabling people to see one another on a regular basis (Farley, 1994, p. 56).

Similarly, in the case of fraternities and sororities, members may converge to engage in manifest functions (e.g., community service, uplift, etc.) while also appreciating the benefits of latent functions (e.g., group solidarity, group uniformity, social networking, etc.).

### **Pluralistic Ignorance and False Consensus as Potential Contributors**

In addition to exploring fraternity and sorority members' collective patterns of activity, this study also considers theoretical concepts in social psychology that seek to explain factors that motivate individuals to engage in such activity. Allport (1924) contends that an individual would think it's absurd to question a position that they assume their fellow group members support even if he or she does not personally embrace the position. When the individual's assumption about others' support is inaccurate, a situation social psychologists call pluralistic ignorance occurs. The individual's erroneous assumption results in him or her participating in activity that most of the group disfavors. For this reason, pluralistic ignorance is also being investigated as a potential contributor to dysfunctional activity.

Misperceptions about the positions taken by others' could also contribute to dysfunctional activity if an individual engages in activity because he or she erroneously assumes that other people support his or her own personal position when in fact they do

not. Gilovich (1990) and other social psychologists refer to that scenario as false consensus. Individuals having a personal interest in dysfunctional activity may refrain from indulging if they're aware that the majority of their peers disapprove of the activity. But misguided by false consensus they follow through feeling justified in doing so.

### **Research Objective**

The purpose of this project is to examine manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus and their relationship to fraternity and sorority members' activity.

### **Significance of the Study**

By highlighting manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus and their relationship to fraternity and sorority members' activity, it is presumed that a greater overall understanding would be gained in regard to the structure of these organizations. More importantly, further insight could better explain why members tend to participate in dysfunctional activity. Thus, information resulting from this study will benefit fraternity and sorority members, the organizations themselves, and also non-members.

By having a better understanding of factors that have been influential in past activity, fraternity and sorority members are able to make more rational and logical activity in the future. Past choices were probably based on inaccurate assumptions or tradition rather than sound reasoning. Results from this study could give fraternity and sorority members a means for examining and interpreting activities that have taken place

within their respective organizations and ultimately allow them to utilize sound judgment when making decisions in regard to future activity.

Fraternities and sororities have much to gain from this research because the information provided can aid in their assessment of members' activity. Having an understanding of influential factors will benefit the organizations in their policy development and intervention methods. Furthermore, this understanding will help them to become more effective in their screening process when selecting prospective candidates for membership.

Non-members will also benefit from this study. Individuals contemplating membership in a fraternity or sorority will benefit from the availability of the additional information. It creates opportunities for them to make informed decisions when making their selections. There are also individuals who may have sought membership with an organization, but, for one reason or another, may not have been accepted. The rejection that they experienced may have lowered their self-esteem or affected them in some other negative ways. In such instances, the results of this study could possibly reverse that effect. This newly acquired information may help them appreciate their rejection and thereby maintain dignity.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Fraternity and sorority members tend to openly declare that manifest functions (e.g., commitment to service) are their primary motivation for taking membership in their respective organizations. There are some critics who object to this declaration though. Critics have even gone so far as to label these organizations as counterproductive.

Nevertheless, these labels can be hard to accept when evidence of positive activity is taken into consideration. On the other hand, supporting evidence has also been produced in favor of the arguments made by the critics. Fraternity and sorority members have been participants in dysfunctional activity such as binge drinking, sexual assault, and murder.

There is no disputing the facts. Fraternity and sorority members have been found to participate in activity that is indicative of their professed manifest functions as well as others that are contradictory to those goals. For these reasons, research is needed in order to identify influencing factors for members' activity. Judging the functional value of fraternities and sororities without first validly and reliably researching the factors that influence them could result in erroneous assumptions. Although earlier studies have sought to examine these issues, they have, all too often, been myopic in their perspectives. Many of these studies have reported evidence of deleterious activity without making conscious attempts to identify factors that may have influenced members to participate in such activity.

This study examines manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, and their relationship to fraternity and sorority members' activity in order to offer greater overall understanding in regard to the structure of fraternities and sororities. The acquired results could potentially benefit fraternity and sorority members, their respective organizations, and also non-members.

The second chapter of this dissertation explores social stratification through Robert Merton's (1968) theory of structural functionalism. The five collective responses that he deems characteristic of all social institutions are used to formulate a theoretical



framework for gaining insight in regard to attitudes and activity of fraternity and sorority members. Understanding their collective responses to the dominant goals of their organizations (i.e., institutions)--as well as their responses to the accepted means for accomplishing those goals--is expected to result in an increased awareness of issues that give rise to dysfunctional activity.

Chapter three delves into the notions of pluralistic ignorance and false consensus. Social psychologists have investigated these concepts in an effort to explain why there is a tendency for individuals to engage in activity that either conflicts with their personal values or those held by a majority of their cohorts. These inquiries offer additional insight into fraternity members' attitudes and activity. Merton's (1968) theory on structural functionalism provides plausible explanations for the collective activity of fraternity and sorority members. And theories in social psychology complement those explanations by positing reasons for their participation as individuals. More specifically, research on pluralistic ignorance and false consensus has revealed evidence indicating that inaccurate perceptions about the attitudes of fellow group members often motivates individuals to engage in activity that they would disfavor otherwise.

Chapter four explores pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, and Merton's (1968) theory on structural functionalism through empirical research. Major and related hypotheses are tested through twelve specific hypotheses. Combined, they speculate relationships between attitudes, perceptions of others' attitudes, and fraternity and sorority members' activity. Independent and dependent variables are identified; concepts are

defined; the universe and sample is described; and the source of data is disclosed.

Essentially, the overall research design is explained in this chapter.

Chapter five provides a summary of the research results; conclusions derived from that summary; and implications for future research and policy changes. It begins with a description of the demographic makeup of the sample population and then proceeds to expound upon procedures and results related to the tested hypotheses. Twenty-six tables are provided throughout the chapter to elucidate discussed data. The twelve specific hypotheses are either accepted or rejected in accordance with the test outcomes. Chapter six provides a general summary, conclusion, limitations, and implications for future research.

Chapter seven transcends the research conclusions proffered in the previous chapter by making a moral assessment. Immanuel Kant's (1785) proposition for a supreme principle of morality (i.e., categorical imperative) is taken as a frame of reference to measure moral appropriateness. Evidence discussed in chapters two through six is then filtered through specific formulations of the categorical imperative in search of violations. Personal accounts of experiences as a fraternity member are also divulged for additional insight. By invoking moral judgment in the final chapter, this study transitions from scientific observation to ethical adjudication. Thus, theories in social stratification and social psychology offer means to better understand things that fraternity and sorority members have done while theories in moral philosophy help to determine what they ought to do. Altogether the ideas raised throughout this dissertation are offered as

contributions to promote decreases in dysfunctionality for fraternity and sorority members, their respective organizations, and society in general.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM**

#### **Introduction**

Theories in social stratification attempt to explain concepts and patterns of division that facilitate social order. Robert Merton's (1968) theory of social structure fell within the functionalist school of thought. However, many of his concepts contrasted with those of traditional functional theorists. While traditional functionalists tended to suggest that all institutions within society served purposes that were ultimately beneficial and therefore conducive to the harmony and structure of society, Merton (1968) had additional perspectives. He suggested that some institutions within society could actually be dysfunctional.

#### **Merton's Theory of Structural Functionalism**

Merton (1968) suggested that dysfunctional institutions could be identified within a society by examining the relationship between a society's dominant goals and the accepted means for acquiring or achieving those goals. He posited that individuals' collective responses to societal institutions often serve as reliable units of analysis for providing indication of that institution's level of functionality or dysfunctionality. Furthermore, individuals respond to societal institutions in systematic patterns. To be more specific, he suggested that individuals would respond to societal structuring and functioning in one of five ways: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, or rebellion (Merton, 1968).

Merton (1968) contrasted with psychologists who suggested that social structures were established to control man's natural instincts for gratification and, therefore, "conformity is the result of a utilitarian calculus or of unreasoned conditioning" (Merton, 1968, p. 132). He questioned this assumption by inquiring about deviant behavior varying in shapes and patterns within different social structures. He declared that one

must still learn why social structures generate circumstances that produce “normal or expected responses of infringement” (Merton, 1968, p. 132). His primary argument was that there is a need to discover how some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons to engage in non-conforming rather than conforming conduct. He suggested that they responded this way, not because of individual, biological reasons, but because they were responding “normally to the cultural situation that they found themselves living in” (Merton, 1968, p.134). Merton’s (1968) research was not very concerned with the individual’s behavior of deviancy, but instead with patterns of people who carry out similar acts. In essence, he suggested that some behavior that had been labeled as deviant was just as normal and commonplace as conforming behavior.

### **Dominant Goals and Accepted Means**

In his analysis of patterns of deviancy, Merton (1968) mentioned two elements of social structure that were of immediate importance. The first was the “culturally defined goals” which were “ordered in some hierarchy of value” (Merton, 1968, p. 186). Some of these things may have been directly related to the biological drives of man, but they were not totally determined by them. The second element was that which “defines, regulates, and controls the acceptable modes of reaching out for these goals” (Merton, 1968, p. 187). These modes were not always the most efficient. In fact, the disallowed procedures were sometimes the most effective for a particular group. Nevertheless, they were prohibited through methods such as taboos, sacred norms, and laws. The criteria for accepting these modes was not based on technical efficiency, but instead on the values that were promoted by the dominant group. (Dominance may exist due to the number of people, amount of power or the ability to produce propaganda.) The chosen mode for striving toward cultural goals was always limited by institutionalized norms.

## **Five Response Patterns**

### **Conformity**

Although cultural goals and institutionalized norms operated jointly, the relationship was not always one of harmony. Groups could sometimes move to either extreme. They could either focus only on the technical efficiencies for striving toward goals, thereby “innovating” alternative means for accomplishing the goals, or they could become so involved with the practice that they did not realize that it was no longer instrumental and they, in turn, fell into a mode of “ritualism” (Merton, 1968, p.193). These two extremes were at odds with the state of equilibrium-“conformity” (Merton, 1968, p.193)-which placed an equal emphasis on cultural goals and institutionalized practices which ultimately formed stable societies. This equilibrium could only be maintained if those who conformed to the constraints achieved satisfaction. Conformity is a stable adaptation to both cultural goals and institutionalized means. There was competition that developed, but as long as some rewards were offered for adherence to the constraints and the focus was not excluded to the competition, satisfaction was achieved from mere participation in the competition. Without this type of order, deviant behavior would likely result (Merton, 1968, p.193).

### **Innovation**

Innovation “occurred when the individual had assimilated the cultural emphasis upon the goal without equally internalizing the institutional norms governing ways and means for its attainment” (Merton, 1968, p.194). There was a feature of the American social structure that predisposed people for this type of adaptation. There was often a thin line between “praiseworthy salesmanship and penitentiary offense” (Merton, 1968, p. 196) until a court decided. One who had achieved success outside of regulated means was often reluctantly admired, privately. White-collar crimes either went unnoticed or unprosecuted because of the status of the offenders (Merton, 1968). “It appears from

analysis that the greatest pressures toward deviation are exerted upon the lower strata” (Merton, 1968, p. 200). For this reason, it was expected for an individual to commit crimes when the legitimate means for success or advancement were not available.

The status of unskilled labor and the consequent low income could not readily compete with the high income achieved from vice, rackets, and crime. Despite persisting open-class ideologies, advancement toward the success-goal was relatively rare and notably difficult for those armed with little formal education and few economic resources (Merton, 1968, p. 201).

When there was no room for vertical mobility, only advancement within a particular caste, the “cardinal American virtue, ‘ambition,’ promoted a cardinal American vice, ‘deviant behavior’” (Merton, 1968, p. 202). This theory was also used to explain discrepancies in crime and poverty. Some poorer countries had less crime. The key was that country’s social structure. “One should not, therefore, expect a linear correlation between crime and poverty” (Merton, 1968, p. 199). A linear correlation resulted in the American social structure because emphasis was placed on success as the dominant goal. People would usually see the discrepancy between the ideology of cultural goals and their inability to reach them. This realization sometimes resulted in rebellion, but more often than not, ended up in their attributing it to mysticism by basing their status on fortune, chance, and luck. This was how well governed societies were run. The promoted concept of luck allowed the unsuccessful to preserve their self-esteem in the face of failure (Merton, 1968, p.195).

### **Ritualism**

Ritualism was identified by statements like “I’m not sticking my neck out,” “I’m playing it safe,” or “Don’t aim high and you won’t be disappointed” (Merton, 1968, p.195). It was, in short, the mode of adaptation of individuals seeking a private escape from the dangers and frustrations that seemed to be inherent in competing for major cultural goals. There was an abandoning of the goals and a clinging, all the more closely,

to the safe routines and the institutional norms. This could be more frequently expected among lower-middle class Americans. This group tended to be content with their status and opted to avoid taking risks that may have seemed to be threatening to their status.

### **Retreatism**

Merton (1968) considered conformity to be the most frequent form of adaptation and, on the other hand, he considered retreatism to be the least. Retreatism was the rejection of both the cultural goals and the accepted institutional means. “People who adapted or maladapted in this fashion were, strictly speaking, in the society, but not of it. They were often identified as vagrants, outcasts, drug addicts, and tramps” (Merton, 1968, p. 207). This came about by internalizing the limitations set by the institution’s accepted means, therefore self-prohibiting the use of illegal means and not having the access or ability to accomplish cultural goals through the legitimate means. Although their positions may have seemed harmless, especially when compared with that of those who were innovative, others within society would not willingly accept them. According to Merton (1968), retreatists were seen as non-productive to the society, and they brought about questions in regard to the structure of the society itself. For these reasons, there were unrelenting efforts made to “revitalize their dead aspirations” (Merton, 1968, p. 207).

### **Rebellion**

Merton (1968) described rebellion as a complete rejection of the social structure altogether. He illustrated the rebel as one who would not only withdraw from the present structure but would encourage a totally new structure, based on a new myth or new concept. “It is, above all, the renegade who, though himself successful, renounces the prevailing values that become the target of greatest hostility among those in rebellion.



For the rebel not only puts the values into question, as does the out-group, but he signifies that the unity of the group is broken” (Merton, 1968, p. 209).

Merton (1968) made a deliberate effort to distinguish between “ressentiment” and rebellion. He reserved the term resentment to describe individuals who rejected the social structure either because they were not accepted by the social structure or they were unable to adequately adjust to the structure. It involved a “fox and the sour grapes” (Merton, 1968, p. 210) pattern. After struggling to reach a grapevine without success, a disappointed fox declared that the grapes were probably sour anyway. Similarly, in resentment, “one condemns what one secretly craves; in rebellion, one condemns the craving itself” (Merton, 1968, p. 210). For this reason, rebels were usually found in a rising class and not the lower strata.

A system in which the focus turned to accomplish the goal rather than accomplishing the goal while abiding by the rules ended up in a state of chaos and disorder. The American social structure was used as a paradigm, and it was declared that the American Dream has no stopping point because there is always a want for 25% more (Merton, 1968). This gave indication of a society that was bombarded on every side by precepts that affirmed the rights or, often, the duty of retaining the goal even in the face of repeated frustration. Primary institutions such as family, church, and school served as means for keeping individuals disciplined and intact even when goals remained elusively beyond reach. Prestigious representatives (those who had their piece of the pie) also reinforced this cultural emphasis. Schools were the “official agencies” (Merton, 1968, p. 212) for passing these values on. “American culture admonishes quitting. Even low aim is a crime” (Merton, 1968, p. 211).

## **Summary**

Robert Merton (1968) considered individuals' collective decisions to either comply with or deviate from social norms to be predictable. He claimed that such predictions could take place once the culturally defined goals and acceptable means for attaining those goals were identified. Then, by knowing where the individuals place their highest priority, it could be possible to scientifically determine the likelihood that a person would take one of five positions within a social structure.

The positions that individuals have taken can be recognized by their actions within their respective social structures. They have engaged in activities that ranged from an equal acceptance of the goals and the means for attaining those goals to a complete rejection of both. Although Merton (1968) conveniently described American social structure in order to better conceptualize his theory, he explained the principles as being universal and applicable to any social structure.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: PLURALISTIC IGNORANCE AND FALSE CONSENSUS**

#### **Introduction**

There is a tendency for individuals to have preconceived notions about the thoughts and beliefs that prevail amongst their respective group members. It's probably even safe to assume that some level of shared understandings and expectations are absolutely necessary for social beings to effectively co-exist. When a group of people share a similar sense of ideals, and therefore understand the values that are held by the group, it seems likely that they are then in an optimum position to cooperate in making decisions in the best interest of the group. So then, it would seem to follow that individual group members should also benefit from the collective understanding that exists within the group. All of this is, of course, contingent upon individuals having an accurate understanding of their respective groups' values; and it is also contingent on groups having an accurate understanding of the values held by its individual members.

What are the implications of inaccurate perceptions between groups and their respective members? The above discussion assumes that shared, accurate, understandings benefit individual group members, as well as groups, as a whole. If that assumption is correct, does it follow that misunderstandings between members and groups are deleterious? Some scholars, particularly in the field of social psychology, think "yes." Inaccurate perceptions of groups by their members, and vice versa, have been studied sporadically since the 1930s. Floyd Allport (1924) offered one of the earliest publications on this phenomenon. In a discussion titled "impression of universality," which primarily focused on group behavior, Allport posited that individuals imagine others around them as equally taking part in reacting to a common crowd object. This being the case, these imagined cohorts are also believed to be accepting of various ideals that are promoted to, or within, the group. "Since the idea as presented is assumed by me

to be accepted by all present, it would seem absurd for me to question it” (Allport, 1924). If an individual publicly endorses a value that she privately rejects, as a result of erroneously assuming that her fellow group members endorse it, when they in fact do not support it either, it is quite possible for destructive results to occur for both the individual and the group. Furthermore, results could be equally destructive when members inaccurately overestimate the amount of agreement that other group members share in common with them. In the former case, groups could collectively participate in activities that few, if any, of its members actually support. In the latter case, individual group members could participate in activities—assuming they have substantial support of fellow members to do so when, in fact, they do not.

### **Pluralistic Ignorance**

Since Allport’s (1924) initial proposition on the impression of universality, more research on the subject has been conducted and a more formal term, “pluralistic ignorance,” has emerged. Although these studies extend over a span of eight decades, researchers in the field unanimously maintain that pluralistic ignorance has been greatly understudied. So then, it makes perfect sense that much of the performed research on the matter has sought to emphasize just how strong the detrimental effects of pluralistic ignorance could be on individual, institutional, and national levels.

Allport’s (1924) impression of universality touched on one of the major tenets of pluralistic ignorance when he suggested that individuals imagine that others react to a common object and accept it as intended. Two major points that he neglected to consider, however, are the direction of causation that the individual applies to himself as opposed to his fellow group members and the validity of his perception. Allport’s (1924) successors have extended his concept by suggesting that pluralistic ignorance results when an individual inaccurately assumes that others support certain activities or ideals because their personal views are aligned with the normal intention of those activities or

ideals even though his personal views deviate from the norm in spite of the fact that he also offers public support for the activities or ideals (Korte, 1972; Kunda, 1999; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller & Prentice, 1994; O’Gorman, 1975, 1986; O’Gorman & Garry, 1976). Recognizing the causal direction that the individual subjected to pluralistic ignorance attributes to his views and activities in contrast with those of his fellow group members is important because it prompts two critical questions that social psychologists have attempted to address: (1) Why does the individual consider his personal position to be a deviation, rather than the norm, when his public actions are apparently the same as his fellows? And (2) why does the individual inaccurately assess the views of his fellow group members?

### **Personality Traits**

Miller and McFarland (1987) look to personality traits in their attempt to explain why individuals engaged in pluralistic ignorance tend to perceive their private views as deviant. More specifically, they suggested that individuals typically tend to believe that they possess higher degrees of traits that are related to social inhibition than other people. From this point the researchers then go on to predict that individuals’ self-diagnosis of increased social inhibition—in cases of personal embarrassment—leads them to further assume that others who behave in ways that are similar to their own, do so for reasons other than the reasons which motivated their own behavior.

### **Heuristics**

At this point Miller and McFarland (1987) have activated the two critical “why” questions (Why individuals tend to assume that they’re deviants? And why do they make errors in assessing the view of others?), however, a sufficient answer has yet to be

provided. In search of a more sufficient explanation, they delve into a theory of social cognition by suggesting “individuals have more data relevant to the existence of internal traits in self than in others” (Miller and McFarland, 1987, p. 301). This then suggests that individuals call on heuristics to explain their personal emotions at a given moment in the same way that they use them to explain other, external, phenomenon that they may witness or experience. And since heuristics are by their very nature inclined to promote statistical fallacies, it makes perfect sense that assessments of self-other personality traits, grounded on the logical foundation of heuristics, would result in erroneous conclusions.

### **False Consensus**

False consensus is similar to pluralistic ignorance in the sense that individuals’ decisions to engage in behaviors or offer support are based on inaccurate assumptions about the way others feel toward the issue in question. In another sense, false consensus works in ways that are very different in comparison to pluralistic ignorance. According to Gilovich (1990), the false consensus effect refers to a tendency for people's own habits, values, and behavioral responses to bias their estimates of the commonness of the habits, values, and actions of the general population. In essence, the individual influenced by false consensus errs in assuming more shared positive support for ideals that are personally embraced while the individual influenced by pluralistic ignorance assume more shared positive support amongst others for ideals that they personally oppose.

## **Subjective Construal**

False consensus effect was first observed in 1943. Researchers noticed that people holding a particular attitude tend to estimate that higher proportions of others share their attitudes than people who do not hold that attitude. (Fabrigar and Krosnick, 1995, p. 469) Gilovich (1990) conducted research to determine if false consensus is partly due to subjects' subjective construal of alternatives in their choices. The results provided evidence suggesting that people fail to consider the fact that they may perceive situations differently than their peers when estimating attitudes of others. And the results also gave indication that false consensus effect increased as more latitude was permitted for subjective construal.

Gilovich's (1990) findings related to those of Miller and McFarland (1987) in the sense that internal traits and self-reflection helped to explain why individuals have a tendency to inaccurately estimate their attitudes as compared to their peers. However, it's interesting how individuals tend to project their individuality in different directions. In the case of false consensus, the subjects view their individuality objectively thereby assuming that more of their peers share their attitude than is actually the case. Individuals influenced by pluralistic ignorance, on the other hand, think that their attitudes are more unique and isolated in comparison to others.

## **Spotlight Effect and Illusion of Transparency**

The "spotlight effect" (Gilovich, 2000) and "illusion of transparency" (Gilovich, 1998) have been offered as possible explanations to facilitate in understanding the causes

of false consensus effect. Spotlight effect occurs when people are cognizant of a particular attribute related to themselves. And because of that awareness they overestimate the likelihood of others also being aware of that particular attribute. Similarly, illusion of transparency occurs when individuals overestimate the likelihood of others having the ability to perceive their thoughts. Gilovich (1998, 2000) contends that spotlight effect and illusion of transparency are both derived from the same anchoring-and-adjustment mechanisms. And insufficient adjustments in either case result in people believing that the perspective of others is more like their own than is actually the case.

### **Summary**

The concepts of pluralistic ignorance and false consensus are being proposed as essential research perspectives in this project because inaccurate assumptions about the attitudes of one's fellow fraternity or sorority members are presumed to be contributing factors in cases of dysfunctional activity. On the other hand, accurate assessments of shared values are presumed to be conducive to group functionality. Social psychologists have shown interest in this topic for more than 80 years.

Researchers have proposed factors such as personality traits and heuristics as potential causes of pluralistic ignorance. When individuals believe they possess higher degrees of traits related to social inhibition, they tend assume that others behave for reasons different than their own even though they engage in the same kind of activity. And assumptions about others' traits are often inaccurate because individuals naturally know more about their own characteristics than others. Yet they assess others according to facts that they know about themselves.



Research on topics like subjective construal, spotlight effect, and illusion of transparency has been pursued to help explain false consensus. Results from Gilovich's (1990) study indicated that people who are biased toward a certain position are more apt to estimate that others share their bias than people who are not biased. Furthermore, there is a tendency for individuals to overestimate the likelihood of others having the ability to perceive their thoughts.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **A THEORETICAL MEDLEY: STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM, PLURALISTIC IGNORANCE, AND FALSE CONSENSUS**

#### **Introduction**

Merton's (1968) theory on structural functionalism provides a means for interpreting response patterns that have been observed through individuals' collective behavior within social institutions. Pluralistic ignorance offers an explanation for individuals' decision to engage in patterns of behavior that conflict with their personal values. And false consensus explains those that conflict with the personal values of one's respective group members. By exploring an integrated combination of all three concepts, this study intends to provide an enhanced theoretical foundation that could possibly facilitate solutions for eliminating dysfunctional behavior within fraternities and sororities by helping to better understand what members tend to do and why. Past studies have only dealt with the "what" aspect of the problem by either focusing on members' manifest function activity or dysfunctional activity without considering the relevance of latent function activity. By merging concepts borrowed from structural functionalism, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus, this study offers insight in regard to the "why" aspect. It assumes that imbalances between manifest function attitudes and latent function attitudes result in dysfunctional behavior for fraternity and sorority members in the same way that imbalances between emphasis on dominant goals and accepted means have resulted in dysfunctional behavior for individuals within social institutions.

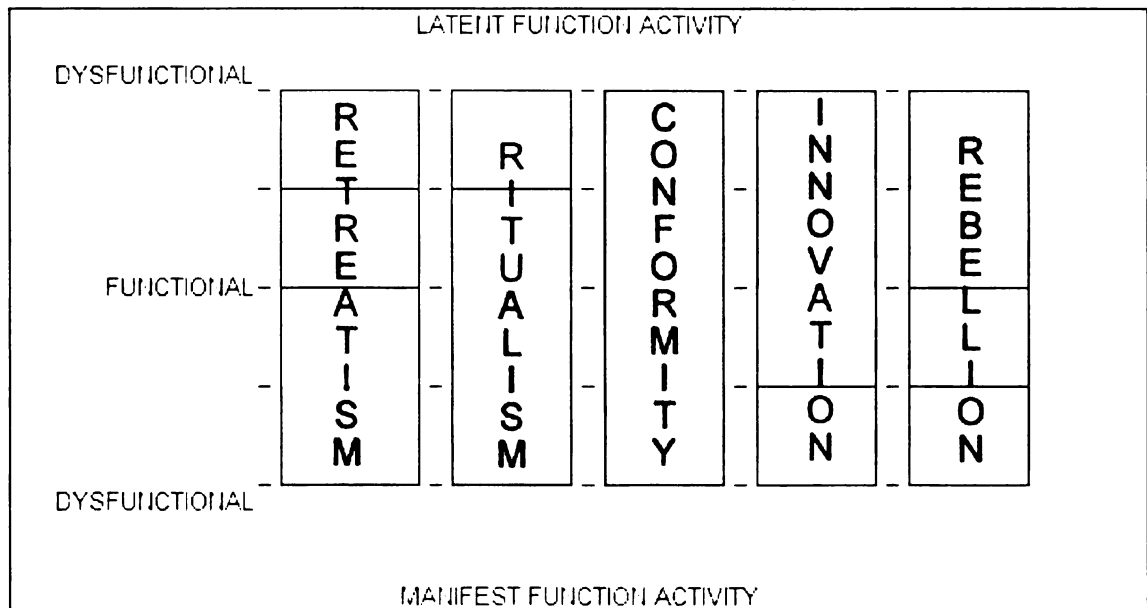
#### **Fraternities and Sororities as Social Institutions**

Although Merton's (1968) social structure theory made numerous referrals to the American social structure, his concepts were not exclusive to any particular institution. Through his concepts, he proposed to offer a generic method of analysis that could be used to evaluate any social structure. His concepts were not limited to macro social

analysis either. They could also be used to evaluate micro institutions and subcultures within a society.

In an effort to identify factors that have been influential in fraternity and sorority members' activity choices, this study examines fraternities and sororities as social structures through Merton's (1968) theory on social structure. Individual fraternity or sorority members' collective responses to institutional goals and accepted means for achieving those goals are reviewed. And a deliberate effort is made to categorize their responses into one of Merton's (1968) predicted categories: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism or rebellion. The proposed categories provide indication of fraternity and sorority members' level of commitment to manifest function and latent function attitudes. Figure 1 illustrates the level of functional analysis for each category.

**Figure 1: Levels of Functionality**



### **Harmony as Conformity**

This study assumes that fraternity and sorority members' harmonious compliance with their respective organization's dominant goals and accepted means is an indicator of Merton's (1968) description of conformity. The commitment to service, support for

disadvantaged communities, and academic matriculation offered as examples of manifest functions in Chapter 1 is complemented by a dual commitment to latent functions such as group solidarity, group uniformity, social networking, etc. In essence, a healthy balance co-exists between formal public sacrifices and informal personal benefits. Fraternity and sorority members assume one of the four extreme positions described by Merton (1968) as innovation, ritualism, retreatism, or rebellion when the balance is breached.

### **Hazing as Innovation**

When the covert hazing practices that continue to exist within fraternities and sororities, regardless of organizational sanctions, are weighed against Merton's (1968) description of the position of innovation, there is evidence of a manipulation or rejection of accepted means in order to achieve desired goals. This position is apparent when incidents of hazing are considered. Hazing continues regardless of laws prohibiting it because the primary focus of those individuals who participate in such activity is to achieve the goal of uniformity, which, for them, takes precedence over the institutionally allowed means for achieving that goal.

The presidents of college and university fraternities like to boast that they have hazing under control. Tough policies ban it, they say, and police have state laws at their disposal to deal with houses that violate the prohibitions. But educators and lawyers familiar with what actually goes on in the pledging process say the reality remains that most pledges don't become members without at least a little abuse, and sometimes quite a bit (Gose, 1997b, p. A37).

Although outsiders are often quick to declare that hazing serves no purpose, insiders tend to profess that you would have to experience the bond and solidarity of the group to understand it. This concept is evident in Lionel Tiger's (1997) description of military personnel's rationale for their hazing practices. He stated that, "in an age of peacekeeping missions and cybernetic weapons, it remains to be seen if the distasteful folk-ferocity of initiations still prepares young men for effective warfare and its civilian

equivalents. One would like to think not. But it is difficult to separate those rituals from the bonding with which they are associated” (Tiger, 1997, p.8).

This study assumes that fraternity or sorority members who take the position of innovation probably place more emphasis on latent functions and are probably more active on a social level within their organizations. However, not all organization members ignore institutional sanctions. Some fraternity and sorority members neglect their interest in group uniformity and solidarity in an effort to comply with the accepted institutional means.

### **Over Compliance as Ritualism**

Merton’s (1968) description of ritualism is evident in instances in which fraternity or sorority members are overly compliant with organizational sanctions to the extent that they lose sight of their concern for uniformity and solidarity.

During the 1980s, many concerns were raised about the pledging practices of Black fraternities and sororities. Community leaders, university administrators, and parents pushed for broad reforms. Some suggested that the idea of Greek ‘brotherhood’ or ‘sisterhood’ does not support hazing, which, in some ... chapters, involves arduous mental or physical harassment. Others steadfastly maintained that the hazing process is essential for building the lifelong bonds these organizations seek to develop between their members. The ensuing controversy led many ... organizations to ban the pledging process altogether. (Kimbrough, 1995, p.62)

In the above example, the organizations that ultimately abolished pledging reverted to a position of ritualism in that they prioritized the institutional prohibition of hazing above their interest in developing group solidarity.

Although fraternity and sorority members who take the position of ritualism often neglect their interest in group uniformity and solidarity, they may still remain active within the organization on a business level. This study assumes that those cases indicate

a higher level of emphasis being placed on manifest functions. There are others within the organizations who take the position of retreatism. These individuals are identifiable by their inactivity.

### **Inactivity as Retreatism**

This study assumes that fraternity or sorority members who disregard the goals and accepted means for achieving those goals—as prescribed by their respective organizations—take the position described by Merton (1968) as retreatism. These are the fraternity or sorority members who have been inducted, but do not regularly participate in business or social activities involved with the organization. An example of this phenomenon can be identified in the results of an empirical study done by Biernat, Green, and Vescio (1996) that measured sorority members' commitment to their organizations by asking three questions. The researchers asked respondents the following questions: (1.) "How much do you like or dislike being a member of your sorority?" This question offered a response scale ranging from "don't like it at all" to "I really like it." (2.) "How committed would you say you are to your sorority?" This question was followed by a response scale that ranged from "I am extremely committed" to "I am not committed at all." (3.) "Overall, how much would you say you like the members of your sorority?" Responses ranged from "not at all" to "they are my best friends" (Biernat, Green, & Vescio, 1996, p. 1197). A small percentage of the sample studied, who gave indication that they did not like being members of their organization nor fellow members of their organization, indicated that they had low levels of commitment to their organization.

As suggested earlier by Merton (1968), members within a social structure do not usually willingly accept the position of retreatism that other members may take. In the case of fraternities and sororities, active members take steps to mobilize inactive members to take more active roles. One example of such an effort is Omega Psi Phi

Fraternity's Reclamation Mandate. The Reclamation Mandate is a required, annual, event in which active members of the organization are expected to participate. During the event, members are encouraged to make deliberate efforts to identify and reclaim inactive brothers (Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, 2001).

Similar to Merton's (1968) perspective, this study assumes that inactive fraternity and sorority members are probably targeted for inclusion because they cause questions to develop in regard to the overall structuring and functioning of the organization. By choosing to not participate, retreatists are perceived to be more problematic than innovators and ritualists. In fact, retreatists and rebels pose the greatest threat to the existing structure. Retreatists decrease functionality through hypo-activity while rebels decrease functionality through hyper-activity.

### **Renouncement as Rebellion**

This study assumes that fraternity or sorority members who take the position of rebellion, like their retreatist counterparts, reject the institutional goals and the accepted means for achieving them. Unlike retreatists though, rebels speak out. They usually renounce their membership within the organization and, in some cases, even struggle to change the overall social structure of the organization. Rebels should not be confused with people who vilify fraternities or sororities as a result of non-acceptance. In other words, rebels are not in a state of resentment. They are usually members or former members who were functional within the social structure at some point and ultimately realized their personal goals and interests were in contrast with those of the organization.

Fourteen members of the Phi Gamma Delta chapter at Utah State University exemplified rebellious characteristics when they resigned from the organization after the chapter was charged with serving alcohol at a fraternity party. The members expressed that "this wasn't the Greek system we joined" ("Fraternity Members Quit," 1997, p.A6).

Those members came to the realization that their interests were not being met within the structure of the fraternity and, in turn, they renounced the organization.

### **Pluralistic Ignorance and False Consensus in Fraternities and Sororities**

Social psychologists have theorized pluralistic ignorance and false consensus as factors that influence individuals' contradictory behavior as group members. They have argued that individuals affected by pluralistic ignorance inaccurately assume that their cohorts support certain activities or ideals because their personal views are aligned with the normal intention of those activities or ideals even though their own personal views deviate from the norm yet they also offer public support for the activities or ideals. (Korte, 1972; Kunda, 1999; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller & Prentice, 1994; O'Gorman, 1975, 1986; O'Gorman & Garry, 1976). Similarly, individuals influenced by false consensus err in assuming more shared positive support for ideals that they embrace personally (Gilovich, 1990, 1998, 2000; Fabrigar and Krosnick, 1995). In either case, individuals could engage in dysfunctional activity as a result of inaccurate perceptions of values shared by their fellow group members.

### **Gender Role Socialization**

Barbara Risman (1982) conducted an analysis of sorority women--over a period of three years--at a large state university on the West coast. The results of that study confirmed her hypothesis suggesting that the distinct structure of fraternities and sororities has substantial influence on gender role socialization. In the particular cases of the sorority members that were studied, she questioned the value of such socialization. She explained that preparedness for traditional roles like housewife and caregiver may



have been valuable during a time when women typically married into their standard of living. But training for those roles "in a world where women spend much of their lives in the paid labor force ... may be anachronistic." (Risman, 232).

From the acquired results Risman (1982) concluded that sorority members were apt to comply in spite of the contradictions because the conservative Greek world comforted them and shielded them from alternative perspectives. And she further suggested that they are able to function in that manner because "the Greek system successfully retards change by routinizing and institutionalizing male-female interaction and by restricting participants to those individuals who accept Greek social norms. "Those that do not, resign, thus ensuring the smoothness of expected interaction." (Risman, 1982, p.250) Her findings could also be explained by pluralistic ignorance or false consensus. Since sorority members surround themselves with others who have also opted to comply with the organizational standards, there is a propensity to make inaccurate assumptions about others' belief in those standards. The outcome is pluralistic ignorance if the individual does not personally embrace the standards or false consensus if she does. In either case, the position of ritualism as described above by Merton (1968) becomes apparent.

### **Sexual and Romantic Behavior**

Through surveys and interviews, Ray and Rosow (2009) examined sexual and romantic behavior of fraternity members at a predominantly white university. When the responses were compared, they realized blacks and whites exhibited distinctly different approaches to sexual objectification of women. Whites responded in ways that were

more aligned with “getting off” while blacks’ were more indicative of romance. For example, white frats defined serious relationships primarily in terms of physical monogamy while blacks emphasized socioemotional exchange. Ray and Rosow (2009) attributed the differences to normative institutional arrangements. They describe the concept in this way:

Normative institutional arrangements identify social contexts (e.g., social environments in fraternity houses), whereby certain behaviors are more or less acceptable and certain structures hold individuals more or less accountable for their treatment of others. Such arrangements represent taken-for-granted assumptions that are external and exist outside of individuals, ‘social, durable, and layered’ (Hays, 1994), and constraining and enabling. Normative institutional arrangements focus on the accepted arrangement of relationships within social institutions. (Ray and Rosow, 2009, p.3)

Ray and Rosow (2009) contend that factors such as off-campus housing (as opposed to owning frat houses), representing a ethnic/racial minority, combined with the pressure of feeling compelled to serve as representatives for that group, contribute to the differences observed between white and black frats. When blacks were asked if they thought they would act differently if they were not attending a predominantly white institution, they replied with a unanimous “yes” and also stated that they would probably behave in ways very similar to their white counterparts.

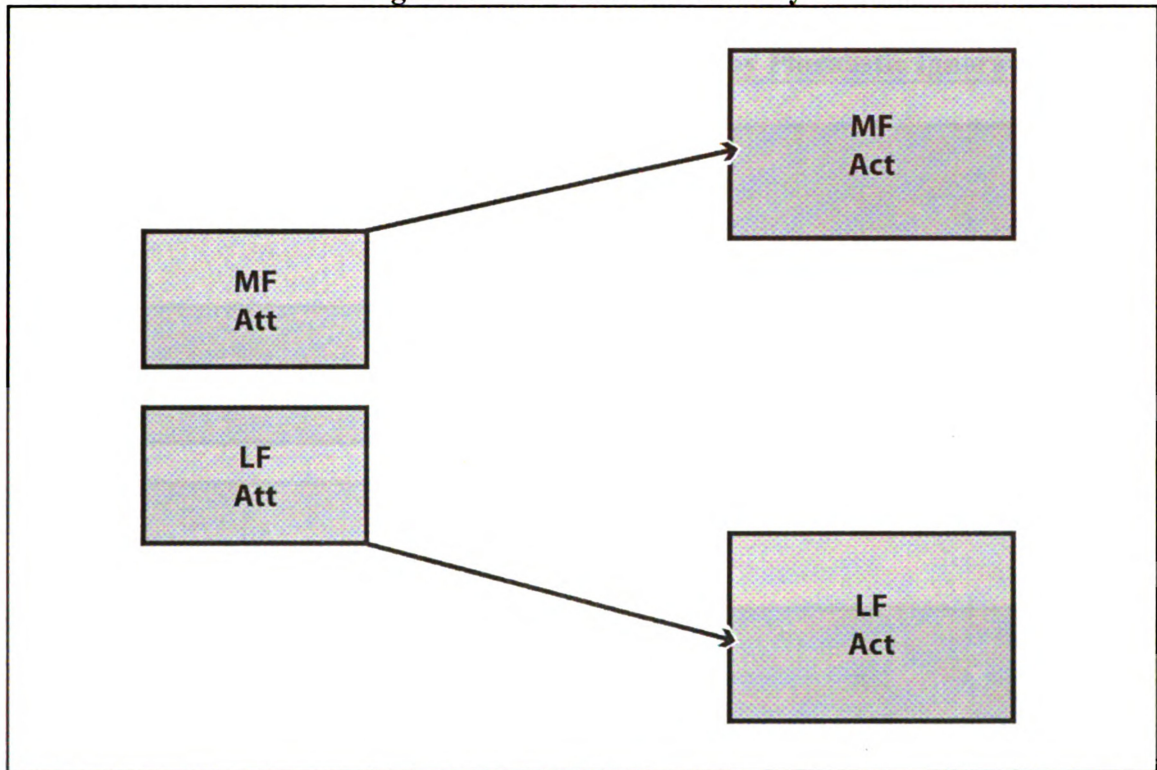
The black frats behavior in Ray and Rosow’s (2009) study could have also been influenced by pluralistic ignorance or false consensus if their decision to refrain from or engage in certain types of activity was based on inaccurate assumptions about other black frats’ desire to serve as role models. Furthermore, the whites’ activity could have also stemmed from erroneous assumptions. One of the white frats reported feeling awkward

for his decision to preserve his virginity for marriage. He explained how the dominant attitude of his peers caused him to feel like a black sheep of the group. If the majority of his peers actually share his values, but act otherwise because they believe doing so is more befitting of the groups' interest, then pluralistic has occurred.

This study examines fraternity and sorority members' perceptions of values shared by their fellow group members as an additional factor influencing their activity choices. Inaccurate perceptions of disfavor for personal activity or ideals are categorized as being subjected to pluralistic ignorance. And inaccurate perceptions of support for personal activity or ideals are categorized as subjected to false consensus.

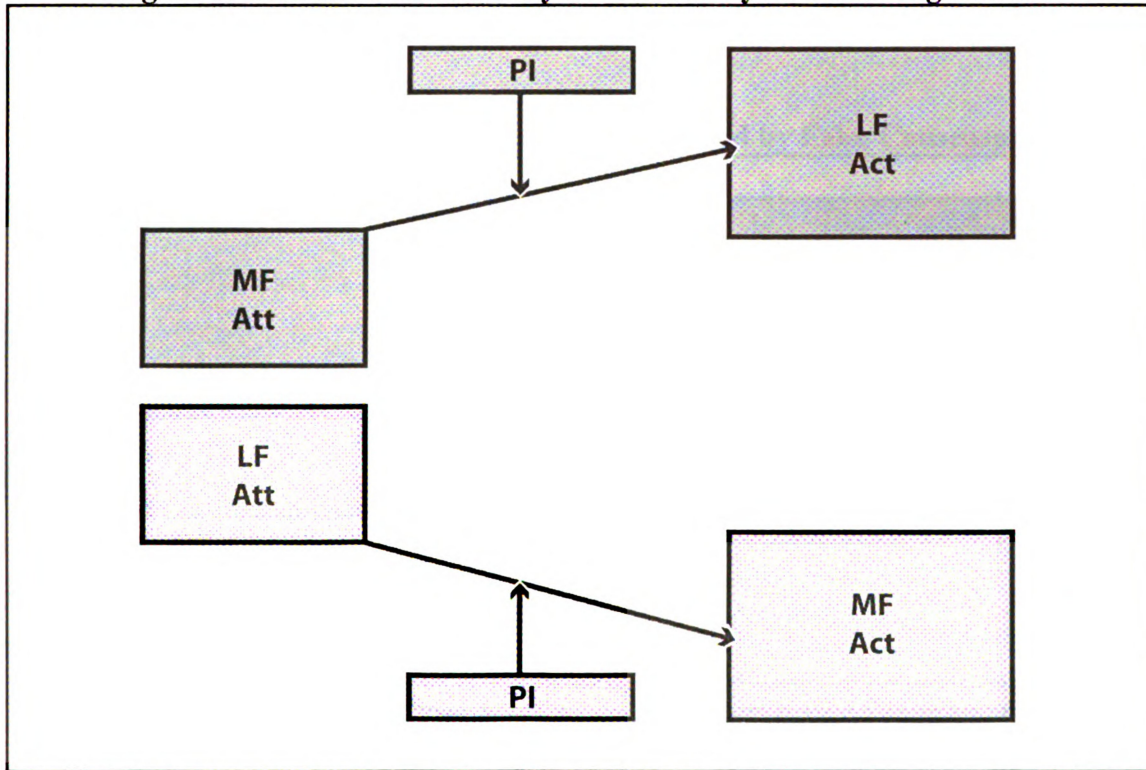
Figures 2 through 6 illustrate premises that guide the section of this study that investigates relationship(s) between attitudes, perceptions, and activity. Manifest Function Attitudes (MF Att) and Latent Function Attitude (LF Att) are depicted as direct causes of Manifest Function Activity (MF Act) and Latent Function Activity (LF Act) respectively. (See Figure 2.)

**Figure 2: Attitudes and Activity**



When moderated by Pluralistic Ignorance (PI), Manifest Function Attitudes could result in Latent Function Activity or Latent Function Attitudes could result in Manifest Function Activity. (See Figure 3.) This understanding helps to explain some occurrences of innovation or ritualism. Individuals may deviate from conforming to their respective institutions' accepted means or dominant goals because their actions are influenced by inaccurate perceptions of others' attitudes. They engage in activity that they privately disfavor because they erroneously assume that the activity is considered desirable by others.

**Figure 3: Attitudes and Activity Moderated by Pluralistic Ignorance**

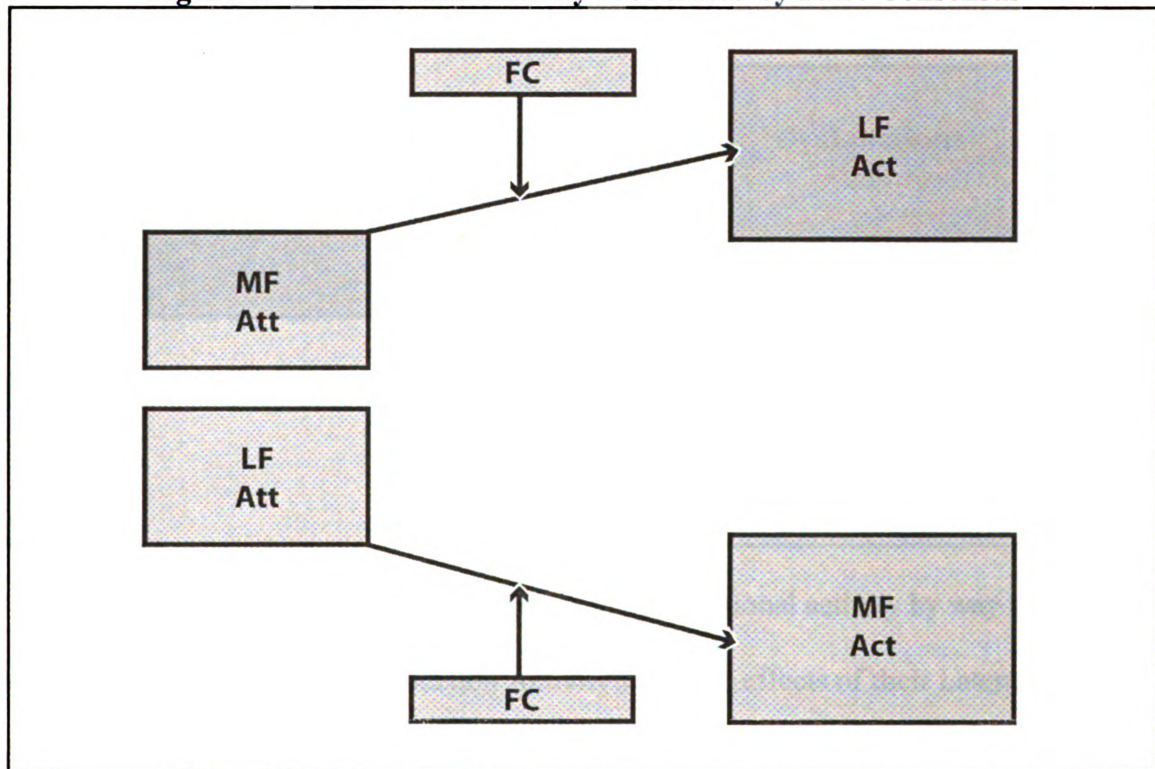


Similarly, Manifest Function Attitudes could result in Latent Function Activity or Latent Function Attitudes could result in Manifest Function Activity when the relationship between attitudes and activity is moderated by False Consensus (FC). (See Figure 4.) This understanding also helps to explain some occurrences of innovation or ritualism. Like Pluralistic Ignorance, individuals may deviate from conforming to their respective institutions' accepted means or dominant goals because their actions are influenced by inaccurate perceptions of others' attitudes. However, unlike Pluralistic Ignorance, the influence of False Consensus causes them to engage in activity that is



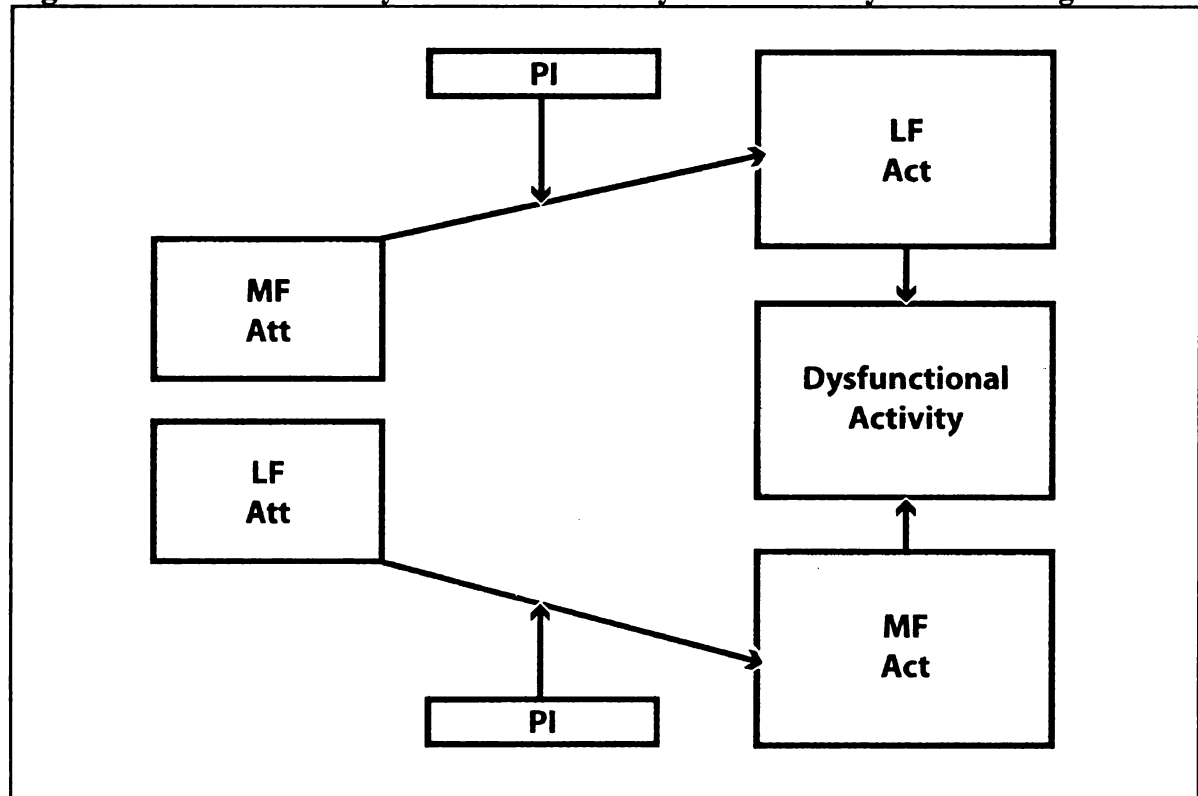
disfavored by others. They do so because they erroneously assume that others find the activity desirable as they do.

**Figure 4: Attitudes and Activity Moderated by False Consensus**



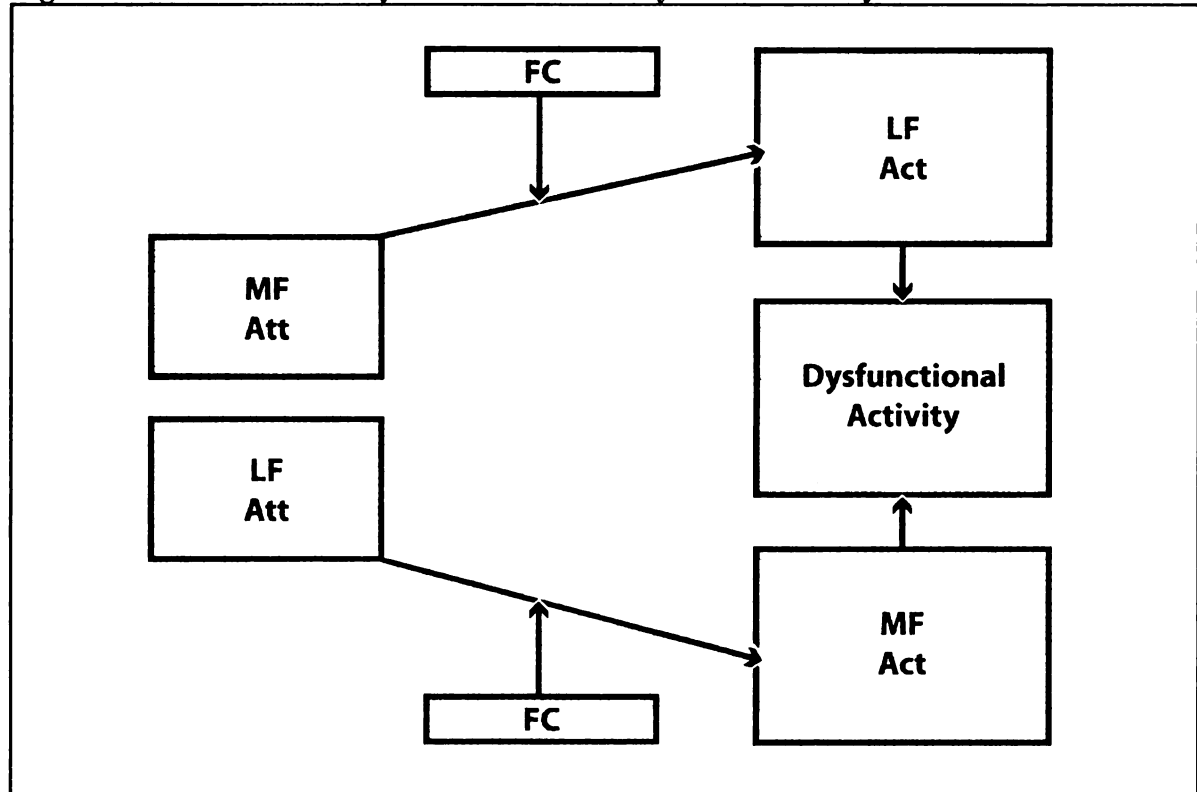
Excessive levels of Latent Function Activity or Manifest Function Activity—resulting from Pluralistic Ignorance moderating the effects of Manifest Function Attitudes and Latent Function Attitudes—could ultimately escalate to dysfunctional activity. (See Figure 5.) Those scenarios fit Merton's (1968) description of retreatism and rebellion. Individuals in either of those categories undermine the functional stability of their respective social institutions by withdrawing from participation in pursuing its dominant goals or adhering to its accepted means.

**Figure 5: Attitudes and Dysfunctional Activity Moderated by Pluralistic Ignorance**



Likewise, individuals may also resort to dysfunctional activity by way of excessive Latent or Manifest Function Activity when the effects of their Latent or Manifest Function Attitudes are moderated by False Consensus. (See Figure 6.) Dysfunctional activity stemming from manifest function activity is indicative of retreatism. And dysfunctional activity stemming from latent function activity is indicative of rebellion.

**Figure 6: Attitudes and Dysfunctional Activity Moderated by False Consensus**



### **Summary**

Fraternities and sororities are examined as social structures in accordance with Merton's (1968) perspective. Analysis of members' activity is done in search of evidence that supports his premises. This study assumes that members who strive to achieve dominant group goals while adhering to legitimate organizational means are conformists. Members who participate in prohibited activities are presumably utilizing innovative methods in order to achieve dominant group ideals. Thus, they place a higher emphasis on latent functions. On the other hand, this study assumes that members who advocate abolishing hazing or pledging in an effort to comply with institutional sanctions probably take the position of ritualism. Therefore, it is likely that they will place higher emphasis on manifest functions. Furthermore, inactive members are presumed to retreat from all



aspects of participation thereby disregarding the manifest and latent functions of the organization. And those members who reject the dominant goals and the accepted means and seek to change the overall structure of their respective organizations are deemed to be rebels. In essence, they set out to redefine the manifest and latent functions of the organization by changing the dominant goals and accepted means.

The concepts of pluralistic ignorance and false consensus are also explored through fraternity and sorority members' perceptions of values shared by their fellow members. They are considered essential research perspectives in this project because inaccurate assumptions about the attitudes of one's fellow fraternity or sorority members are presumed to be contributing factors in cases of dysfunctional activity.

Fraternity and sorority studies have presented evidence of member activity that could possibly be explained by pluralistic ignorance or false consensus. Risman's (1982) study demonstrated ways in which organizational structure culminates in sorority members complying with traditions that are no longer relevant. Since they are surrounded by others who also comply with those traditions, it's likely that they comply in response to a presumed consensus. Ray and Rosow's (2009) study found similar kinds of results in regard to fraternity members and their objectification of women. Both black and white fraternities exhibited distinct kinds of dominant behavior as well as private rejection of that behavior. Hypothetically speaking, if the position taken by those individuals who rejected the dominant behavior—presumably a minority—was in fact the personal position of the majority, then those who engaged in the (privately) disfavored behavior were affected by pluralistic ignorance. A better understanding of these kinds of scenarios could decrease dysfunctionality and in turn benefit fraternity and sorority members, their respective organizations, and anyone else either directly or indirectly associated with them.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION**

#### **Introduction**

The overall purpose of this study was to determine a relationship between manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, and fraternity and sorority members' manifest function activity and latent function activity in regard to their respective organizations. Those concepts were borrowed from theories described in Chapters 1 through 4 and re-defined for the specific purposes of this study and then identified as either independent or dependent variables. The variables were used to formulate 12 research hypotheses—predicting relationships between fraternity and sorority members' attitudes and activity.

At the conclusion of an extensive search for existing instruments, a final decision was made to develop a questionnaire (See Appendix B). The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' socioeconomic background, prior expectations in regard to fraternities and sororities, perception of other's prior expectations, and current activity within their respective organizations. Socioeconomic background information was collected in case unpredicted or spurious factors may have affected the research results; prior expectations were expected to indicate the level of attachment that the respondents had to manifest function attitudes or latent function attitudes; perception of others' prior expectations was expected to indicate the presence of pluralistic ignorance or false consensus; and current activity was deemed as indicative of either manifest function activity or latent function activity. Prior to conducting the survey, the items were tested for face validity through multiple small group discussions with fraternity and sorority members.

Convenience sampling took place through fraternity and sorority chapters in Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan. Fraternity and sorority contacts were approached through telephone calls, electronic mail, and letters; informed of the project's objectives; and then they were asked to participate in pre and post oral surveys. Upon their acceptance, they were assured that their participation would be voluntary and their identity, as well as the identity of their respective organizations, would remain strictly confidential (See Appendix A). Turning Technologies Audience Response Technology was used in order to collect responses anonymously. Participants were given random transmitters that had no connection to their identities. The transmitters were then used to respond to survey items. All of the responses were collected at the same time thereby significantly decreasing opportunity to identify any particular respondent.

### **Definition of Concepts**

The variables identified in the research hypotheses are manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, manifest function activity, and latent function activity. These variables are defined below:

- Manifest function attitudes – attachment to publicly professed goals that tend to indicate positive advancement and uplift.
- Latent function attitudes – attachment to internally embraced ideals that tend to link members under some form of commonality.
- Pluralistic ignorance – inaccurate assumptions about others' position on certain activities or ideals that are believed to contrast with one's own private values.
- False consensus – inaccurate assumptions about others' position on certain activities or ideals that are believed to be shared with one's own private values.
- Manifest function activity – participation in formal (business-oriented) organizational projects and events.
- Latent function activity – participation in informal (socially-oriented) organizational projects and events.

## **Variables Considered in the Research**

This research is based on an examination of independent and dependent variables. Manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus will be measured as independent variables. Manifest function activity and latent function activity will be measured as dependent variables.

## **Hypotheses**

The major hypothesis for this research is that there is a relationship between manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, and fraternity and sorority members' activity. A related hypothesis is that there is also a relationship between perceptions about other members' attitudes and activity.

Specific hypotheses to be tested are:

- H<sub>1</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase as manifest function attitude scale scores increase.
- H<sub>2</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease as manifest function attitude scale scores increase.
- H<sub>3</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase as latent function attitude scale scores increase.
- H<sub>4</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease as latent function attitude scale scores increase.
- H<sub>5</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease when an individual experiences manifest function pluralistic ignorance.
- H<sub>6</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease when an individual experiences latent function pluralistic ignorance.
- H<sub>7</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase when an individual experiences latent function pluralistic ignorance.
- H<sub>8</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase when an individual experiences manifest function pluralistic ignorance.

- H<sub>9</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase when an individual experiences manifest function false consensus.
- H<sub>10</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase when an individual experiences latent function false consensus.
- H<sub>11</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease when an individual experiences latent function false consensus.
- H<sub>12</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease when an individual experiences manifest function false consensus.

### **Development of the Questionnaire**

Section one of the questionnaire (See Appendix B) was intended to obtain respondents' socioeconomic background information. In case results seemed inconsistent when compared between variables associated with manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, manifest function activity, and latent function activity, socioeconomic factors could possibly offer more reasonable explanations. Allowing for the possible influence of extraneous variables could have reduced the risk of reporting inaccurate conclusions in the event of ambiguous results.

The second section of the questionnaire (See Appendix B) was proposed as a means for attaining respondents' prior expectations in regard to fraternities and sororities. The questions in this section were designed to inquire of the participants' opinions, concepts, and tolerance in regard to some common beliefs, stereotypes, and allegations about fraternities and sororities. The questions were arranged so that several questions measured similar expectations. Ten of the questions were indicative of manifest function attitudes. The other ten questions were indicative of latent function attitudes.

The third section of the questionnaire (See Appendix B) asks fraternity and sorority members to assess their previous responses in comparison to those of the other respondents. The questions in this section were designed to identify instances of pluralistic ignorance or false consensus. The questions are arranged so that they

measured the correlation between respondents' perception of others' attitudes and their own personal attitudes.

The fourth section of the questionnaire (See Appendix B) asks fraternity and sorority members to identify activities that they had participated in or been affiliated with within their respective organizations. Activities listed in this section were selected in an effort to determine whether respondents' activities were influenced by manifest function attitudes or latent function attitudes. Questions in this section of the survey deal with issues such as business affiliation, social affiliation, and academic affiliation with fellow fraternity and sorority members. Ten of the questions are indicative of manifest function activities. The other ten questions are indicative of latent function attitudes.

### **Survey Validity Tests**

As means for testing face validity, the survey instrument was constructed in consultation with Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan fraternity and sorority members during multiple, informal, small group discussions. During each meeting attendees were asked to answer the questions in a simulated survey. Afterwards, they were asked specific questions that assessed the clarity, intent, and affect of each survey item. A significant amount of feedback was obtained during the sessions.

The first group discussion resulted in the addition of an item to make a distinction between undergraduate and graduate respondents. The discussion consisted of three participants—two Black males who were inducted into their respective fraternities as undergraduate students and a Black female who was inducted into her sorority as a college graduate. None of the first discussion participants were members of the same organization.

The second group discussion resulted in several survey items being re-worded to more clearly distinguish inquiries as emphasizing respondents' activity either as an individual or as a fraternity or sorority member. For example, "Have you donated to any

charities since you've been a member of your organization?" was re-worded to ask "Have you made personal charitable donations since you've been a member of your organization?" Discussion participants proposed that the change would capture a more accurate impression of the respondents' attachment to either manifest function or latent function activity without confusing it with their compliance with organizational activity. There were six participants for the second discussion. Two of them were Black males who were members of different predominantly Black fraternities; two of them were Black females who were members of the same predominantly Black sorority; and two of them were White females who were members of different predominantly White sororities. One of the males was inducted as a college graduate. All of the other participants were inducted as undergraduate students.

A third group discussion was conducted with seven undergraduate students. The group consisted of Black, Hispanic, and White males and females. The males were members of different fraternities. The females were members of different sororities. Recommendations made during the first two discussions were repeated in the third one.

### **Rationale for Survey Items**

The ten survey items contrived as indicators of manifest function attitudes were assembled to correspond with four categories of concepts that have been publicly espoused as benefits of fraternity or sorority membership: Service and uplift; professional advancement; academic success; and organizational governance. Three service and uplift survey items inquired about community involvement, assisting others, and confronting social problems. Four professional advancement items inquired about leadership, social status, and business aspirations. Two academic success items pertained to academic records and matriculation success. And a single organizational governance item referred to a prohibited practice. The specific survey items follow:

### **Service and Uplift**

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities placed extensive effort on community involvement.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were eager to assist others.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities worked to eliminate social problems.

### **Professional Advancement**

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to serve as positive role models.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities recruited individuals that were outstanding citizens.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought the most successful individuals in America were fraternity or sorority members.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities tended to place strong emphasis on business goals.

### **Academic Success**

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to possess higher academic records than non-members.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority was conducive to greater success in matriculating through college.

### **Organizational Governance**

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members did not practice pledging because it is prohibited.

The ten survey items devised as indicators of latent function attitudes were compiled to correspond with social networking, group uniformity, and group solidarity. Those three concepts have been deemed as being informal benefits of fraternity or sorority membership. Five social networking items inquired about friendship, sex partners, fun, support networks, and social power. Three group uniformity items pertained to types of members, likeness, and dancing abilities. And two group solidarity items inquired about acceptance and bonds between members. The specific survey items follow:



### **Social Networking**

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity brothers and/or sorority sisters had close friendships.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority provided a support network that could be used in times of need.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority offered social power.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members generally had more sex partners than non members.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members had tremendous amounts of fun.

### **Group Uniformity**

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought each fraternity or sorority had distinct types of members. (Example: smart, lively, attractive, athletic, etc.)
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because they are so much alike.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were great dancers.

### **Group Solidarity**

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members pledge in order to be fully accepted into their organizations.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because of their pledging process.

The ten survey items proposed as indicators of manifest function activity were selected to correspond with the same four categories of concepts used to select manifest function attitude survey items. Three service and uplift survey items inquired about community involvement, mentoring, and charitable donations. A single professional advancement item inquired about selective association with fellow members. Two academic success items pertained to assisting with course assignments and encouraging academic progress. And four organizational governance items inquired about voicing opinions, dissuading prospective members, meeting attendance, and encouraging structural change. The specific survey items follow:

### **Service and Uplift**

- Do you regularly participate in community involvement projects?

- Have you ever served as a mentor since you've been a member of your organization?
- Have you donated to any charities since you've been a member of your organization?

### **Professional Advancement**

- Are you selective about the fraternity or sorority members that you socialize with?

### **Academic Success**

- Have you ever assisted another member of your organization with a course assignment?
- Have you ever encouraged another member of your organization in regard to academic progress?

### **Organizational Governance**

- Have you ever voiced opposing views with two or more of your fellow fraternity or sorority members in regard to organizational issues?
- Have you ever advised an interested individual not to seek membership in a fraternity or sorority?
- Do you regularly attend business meetings hosted by your fraternity or sorority members?
- Do you actively urge your fellow fraternity or sorority members to change their way of doing things either socially or within the organization?

The ten survey items proposed as indicators of latent function activity were compiled to correspond with social networking, group uniformity, and group solidarity. They are the same concepts used as indicators for latent function attitudes. Two social networking items inquired about party attendance and granting favors for fellow members. Four group uniformity items pertained to hazing others, reporting instances of hazing, and having been hazed. And four group solidarity items inquired about fighting, drinking, drug use, and group sex acts. The specific survey items follow:

### **Social Networking**

- Do you regularly attend parties hosted by your fellow fraternity or sorority members?
- Have you ever given special benefits or favors to a member of your fraternity or sorority in a situation in which your authority or position required that you treat all clients, guests, customers, etc., equally?

### **Group Uniformity**

- Have you ever pledged another individual(s) for membership into your organization?
- Have you, or would you, report known instances of pledging?
- Did you pledge prior to taking membership in your organization?
- Have you ever heckled or publicly insulted members of other fraternities or

sororities because you disapproved of their appearance or personality?

### **Group Solidarity**

- Have you ever fought members of other fraternities or sororities?
- Do you regularly drink with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?
- Do you regularly use drugs with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?
- Have you ever engaged in group sex acts with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?

### **Source of Data**

As a result of both financial and geographical restrictions, convenience sampling was utilized for selecting participants for the study. Fraternity and sorority chapters served as clusters for sampling fraternity and sorority members. The participants are representative of the Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan—undergraduate and graduate—fraternity and sorority population. That population consists of a host of Pan-Hellenic (historically black), Interfraternity (white), and Independent (multicultural) Greek Council organizations. (History and Future, 2009) Surveys, in the form of oral questionnaires, were administered to fraternity and sorority members throughout Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan.

### **Universe and Sample**

Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan fraternity and sorority members are the units of analysis for this research. Surveys were administered to 62 Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan fraternity and sorority members. Fraternity and sorority rosters of members, Cooley Law School, and Michigan State University were the sampling frames for the study.

### **Turning Technologies Audience Response System**

Survey responses were collected through Turning Technologies Audience Response System. Participants responded to the survey items using remote response cards networked with a radio transmitter. As an effort to assure participant anonymity,

unique participant identifiers were not recorded. It was presumed that respondents would answer sensitive items (e.g., drug use and sexual activity) more honestly if they were confident that their identity and also the identity of their respective organization would not be disclosed.

Turning Technologies' real-time data compilation features made it possible for survey results to be shared with the participants as data was being collected. This ability was beneficial in attempting determine the accuracy of respondents' perception of others. After divulging their prior expectations in regard to fraternities and sororities, respondents were shown the collective responses of the group—including their own—in bar graphs. They were then asked to give their reaction to the results by responding to survey items that asked about their perception of other's prior expectations. Later, during data analysis, results reported as being expected were categorized as accurate perceptions of others' prior expectations. And results reported as being unexpected were categorized as inaccurate perceptions of others' prior expectations.

### **Summary**

Concepts on structural functionalism, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus were integrated into a theoretical framework that served as a foundation to guide an examination of relationships between manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, and fraternity and sorority members' manifest function activity and latent function activity in regard to their respective organizations.

They were defined and articulated as independent and dependent variables and then used to formulate specific research hypotheses that predicted relationships between fraternity and sorority members' attitudes and activity. Data was then collected through an oral questionnaire administered to Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan fraternity and sorority

members using Turning Technologies Audience Response Technology. The population for the study was Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan fraternity and sorority members.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

Data gathered from the questionnaire was compiled and analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 17.0. Bivariate analysis was done after grouped responses from the independent variables (manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus) and dependent variables (manifest function activity and latent function activity) were operationalized. Cross-tabulations were then performed along with odds ratio calculations between the independent and dependent variables.

#### **Operationalization of Variables**

Manifest function attitudes and latent function attitudes are measured through questions that evaluate the respondents' level of prioritization for either one or the other. Prioritizations for manifest function attitudes are indicated by ten questions, grouped to gain the respondent's attitudes on service and uplift as they are related to fraternities and sororities. Prioritizations for latent function attitudes are indicated by ten questions that are grouped to gain the respondents' attitudes on group solidarity and group uniformity as they are related to fraternities and sororities.

Manifest function activity and latent function activity are measured through questions that evaluate the respondents' formal or informal affiliation with their respective fraternities or sororities. Ten questions are grouped to identify formal

(business-oriented) affiliation. The other ten questions are grouped to identify informal (socially-oriented) affiliation.

### **Independent Variables**

Manifest function attitudes were measured by a ten-item scale. The scale contains four response categories: Definitely True, Probably True, Probably False, and Definitely False. The ten items are as follows:

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities placed extensive effort on community involvement.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to serve as positive role models.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities tended to place strong emphasis on business goals.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members did not practice hazing because it is prohibited.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to possess higher academic records than non-members.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought the most successful individuals in America were fraternity or sorority members.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority was conducive to greater success in matriculating through college.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities recruited individuals that were outstanding citizens.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were eager to assist others.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities worked to eliminate social problems.

All ten of the items are scored so that a lower score indicates stronger manifest function attitudes. After the scale was computed, the scores were dichotomized at the mean.<sup>1</sup> Scores below the mean were coded as StrongManifestAttitude, while scores above the mean were be coded as WeakManifestAttitude.

Latent function attitudes were also measured by a ten-item scale. The scale contains four response categories: Definitely True, Probably True, Probably False, and Definitely False. The ten items are as follows:

- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity brothers and/or sorority sisters had close friendships.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought each fraternity or sorority had distinct types of members. (Example: smart, lively, attractive, athletic, etc.)
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because they are so much alike.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were hazed in order to be fully accepted into their organizations.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because of their pledging process.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority provided a support network that could be used in times of need.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority offered social power.

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<sup>1</sup> Dichotomizing at the interval midpoint may have resulted in a more accurate division of strong and weak manifest function attitudes. However, given the small sample population, the results were more likely to have been skewed, thus more difficult to analyze. Dichotomizing at the mean effectively served the conceptual needs of this study by dividing the participants' manifest function attitudes in comparison to each other.



- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members generally had more sex partners than non members.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members had tremendous amounts of fun.
- Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were great dancers.

All ten of the items were scored so that a lower score denotes stronger latent function attitudes. After the scale was computed, the scores were dichotomized at the mean.<sup>2</sup> Scores below the mean were coded as StrongLatentAttitude, while scores at and above the mean were coded as WeakManifestAttitude.

Pluralistic ignorance and false consensus were determined by first computing Manifest Function Perception and Latent Function Perception categories. And then respondents were classified according their unique combination of attitudes, perceptions, and activities.

The Manifest Function Perception category was developed by asking survey participants to give their perception of the results acquired through each of the ten Manifest Function Attitude items described in the scale above. And the Latent Function Perception category was developed by asking their perception of the results acquired through each of the ten Latent Function Attitude items. Subsequent scales LatPerceptionCategory and ManPerceptionCategory were developed. They contained four response categories: Exactly as Expected, Somewhat as Expected, Mostly Unexpected, and Totally Unexpected.

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<sup>2</sup> Dichotomizing at the interval midpoint may have resulted in a more accurate division of strong and weak latent function attitudes. However, given the small sample population, the results were more likely to have been skewed, thus more difficult to analyze. Dichotomizing at the mean effectively served the conceptual needs of this study by dividing the participants' latent function attitudes in comparison to each other.

The ten Manifest Function Perception items were scored so that a lower score indicates a more accurate perception of others' manifest function attitudes. After the scale was computed, the scores were dichotomized twice—at the mean and then again at interval midpoints.<sup>3</sup> Scores below the mean or midpoint were coded as Accurate, while scores above the mean were be coded as Inaccurate.

The ten Latent Function Perception items were scored so that a lower score indicates a more accurate perception of others' latent function attitudes. After the scale was computed, the scores were dichotomized twice—at the mean and then again at interval midpoints.<sup>4</sup> Scores below the mean or midpoint were coded as Accurate, while scores above the mean were coded as Inaccurate.

Respondents having a strong latent function attitude; inaccurate perception of other's manifest function attitudes; and high manifest function activity, are coded as ManifestPI to indicate that they are subject to manifest function pluralistic ignorance. Respondents having a strong manifest function attitude; inaccurate perception of other's latent function attitudes; and high latent function activity, are coded as LatentPI to indicate that they are subject to latent function pluralistic ignorance. Respondents having a strong manifest function attitude; inaccurate perception of other's manifest function attitudes; and high manifest function activity, are coded as ManifestFC to indicate that they are subject to manifest function false consensus. Respondents having a strong latent

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<sup>3</sup> Dichotomizing at interval midpoints gives an objective indication of respondents' perception of others Manifest Function Attitudes. Dichotomizing at the mean indicates respondents' perception of others as compared with the population sampled for this study.

<sup>4</sup> Dichotomizing at interval midpoints gives an objective indication of respondents' perception of others Latent Function Attitudes. Dichotomizing at the mean indicates respondents' perception of others as compared with the population sampled for this study.

function attitude; inaccurate perception of other's latent function attitudes; and high latent function activity, are coded as LatentFC to indicate that they are subject to latent function false consensus.

### **Dependent Variables**

Manifest function activity is measured by ten fixed-choice items with two response categories: Yes and No. The ten items are as follows:

- Do you regularly attend business meetings hosted by your fraternity or sorority members?
- Do you regularly participate in community involvement projects?
- Do you actively urge your fellow fraternity or sorority members to change their way of doing things either socially or within the organization?
- Have you ever voiced opposing views with two or more of your fellow fraternity or sorority members in regard to organizational issues?
- Have you ever advised an interested individual not to seek membership in a fraternity or sorority?
- Are you selective about the fraternity or sorority members that you socialize with?
- Have you ever assisted another member of your organization with a course assignment?
- Have you ever encouraged another member of your organization in regard to academic progress?
- Have you ever served as a mentor since you've been a member of your organization?
- Have you donated to any charities since you've been a member of your organization?

All ten of the items are scored so that a lower score indicates greater manifest function activity. After the scale was computed, the scores were dichotomized at the

mean. Scores below the mean were coded as HighManifestActivity to indicate more “yes” responses to manifest function activity, while scores at and above the mean were coded as LowManifestActivity to indicate more “no” responses to manifest function activity.

Latent function activity is measured by ten fixed-choice items with two response categories: Yes and No. The items are:

- Have you ever pledged another individual(s) for membership into your organization?
- Have you, or would you, report known instances of pledging?
- Did you pledge prior to taking membership in your organization?
- Do you regularly attend parties hosted by your fellow fraternity or sorority members?
- Have you ever heckled or publicly insulted members of other fraternities or sororities because you disapproved of their appearance or personality?
- Have you ever fought members of other fraternities or sororities?
- Do you regularly drink with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?
- Do you regularly use drugs with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?
- Have you ever engaged in group sex acts with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?
- Have you ever given special benefits or favors to a member of your fraternity or sorority in a situation in which your authority or position required that you treat all clients, guests, customers, etc., equally?

All ten of the items were scored so that a lower score indicates greater latent function activity. After the scale was computed, the scores were dichotomized at the mean. Scores below the mean are coded as HighLatentActivity to indicate more “yes”

responses to latent function activity, while scores at and above the mean were coded as LowLatentActivity to indicate more “no” responses to latent function activity.

### **Description of the Sample**

The population for this study was 62 members of Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan fraternity and sorority community. It consists of Black, White, Hispanic, and Multiracial fraternities and sororities. Study participants were undergraduate, graduate, and post graduate students. The length of membership within their respective organizations ranged from 6 to 36+ years. Table 1 presents the demographics for this sample. 44 (71%) of the respondents were male, and 18 (29%) were female. 43 (69.4%) of the respondents were members of a fraternity and 19 (30.6) were members of a sorority. This was a result of the fraternities having a predominantly “male only” membership makeup while the sororities had a predominantly “female only” membership makeup. The difference of 1—between number of male fraternity members and number of female sorority members—is likely due to a response error. Respondents identified their respective organizations as being “predominantly Black” (46, 74.2%), “predominantly White” (10, 16.1%), “predominantly Hispanic” (2, 3.2%), or “multi-racial” (4, 6.5%). 39 (62.9%) of the respondents were enrolled in a college or university when the study was conducted. 23 (37.1%) of the respondents were not enrolled. Respondents identified their race or ethnicity as being “White” (9, 14.5%), “African-American” (46, 74.2%), “Asian” (4, 6.5%), “Hispanic” (2, 3.2%), or “African” (1, 1.6%).

The respondents’ ages ranged from 18 to 50+ years. The lowest frequencies of age ranges represented were 29-33 years and 39-53 years with 1 (1.6%) response each, followed by 34-38 and 44-49 years having 2 (3.2%) responses each. The highest frequency of age ranges represented was 18-23 years having 29 (46.8%) responses,

followed by 50+ years having 18 (29%) responses. 9 (14.5%) of the respondents reported their age range as being 24-28 years.

Freshmen represented 1 (1.6%) of the respondents, 2 (3.2%) were Sophomores, 11 (17.7%) were Juniors, 14 (22.6%) were Seniors, 15 (24.2%) were graduate students, 14 (22.6%) were post-graduates, 4 (6.5%) classified themselves as other, and 1 (1.6%) response was missing.

Respondents identified their religion as being “Christianity” (56, 90.3%), “Hinduism” (1, 1.6%), “None” (1, 1.6%), “Other” (3, 4.8%), and 1 (1.6%) response was missing. 7 (11.3%) of the respondents resided in the Northeast region of the United States prior to attending college; 7 (11.3%) resided in the Southern region; and 48 (77.4%) resided in the Midwest region.

The average family income of the respondents prior to attending college ranged from \$0-\$19,999 (7, 11.3%) to more than \$100,000 (12, 19.4%) with 3 (4.8%) missing responses. The lowest frequency of income reported was \$50,000 - \$59,000 having 4 (6.5%) responses. The highest frequency of family income reported was \$100,000+ having 12 (19.4%) responses. 7 (11.3%) reported \$0-19,999; 10 (16.1%) reported \$20,000-\$29,999; 8 (12.9%) reported \$30,000-\$39,999; 9 (14.5%) reported \$40,000-\$49,999 and \$60,000-\$99,999 each.

**Table 1: Sample Population Demographics**

CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	POPULATION
<b>GENDER</b>			
Male	44	71	62
Female	18	29	
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>			
Fraternity	43	69.4	62
Sorority	19	30.6	
<b>LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP</b>			
6-10 years	6	9.7	62
11-15 years	5	8.1	
16-20 years	2	3.2	
21-25 years	1	1.6	
26-30 years	1	1.6	
31-35 years	3	4.8	
36+ years	7	11.3	
<b>ACADEMIC STATUS AT TIME OF INDUCTION</b>			
Undergraduate	45	72.6	62
Graduate	17	27.4	
<b>ORGANIZATION GENDER MAKEUP</b>			
Male Only	43	69.4	62
Female Only	19	30.6	
<b>ORGANIZATION RACIAL MAKEUP</b>			
Predominantly White	10	16.1	62
Predominantly Black	46	74.2	
Predominantly Hispanic	2	3.2	
Multi-racial	4	6.5	
<b>CURRENTLY ENROLLED</b>			
Yes	39	62.9	62
No	23	37.1	
<b>YOUR RACE OR ETHNICITY</b>			
White	9	14.5	62
African-American	46	74.2	
Asian	4	6.5	
Hispanic	2	3.2	
African	1	1.6	

**Table 1: Sample Population Demographics (continued)**

<b>YOUR AGE RANGE</b>			
18-23	29	46.8	62
24-28	9	14.5	
29-33	1	1.6	
34-38	2	3.2	
39-43	1	1.6	
44-49	2	3.2	
50+	18	29	
<b>ACADEMIC CLASSIFICATION</b>			
Freshman	1	1.6	62
Sophomore	2	3.2	
Junior	11	17.7	
Senior	14	22.6	
Graduate	15	24.2	
Post-Graduate	14	22.6	
Other	4	6.5	
Missing	1	1.6	
<b>YOUR RELIGION</b>			
Christianity	56	90.3	62
Hinduism	1	1.6	
None	1	1.6	
Other	3	4.8	
Missing	1	1.6	
<b>RESIDENCE PRIOR TO ATTENDING COLLEGE</b>			
NorthEast U.S.	7	11.3	62
Southern U.S.	7	11.3	
Midwest U.S.	48	77.4	
<b>FAMILY INCOME PRIOR TO ATTENDING COLLEGE</b>			
\$0 - \$19,999	7	11.3	62
\$20,000 - \$29,999	10	16.1	
\$30,000 - \$39,999	8	12.9	
\$40,000 - \$49,999	9	14.5	
\$50,000 - \$59,999	4	6.5	
\$60,000 - \$99,999	9	14.5	
\$100,000 +	12	19.4	
Missing	3	4.8	



### **Test of the Hypotheses**

The range for manifest function attitude scale scores was 31 with a minimum of 10, maximum of 41, and a mean of 24.50. Latent function attitude scale scores range was 24 with a minimum of 10, maximum of 34, and a mean of 19.25. The range for perception of others' manifest function attitude scale scores was 26 with a minimum of 12, maximum of 38, and mean of 20.93. And the range for perception of others' latent function attitude scale scores was 28 with a minimum of 10, maximum of 38, and a mean of 23.17. The range for manifest function activity scale scores was 10 with a minimum of 10, maximum of 20, and a mean of 12.39. Latent function activity scale scores range was 9 with a minimum of 12, maximum of 21, and a mean of 15.11.

H<sub>1</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase as Manifest function attitude scale scores increase.

Hypothesis 1 tested the relationship between manifest function attitudes and manifest function activity of fraternity and sorority members. In accordance with Merton's (1968) theory of social structure, this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members with strong manifest function attitudes would participate in manifest function activities more than those with weak manifest function attitudes. That assumption was invalid for this sample of fraternity and sorority members when the mean was used to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. Table 2 presents the results of that method. An Odds-Ratio calculation of 1.0000 indicates that the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having strong manifest function attitudes exhibiting high manifest function activity are no more or less than the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having weak manifest function attitudes exhibiting high manifest function activity.

**Table 2: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFatt by MFact (at mean)**

<b>Manifest Function Attitude * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
StrongManifest Attitude	14	7	21
WeakManifest Attitude	18	9	27
	32	16	48
<hr/>			
	14 x 9		=
	18 x 7		<b>1.0000</b>

Additionally, the assumption that fraternity and sorority members with a strong manifest function attitude would participate in manifest function activity more than those with a weak manifest function attitude was not confirmed when the interval midpoint was used to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories either. Table 3 presents the results of that method. An Odds-Ratio calculation of 0.6190 indicates that the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having strong manifest function attitudes exhibiting high manifest function activity are .62 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having weak manifest function attitudes exhibiting high manifest function activity.

**Table 3: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFatt by MFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Manifest Function Attitude * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
StrongManifest Attitude	26	6	32
WeakManifest Attitude	14	2	16
	40	8	48
<hr/>			
	26 x 2		=
	14 x 6		<b>0.6190</b>

Hypothesis 1 is rejected whether the mean or interval midpoints are used to distinguish between strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. Furthermore, the relationship between manifest attitude and manifest activity is inverted when interval midpoints are used as dividers. Although these respondents expressed values indicative of the manifest functions of their respective organizations, they reported engaging in more latent function activity. This type of contradiction could possibly be explained by manifest function pluralistic ignorance.

H<sup>2</sup> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease as manifest function attitude scale scores increase.

Hypothesis 2 tested the relationship between manifest function attitudes and latent function activities of fraternity and sorority members. In accordance with Merton's (1968) theory of social structure, this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members with strong manifest function attitudes would participate in latent function activities less than those with weak manifest function attitudes. That assumption was not valid for this sample of fraternity and sorority members when the mean was used to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. (See Table 4). As indicated by a 1.4444 Odds-Ratio calculation, the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having strong manifest function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity are 1.44 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having weak manifest function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity.

**Table 4: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFatt by LFact (at the mean)**

<b>Manifest Function Attitude * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
StrongManifest Attitude	14	9	23
WeakManifest Attitude	14	13	27
	28	22	50
<hr/>			
	14 x 13		=
	14 x 9		<b>1.4444</b>

The assumption that fraternity and sorority members with a strong manifest function attitude would participate in latent function activity less than those with a strong latent function attitude was also contradicted when the interval midpoint was used to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. Table 5 presents the results of that method. An Odds-Ratio calculation of 1.2632 indicates that the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having strong manifest function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity are 1.26 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having weak manifest function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity.

**Table 5: MFatt by LFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Manifest Function Attitude * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
StrongManifest Attitude	16	19	35
WeakManifest Attitude	6	9	15
	22	28	50
<hr/>			
	16 x 9		=
	6 x 19		<b>1.2632</b>

Hypothesis 2 is rejected whether the mean or interval midpoints are used to distinguish between strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. Results from both methods contradict Merton's (1968) description of innovation. The relationship between manifest function attitudes and latent function activity is inverted. These respondents reported that they engaged in more latent function activity even though they expressed values more aligned with the manifest functions of their organization. Manifest function pluralistic ignorance could possibly help explain the discrepancy.

H<sup>3</sup> The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase as latent function attitude scale scores increase.

Hypothesis 3 tested the relationship between latent function attitudes and latent function activity of fraternity and sorority members. In accordance with Merton's (1968) theory of social structure, this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members with a strong latent function attitude would participate in latent function activity more than those with a weak latent function attitude. That assumption was valid for this sample of fraternity and sorority members when the mean was used to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. (See Table 6.) As indicated by a 1.9385 Odds-Ratio calculation, the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having strong latent function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity are 1.93 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having weak latent function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity.

**Table 6: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFatt by LFact (at the mean)**

<b>Latent Function Attitude * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
StrongLatent Attitude	18	10	28
WeakLatent Attitude	13	14	27
	31	24	55
<hr/>			
	18 x 14		=
	13 x 10		<b>1.9385</b>

The assumption that fraternity and sorority members with a strong latent function attitude would participate in latent function activity more than those with a weak latent function attitude proved to be invalid when the interval midpoint was used to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. Table 7 presents the results of that method. An Odds-Ratio calculation of 0.7667 indicates that the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having strong latent function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity are .77 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having weak latent function attitudes exhibiting high latent function activity.

**Table 7: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFatt by LFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Latent Function Attitude * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
StrongLatent Attitude	23	30	53
WeakLatent Attitude	1	1	2
	24	31	55
<hr/>			
	23 x 1		=
	1 x 30		<b>0.7667</b>

Hypothesis 3 is accepted using the mean but rejected using the interval midpoint method to distinguish between strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. The mean results attest to Merton's (1968) concept of conformity as they pertain to the sample population observed for the purposes of this study. The participants with stronger latent function attitudes reported that they engaged in latent function activity more than those having weaker latent function attitudes. Thus, they act in accordance with their private, socially oriented goals. The interval midpoint results suggest that this conclusion may not hold true for fraternity and sorority members in general.

H<sup>4</sup> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease as latent function attitude scale scores increase.

Hypothesis 4 tested the relationship between latent function attitudes and manifest function activity of fraternity and sorority members. In accordance with Merton's (1968) theory of social structure, this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members with a strong latent function attitude would participate in latent function activity more than those with a weak latent function attitude. That assumption proved to be invalid for this sample of fraternity and sorority members when the mean was used to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. (See Table 8.) As indicated by a 1.1912 Odds-Ratio calculation, the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having strong latent function attitudes exhibiting high manifest function activity are 1.19 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members having weak latent function attitudes exhibiting high manifest function activity.

**Table 8: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFatt by MFact (at the mean)**

<b>Latent Function Attitude * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
StrongLatent Attitude	18	8	26
WeakLatent Attitude	17	9	26
	35	17	52
<hr/>			
	$18 \times 9$		=
	$17 \times 8$		<b>1.1912</b>

The assumption that fraternity and sorority members with a strong latent function attitude would participate in manifest function activity less than those with a weak latent function attitude could not be tested using the interval midpoint to divide respondents into strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories Table 9 presents the results of that method. None of the respondents were categorized as having a weak latent function attitude and low manifest function activity. Thus an odds ratio was incalculable.

**Table 9: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFatt by MFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Latent Function Attitude * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
StrongLatent Attitude	43	8	51
WeakLatent Attitude	1	0	1
	44	8	52
<hr/>			
	$43 \times 0$		=
	$1 \times 8$		-----



Hypothesis 4 was rejected using the mean calculation method and incalculable using the interval midpoint to distinguish between strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. The mean results contradict the assumption that fraternity and sorority members having strong latent function attitudes would participate in manifest function activity less than those having weak latent function attitudes. Thus, they contrast with Merton's (1968) description of innovation. The relationship between latent function attitudes and manifest function activity is inverted. These respondents reported that they engaged in more manifest function activity even though they expressed values more aligned with the latent functions of their organization. Latent function pluralistic ignorance could possibly help explain the discrepancy.

H<sub>5</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease when an individual experiences manifest function pluralistic ignorance

Hypothesis 5 could not be tested when the mean (Table 10) or interval midpoints (Table 11) were used to determine inaccurate and accurate manifest function perception categories and high and low manifest function activity categories. Since there weren't any respondents who experienced manifest function pluralistic ignorance and low manifest function activity, an odds ratio was incalculable.

**Table 10: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFPI by MFact (at the mean)**

Manifest Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Manifest Function Activity			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes PluralisticIgnorance	8	0	8
No PluralisticIgnorance	28	18	46
	36	18	54
<hr/>			
	8 x 18		=
	28 x 0		-----

**Table 11: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFPI by MFact (at the midpoint)**

Manifest Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Manifest Function Activity			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes PluralisticIgnorance	4	0	4
No PluralisticIgnorance	39	8	47
	43	8	51
<hr/>			
	4 x 8		=
	39 x 0		-----

H<sub>6</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease when an individual experiences latent function pluralistic ignorance

Hypothesis 6 could not be tested when the mean (Table 12) or interval midpoints (Table 13) were used to determine inaccurate and accurate latent function perception categories and high and low latent function activity categories. Since there weren't any respondents who experienced manifest function pluralistic ignorance and low latent function activity, an odds ratio was incalculable.

**Table 12: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFPI by LFact (at the mean)**

Latent Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Latent Function Activity			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
Yes PluralisticIgnorance	5	0	5
No PluralisticIgnorance	25	25	50
	30	25	55
<hr/>			
	5 x 25		=
	25 x 0		-----

**Table 13: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFPI by LFact (at the midpoint)**

Latent Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Latent Function Activity			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
Yes PluralisticIgnorance	1	0	1
No PluralisticIgnorance	23	32	55
	24	32	56
<hr/>			
	1 x 32		=
	23 x 0		-----

H<sub>7</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase when an individual experiences latent function pluralistic ignorance

Hypothesis 7 tested the relationship between latent function pluralistic ignorance and manifest function activity of fraternity and sorority members. In accordance with dominant theories on pluralistic ignorance (Korte, 1972; Kunda, 1999; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller & Prentice, 1994; O’Gorman, 1975, 1986; O’Gorman & Garry, 1976), this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members who experienced latent function pluralistic ignorance would participate in manifest function activity more than those who had not experienced latent function pluralistic ignorance. That assumption was invalid for this sample of fraternity and sorority members when the mean was used to

divide respondents into inaccurate and accurate latent function perception categories and high and low manifest function activity categories. Table 14 presents the results of that method. An Odds-Ratio calculation of 1.0000 indicates that the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members experiencing latent function pluralistic ignorance exhibiting high manifest function activity are no more or less than the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members who do not experience latent function pluralistic ignorance exhibiting high manifest function activity. Thus, hypothesis 7 is rejected.

**Table 14: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFPI by MFact (at the mean)**

Latent Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Manifest Function Activity			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes PluralisticIgnorance	2	1	3
No PluralisticIgnorance	32	16	48
	34	17	51
<hr/>			
	2 x 16		= 1.0000
	32 x 1		

Hypothesis 7 could not be tested using interval midpoints to determine inaccurate and accurate latent function perception categories and high and low latent function activity categories. Since there weren't any respondents who experienced latent function pluralistic ignorance, an odds ratio was incalculable. (See Table 15.)

**Table 15: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFPI by MFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Latent Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes PluralisticIgnorance	0	0	0
No PluralisticIgnorance	44	8	52
	44	8	52
<hr/>			
	0 x 8		=
	44 x 0		-----

Hypothesis 7 was rejected using the mean calculation method and incalculable using the interval midpoint to distinguish between strong and weak attitude categories and high and low activity categories. The mean results contradict the assumption that fraternity and sorority members experiencing latent function pluralistic ignorance would participate in manifest function activity more than those who do not experience latent function pluralistic ignorance. Therefore latent function pluralistic ignorance does not help explain the contradictory mean results acquired when hypothesis 4 was tested.

**H<sub>8</sub>** The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase when an individual experiences manifest function pluralistic ignorance

The assumption that fraternity and sorority members who experience manifest function pluralistic ignorance would participate in latent function activity more than those who did not experience manifest function pluralistic ignorance proved to be invalid when the mean was used to divide respondents into inaccurate and accurate manifest function perception categories and high and low latent function activity categories. Table 16 presents the results of that method. An Odds-Ratio calculation of 0.5833 indicates that the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members experiencing manifest function pluralistic ignorance exhibiting high latent function activity are .58 times the observed

odds of fraternity and sorority members who do not experience manifest function pluralistic ignorance exhibiting high latent function activity. Thus, hypothesis 8 is rejected when the mean calculation method is used.

**Table 16: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFPI by LFact (at the mean)**

<b>Manifest Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	<b>HighLatent Activity</b>	<b>LowLatent Activity</b>	
<b>Yes</b>			
PluralisticIgnorance	3	4	7
<b>No</b>			
PluralisticIgnorance	27	21	48
	30	25	55
<hr/>			
	3 x 21	=	<b>0.5833</b>
	27 x 4		

Hypothesis 8 is accepted when interval midpoints are used to determine inaccurate and accurate latent function perception categories and high and low latent function activity categories. In accordance with dominant theories on pluralistic ignorance (Korte, 1972; Kunda, 1999; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller & Prentice, 1994; O’Gorman, 1975, 1986; O’Gorman & Garry, 1976), this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members who experienced manifest function pluralistic ignorance would participate in latent function activity more than those who did not experience manifest function pluralistic ignorance. An odds ratio calculation of 1.3182 confirms that assumption (See Table 17). The observed odds of fraternity and sorority members experiencing manifest function pluralistic ignorance exhibiting high latent function activity are 1.32 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members who do not experience manifest function pluralistic ignorance exhibiting high latent function activity. Therefore manifest function pluralistic ignorance helps explain the contradictory results that were acquired when hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested. Those respondents who reported that they engaged

in more latent function activity even though they expressed values more aligned with manifest function attitudes may have acted under the influence manifest function pluralistic ignorance.

**Table 17: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFPI by LFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Manifest Function Pluralistic Ignorance * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
Yes PluralisticIgnorance	2	2	4
No PluralisticIgnorance	22	29	51
	24	31	55
	<hr/>		
	$2 \times 29$		=
	$22 \times 2$		<b>1.3182</b>

Hypotheses 9 through 12 could not be tested when interval midpoints were used to determine false consensus (through inaccurate and accurate manifest or latent function perception categories) and high or low latent and manifest function activity categories. There weren't any respondents who experienced manifest function false consensus and also reported low manifest function activity (See Table 18). Similarly, there weren't any respondents who experienced manifest function false consensus and also reported high latent function activity (See Table 21). And there weren't any respondents who experienced latent function false consensus (See Tables 19 and 20). For these reasons, odds ratio was incalculable for any of the false consensus cross tabulations.

**Table 18: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFFC by MFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Manifest Function False Consensus * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	2	0	2
No FalseConsensus	42	8	50
	44	8	52
<hr/>			
	$2 \times 8$		=
	$42 \times 0$		-----

**Table 19: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFFC by LFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Latent Function False Consensus * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	0	0	0
No FalseConsensus	24	32	56
	24	32	56
<hr/>			
	$0 \times 32$		=
	$24 \times 0$		-----

**Table 20: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFFC by MFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Latent Function False Consensus * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	0	0	0
No FalseConsensus	44	8	52
	44	8	52
<hr/>			
	$0 \times 8$		=
	$44 \times 0$		-----



**Table 21: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFFC by LFact (at the midpoint)**

<b>Manifest Function False Consensus * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	0	2	2
No FalseConsensus	24	30	54
	24	32	56
<hr/>			
	$0 \times 30$		=
	$24 \times 2$		-----

Hypotheses 9 and 10 could not be tested using the mean to determine false consensus (through inaccurate and accurate manifest or latent function perception categories) and high or low latent and manifest function activity categories either. There weren't any respondents who experienced manifest function false consensus and also reported low manifest function activity (See Table 22). Nor were there any respondents who experienced latent function false consensus and also reported low latent function activity (See Table 23). For these reasons, odds ratio was incalculable for manifest function false consensus and manifest function activity or latent function false consensus and latent function activity cross tabulations.

**Table 22: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFFC by MFact (at the mean)**

<b>Manifest Function False Consensus * Manifest Function Activity</b>			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	4	0	4
No FalseConsensus	30	18	48
	34	18	52
<hr/>			
	$4 \times 18$		=
	$30 \times 0$		-----

**Table 23: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFFC by LFact (at the mean)**

<b>Latent Function False Consensus * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	7	0	7
No FalseConsensus	24	25	49
	31	25	56
<hr/>			
	$7 \times 25$		=
	$24 \times 0$		-----

H<sub>11</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease when an individual experiences latent function false consensus.

Hypothesis 11 tested the relationship between latent function false consensus and manifest function activity of fraternity and sorority members. In accordance with dominant theories on false consensus (Gilovich, 1990; Fabrigar and Krosnick, 1995; Gilovich, 2000; Gilovich, 1998), this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members who experience latent function false consensus would participate in manifest function activity less than those who did not experience latent function false consensus. When the mean was used to determine false consensus (through inaccurate and accurate manifest or latent function perception categories) and high or low latent and manifest function

activity categories, an odds ratio calculation of 0.9677 was acquired. It confirms the assumption of this study. The observed odds of fraternity and sorority members experiencing latent function false consensus exhibiting high manifest function activity are .97 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members who do not experience latent function false consensus exhibiting high manifest function activity. (See Table 24). Thus hypothesis 11 is accepted using the mean calculation method. However, the acquired result is so close to 1.0000 it provides extremely weak support for the hypothesis.

**Table 24: Odds Ratio Calculation – LFFC by MFact (at the mean)**

Latent Function False Consensus * Manifest Function Activity			
	HighManifest Activity	LowManifest Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	4	2	6
No FalseConsensus	31	15	46
	35	17	52
<hr/>			
	4 x 15		= 0.9677
	35 x 2		

Hypothesis 11 is accepted when the mean is used to determine inaccurate and accurate latent function perception categories and high and low manifest function activity categories. The acquired results (weakly) support the assumption that fraternity and sorority members experiencing latent function false consensus would participate in manifest function activity more than those who do not experience latent function false consensus.

H<sub>12</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease when an individual experiences manifest function false consensus.

Hypothesis 12 tested the relationship between manifest function false consensus and latent function activity of fraternity and sorority members. In accordance with dominant theories on false consensus (Gilovich, 1990; Fabrigar and Krosnick, 1995; Gilovich, 2000; Gilovich, 1998), this study assumed that fraternity and sorority members who experience manifest function false consensus would participate in latent function activity less than those who did not experience manifest function false consensus. When the mean was used to determine false consensus (through inaccurate and accurate manifest or latent function perception categories) and high or low latent and manifest function activity categories, an odds ratio calculation of 0.2716 was acquired. It confirms the assumption of this study. The observed odds of fraternity and sorority members experiencing manifest function false consensus exhibiting high latent function activity are .27 times the observed odds of fraternity and sorority members who do not experience manifest function false consensus exhibiting high latent function activity (See Table 25). Thus hypothesis 12 is accepted.

**Table 25: Odds Ratio Calculation – MFFC by LFact (at the mean)**

<b>Manifest Function False Consensus * Latent Function Activity</b>			
	HighLatent Activity	LowLatent Activity	
Yes FalseConsensus	1	3	4
No FalseConsensus	27	22	49
	28	25	53
	<hr/>		
	1 x 22		=
	<hr/>		
	27 x 3		<b>0.2716</b>

## Summary

The population for this study was 62 members of the Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan fraternity and sorority community. Table 1 illustrates the demographic information related to the sample population. That information included gender, membership status, respective organization gender makeup, respective organization racial makeup, college enrollment status, ethnicity, age, academic classification, religious affiliation, primary residence prior to attending college, and average household income prior to attending college.

The independent variables for this study were manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus. The dependent variables were manifest function activity and latent function activity. The major hypothesis for this research is that there is a relationship between manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, false consensus and manifest function activity and latent function activity. The specific research hypotheses were:

- H<sub>1</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase as manifest function attitude scale scores increase.
- H<sub>2</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease as manifest function attitude scale scores increase.
- H<sub>3</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase as latent function attitude scale scores increase.
- H<sub>4</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease as latent function attitude scale scores increase.

- H<sub>5</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease when an individual experiences manifest function pluralistic ignorance.
- H<sub>6</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease when an individual experiences latent function pluralistic ignorance.
- H<sub>7</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase when an individual experiences latent function pluralistic ignorance.
- H<sub>8</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase when an individual experiences manifest function pluralistic ignorance.
- H<sub>9</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will increase when an individual experiences manifest function false consensus.
- H<sub>10</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will increase when an individual experiences latent function false consensus.
- H<sub>11</sub> The probability of participating in manifest function activity will decrease when an individual experiences latent function false consensus.
- H<sub>12</sub> The probability of participating in latent function activity will decrease when an individual experiences manifest function false consensus.

This study tested twelve hypotheses using both the mean and interval midpoints as categorical cut points (See table 26). Four of the hypotheses could not be tested using either method. Half of the eight testable hypotheses were accepted by at least one method. None were accepted using both methods. Two were accepted using the mean but incalculable using the interval midpoint. One was accepted using the interval midpoint method but rejected using the mean method. And one was accepted using the mean method but rejected using the interval midpoint.

Hypothesis 3 was accepted using the mean calculation method but rejected using the interval midpoint. That result suggests that hypothesis 3 is supported by the responses of this sample population but not necessarily by fraternity and sorority members in

general. Hypotheses 11 and 12 were accepted using the mean to calculate an odds-ratio value. But they could not be tested using interval midpoints. Hypothesis 8 was accepted using the interval midpoint to calculate an odds-ratio value and rejected using the mean. This result was especially valuable for sustaining the premises that guided this study. It helps explain the contradictory results that were acquired when Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested. And having calculated this odds ratio value using the interval midpoint method suggests that the result is not necessarily limited to the responses of this study. The respondents' categorization as exhibiting high or low latent function activity was not a subjective comparison to this particular sample population. Instead, their score was compared to the actual response range for the activity scale.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected using both calculation methods. Hypotheses 4 and 7 could not be tested using interval midpoints and they were rejected using the mean calculation method. And Hypotheses 5, 6, 9, and 10 could not be tested using either calculation method.

Table 26: Hypothesis Results

Hypotheses Tested	Category Cut Points	
	Mean	Interval Midpoint
H1	Rejected	Rejected
H2	Rejected	Rejected
H3	Accepted	Rejected
H4	Rejected	Incalculable
H5	Incalculable	Incalculable
H6	Incalculable	Incalculable
H7	Rejected	Incalculable
H8	Rejected	Accepted
H9	Incalculable	Incalculable
H10	Incalculable	Incalculable
H11	Accepted	Incalculable
H12	Accepted	Incalculable

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **General Summary**

Fraternity and sorority members have been found to participate in activities that are indicative of their professed manifest functions as well as others that are contradictory to those goals. For these reasons, this research was done in an effort to identify factors that influence members' activity. Past studies have reported evidence of deleterious activity without making conscious attempts to identify factors that may have influenced members to participate in such activity.

When fraternities and sororities are examined as social structures in accordance with Merton's (1968) perspective, analysis of members' activity provides evidence that seems to support his premises. And the evidence also supports dominant theories on pluralistic ignorance (Korte, 1972; Kunda, 1999; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller & Prentice, 1994; O'Gorman, 1975, 1986; O'Gorman & Garry, 1976) and false consensus (Gilovich, 1990; Fabrigar and Krosnick, 1995; Gilovich, 2000; Gilovich, 1998).

Manifest function attitudes, latent function attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, and false consensus were explored in relation to fraternity and sorority members' manifest function activity and latent function activity. As a result of this study, statistical data has been produced which indicates an increased probability of participating in manifest function activity as fraternity or sorority members' manifest function attitudes increase; increased probability of latent function activity as latent function attitudes increase; and a decreased probability of manifest function activity as latent function attitudes increase.



Furthermore, the evidence also indicates an increased probability of participating in latent function activity when members experience manifest function pluralistic ignorance; an increased probability of manifest function activity when they experience latent function false consensus; and a decreased probability of latent function activity when they experience manifest function false consensus. This evidence offers much to fraternity and sorority members, their respective organizations, and non-members alike.

Expectations and perceptions—whether accurate or inaccurate—often influence activity. Individuals' personally embraced ideals in regard to their groups or organizations have been directly related to the manner in which they act in situations that arise. These studies have also stressed the importance of considering individuals' personal roles and expectations rather than simply setting policies based on generalized organizational goals.

### **Conclusion**

Although half of the testable specific hypotheses in this study were rejected or incalculable, it's important to emphasize the fact that the major hypothesis was supported. The acquired odds ratio calculations indicate relationships between fraternity and sorority members' attitudes, pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, and activity. This knowledge—combined with the risks described by Merton and social psychologists—deems prior expectations and perceptions of others' to be critical factors to consider when developing policies related to fraternities and sororities. Past policies—developed without consideration for members' attachment to latent functions—may have contributed to dysfunctional activity. Proper planning could greatly reduce that kind of

activity in the future. Policies grounded on a more balanced foundation between manifest functions and latent functions may result in more conformity as a result of respect allowed for all parties involved. Merton (1968) described it as a relationship of conformity. Essentially, fraternity and sorority members would conform in the direction of the manifest goals. And the organizations would conform in the direction of latent goals. Otherwise, dysfunctional activity is immanent as a result of fraternity and sorority members either employing innovative means to meet their demands for latent functions or retreating from any participation whatsoever.

### **Limitations**

Results of this study show promise as a tool for policymakers to utilize when developing organizational sanctions. However, it should be used with caution. There were several limitations that inhibit the ability to generalize the validity and reliability of the findings. The sample size was relatively small given the membership numbers that have been reported by fraternities and sororities; hypotheses 11 and 12 were only accepted using the mean as a cut point; all of the participants resided in the same region when the study was conducted; and they were asked to give self-reports of prior expectations and current activity.

Although the major hypothesis was supported, many of the specific hypotheses were either rejected or incalculable. There were not enough cases to test every scenario under investigation. Nor were there enough to sustain statistical reliability. Tests that revealed no difference between strong and weak or high and low categories could have yielded different results if the sample population had been larger. While the design of

this study was conducive to obtaining more honest responses, it was also difficult to get respondents to sacrifice in ways that were needed to show up for the survey at a uniform time and date. Furthermore, the ten, five, and two dollars offered as compensation probably wasn't a strong motivation in many instances. Higher compensation and remote response technology are considerations for future research. More people may have agreed to participate in the study if they were not required to make the sacrifices necessary to participate at a central time and location.

Hypotheses were tested using both mean and midpoint intervals as cut points dividing high and low or strong and weak categories to compensate for the small sample population. The mean method weighs each participant's score in comparison to the results of this particular study. The midpoint interval method weighs them in comparison to the range of possible scores. Although the hypotheses accepted using the mean method are reliable for this particular population, they may not be applicable to fraternities and sororities in general. Worst case scenario, the mean score for any particular population could actually fall within the upper or lower limits of a scale. For example, in the case of this study, a respondent's attitude score could be high yet categorized as low when compared to the mean score for this particular population. In other words, an individual with a moderately strong attitude could potentially score below the mean if the rest of the population has a very strong attitude on the same issue. So then, empirical data acquired through the mean method are best suited for clarifying the theoretical concepts discussed throughout this study—not generalization for fraternity and sorority members at large.

Cronbach (1951) insisted that coefficient alpha estimates should always equal or exceed .70. George and Mallery (2003) are more forgiving. While they agree that .70 is acceptable, they consider .60 questionable but potentially valuable. Reliability tests of scale items for this study revealed good, moderate, and poor associations between some of the survey scale items: ManAttitude (.801); LatAttitude (.619); ManActivity (.616); and ManPerception (.643); LatActivity (.397) ; LatPerception (.528). These findings do not negate the theoretical value of the concepts developed through this study, but they do merit cause for further investigation. Gliem and Gliem (2003) recommend factor analysis of scale items in addition to coefficient alpha estimates because reliability tests don't offer indication for dimensionality. The scale items could possibly measure different dimensions of the variables in question.

In addition to the points raised in chapter three, expectations and perceptions are also influenced by social and cultural factors. That being the case, this study may have yielded different results if it had been performed in a different region of the country. Furthermore, extending this research to include theories on regionalism could possibly offer additional insight that could facilitate interpretation of the results. These are some ideas to consider for future research.

Data for this study was collected through self-reports. Fraternity and sorority members were asked to report their expectations of fraternities and sororities prior to becoming a member. And they were also asked to report their activity as members. In some cases, study participants were being asked to recall expectations that they had more than 35 years ago. Thus, their reported expectations could have been inaccurate. If more

resources were available, a longitudinal study that interviews participants as prospective members and then again as members could greatly reduce the risks associated with inaccurate memories resulting from time lapses.

### **Implications**

In spite of the noted limitations, the empirical data produced by this study is valuable information that is now available to help prevent continuance of the kind of dysfunctional behavior that has occurred in the past. Fraternity and sorority policymakers and members are now in a position to compromise on reasonable grounds that allow consideration for both the manifest functions and the latent functions of their respective organizations. This could then reduce occurrences in which members fall into the extreme categories of either ritualism or innovation. Both of those extreme positions contrast with Merton's (1968) ideal position of conformity which is a state of equilibrium that equally prioritizes the members' interests in group solidarity and group uniformity as well as their interests in service and uplift.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **The Moral Assessment**

#### **Introduction**

Theories in moral philosophy attempt to determine how humans ought to treat each other and their shared universe. Immanuel Kant (1785) proposed a supreme principle of morality termed the categorical imperative. He contended that the categorical imperative—“always act in such a way that you can also will that the maxim of your action should become a universal law” (Kant, 1785, p.v)—is the one supreme principle for the whole field of morals. More specifically, he offered several formulations to facilitate comprehension of the categorical imperative. Although these formulations were expressed in different terms they all returned, full circle, to Kant’s proposed supreme principle of morality (Kant, 1785).

Autonomy is a prevalent theme found throughout all of the formulations offered by Kant. This is primarily due to the fact that Kant declares that the moral law is determined by reason, which guides the internal “good will” of agents. This being the case, all rational beings are self-governing, e.g., autonomous, and capable of making morally right decisions as long as they adhere to the categorical imperative. On the other hand, compliance with external sanctions and regulations are not moral decisions if the compliance results as an attempt to avoid penalties or gain rewards because the agents in such cases are not acting autonomously, but instead they are acting heteronomously (Kant, 1785).

In an effort to examine ethical ramifications related to previous research findings, this study intends to analyze the relationship between prospective members and current members of fraternities and sororities against Kant's (1785) categorical imperative. More specifically, it intends to test the notion that current fraternity and sorority members are immoral in the manner in which they represent their organizations to prospective members. In essence, it will attempt to determine if fraternity and sorority members violate formulations 1 or 2 of the categorical imperative through manipulation of prospective members or disregard for their personal autonomy.

My understanding of Kant's (1785) categorical imperative suggests that current fraternity and sorority members are blatantly immoral in the manner in which they represent their organizations to prospective members. In order to clarify my position, I intend to show that fraternity and sorority members violate the categorical imperative through manipulation of prospective members. I start by summarizing my personal induction experiences, and then relate them with those of other fraternity and sorority members, and then finally show how our collective experiences were the result of violations of specific formulations of Kant's (1785) categorical imperative. Through Merton's (1968) theory on structural functionalism, chapter two established a context in which the social structure of fraternities and sororities could be discussed in terms of collective patterns; chapter three examined pluralistic ignorance and false consensus as factors that could potentially motivate individuals to participate in those collective patterns of activity; and chapters four through seven discussed the results of an empirical study that confirmed both. This chapter concludes the study with an examination of the

relationship between prospective members and current members of fraternities and sororities in order to determine moral appropriateness through self-reflection.

### **Memoirs as a Fraternity Pledge**

I was physically beaten, mentally fatigued, and verbally insulted three times per week, on average, for the duration of my fraternity pledge period. This period was officially termed as an “intake process” and documented as being one month long. However, the process actually lasted over sixteen weeks, covering two academic semesters. There were others who shared those pledging experiences with me. In fact, I shared those experiences with as many as thirty other pledges. Only three of us successfully completed the process. We were encouraged to believe that the others lacked the necessary qualifications that carried us through the process.

It often seems odd to people when I tell them that I am proud to have experienced all of the above. They tend to be even more astonished when they learn that my fraternity officially proscribes that type of behavior and requires all existing members, as well as prospective members, to sign legal documentation which explicitly states that hazing is illegal and that the organization will prosecute all cases of known offenders. These factors raise question as to why members, and prospective members alike, participate in this kind of behavior. These queries are certainly worthy of investigation. After all, 30 other pledges shared my pledging experiences with me. Furthermore, since I completed that process, I’ve witnessed several hundred other pledges experience a process similar to my own. And although I can not know for certain that pledges prior to myself experienced the same process, I truly believe—as folktales and legends suggest—that my



experiences were exemplary of a process that has repeated itself many times over for more than a century.

My fellow pledges and I—in accordance with an understood norm—expected to participate in an informal, “underground,” pledge period that would last as long as our pledgers deemed necessary with an implied understanding that the official “intake period” would not last nearly as long as the unofficial pledge period. Our “underground” understanding also made allowance for anticipated beatings although we had officially acknowledged that we understood that all forms of hazing were prohibited within the organization.

### **Memoirs of a Fraternity Member**

#### **OWT Brothers**

Once I became a member I learned that all members of my fraternity did not undergo the same type of underground pledge process that I endured. In fact, I learned that some members did not participate in an underground process, at all. Thus, I (along with my line brothers) began to undergo the arduous task of learning the secret rituals used to distinguish brothers who pledged from those who did not. As I became more and more involved in that quest for knowledge, I became aware of the concept of OWT brothers. OWT brothers are the ones who caught my attention as a prospective member. They are active in the social aspects of the organization; they participate in the syncopated step routines; and they are very vocal participants in the public displays of call and response chants; most importantly they are presumed to have participated in the

underground pledge process. In essence, they represent the mystique of group uniformity that is promoted through unofficial propaganda.

### **CAT Brothers**

As I learned more about the OWT brothers of my fraternity, I also learned about another type of brother who is defined as CAT. CAT brothers are also called “paper brothers” because it’s assumed that they did not participate in the underground pledge process or any pledge process at all. They made rare appearances at social functions. And when they did show up, they usually avoided wearing paraphernalia for fear of being detected by the OWT brothers. When CAT brothers were discovered, embarrassing confrontations usually ensued. Sometimes the confrontations escalated to fights.

### **Authentic Members**

As a prospective member I expected to find the OWT-CAT relationship described above. It was my motivation for pledging. I wanted to experience the OWT aspect of fraternity life. And I was lead to believe pledging was the only way it would ever happen. In fact, I was under the impression that the OWT experience was the true fraternity experience. Thus, the CAT experience was reserved for those who were not members in the true sense of fraternity. That propaganda was promoted through call and response chants. It was pushed during informal information sessions. And it was bolstered heavily throughout my pledge process.

Since the OWT brothers were offered up as exhibits of the true members of my fraternity, all others are implicated as inauthentic (i.e., those that we don’t speak about). Therefore popular figures acknowledged as members through official organization

literature (e.g., entertainers, professional athletes, politicians, etc.) are presumed to be OWT. So then, the full summation suggests that authentic members are remarkable in their craft and also OWT within the fraternity. In essence, the propaganda suggests that true fraternity members experience Merton's (1968) state of conformity. It appears that they accomplish the manifest functions of the organization in their professional lives while also accomplishing latent functions through social interactions. In essence, they experience the best of both worlds. That's why my line brothers and I endured the hardships described above.

### **Conflicting Realities**

I wasn't a member of my fraternity long before I was greeted with some harsh realities related to the structure of my organization. One of the first realities was learning that the OWT brothers and the professional brothers don't make up a homogenous group. I learned that many of the brothers deemed to be OWT had been suspended from the organization. Some had even been prosecuted by the fraternity with civil or criminal charges. And their talents weren't always remarkable. Many of them never even finished the degree they were pursuing when they pledged.

While attending official fraternity conferences, I was shocked when I realized the OWT brothers were the minority in presence. CAT brothers represented the majority. And they went to great lengths to enforce restrictions prohibiting OWT brothers from loitering in surrounding areas. They justified their efforts by emphasizing the fact that OWT brothers were either inactive or they had not registered to participate in the conferences.

In the absence of OWT brothers, CAT brothers made critical decisions at conferences regarding organizational policies and sanctions. Those decisions often gave little regard for members' latent function goals. For instance, a policy was implemented prohibiting inactive brothers from participating in activities funded by the organization. When OWT brothers learned of the new policy they were furious. They felt the decision conflicted with their interest in brotherhood. I can remember inactive fraternity members being turned away from an annual picnic while friends and family who were non-members were well received. That scenario is a sharp contrast with the concept of group solidarity that had been impressed upon me as a prospective member.

It's clear that divisions exist within fraternities and sororities. And those divisions tend to play out through the positions that Merton (1968) describes in his theory of structural functionalism. If my personal observations as a fraternity member are taken as an example, it's apparent how CAT brothers can resort to ritualism and OWT brothers to innovation. What about the prospective members? I'm not sure I would have been attracted to my fraternity if I had been told that I would have to pick a side. Or maybe I would have foregone the pledge process if I had known that non-pledgers were the ultimate decision-makers for my organization. Was it wrong for the informed members to withhold these critical facts from me as a prospective member?

### **Kant, Merton, Fraternities and Sororities, and Conformity**

Kant's (1785) second formulation of the categorical imperative states that "one should always act in such a way that humanity either in oneself or in others is always treated as an end in itself and never merely as a means. If a person is treated as a mere

means, then he is treated as nothing more than a thing without purposes of his own rather than as a self-determining rational agent” (Kant, 1785, p. vii). In essence the individual autonomy of agents must be respected. Merton’s (1968) described position of conformity, in relation to fraternity and sorority members could possibly comply with Kant’s (1785) second formulation. In such a position prospective fraternity and sorority members are not used merely as a means to the fraternity or sorority ends of manifest functions such as increasing membership and implementing formal organizational policies. This is because the position of conformity also allows prospective members the opportunity to pursue their personal ends of latent functions, which include taking part in activity associated with group solidarity and group uniformity.

### **Violation of the Second Formulation**

Although the position of conformity, which has been described as the ideal position for fraternity and sorority members, could possibly comply with Kant’s second formulation, evidence above has shown that members tend to fall into one extreme position (innovation) or the other (ritualism). This being the case, according to Kant’s proposition, fraternity and sorority members in either of those extreme positions take part in immoral activities because they are either acting heteronomously, i.e., disregarding their own ends and supplanting them with those of the organization (ritualism), or they are treating the organization merely as a means to their own personal ends by disregarding official regulations while participating in activity that is only geared to produce latent function results (innovation). In either case the members are in violation of Kant’s (1785)

second formulation and thereby ultimately in violation of his supreme principle of morality: the categorical imperative.

### **Violation of the First Formulation**

Kant's first formulation of the categorical imperative: "One should act only on that maxim that can at the same time be willed to become a universal law," (Kant, 1785, p. vi) is also violated in either of the extreme positions that many fraternity and sorority members subscribe to. This is so because it does not make sense to think that one would will that all fraternity and sorority members commit all of their time and energy to furthering organizational ideals while giving no consideration to their personal goals of group uniformity and solidarity as those are some of the major attractions for prospective members. Members engaged in ritualism would have to view their decision as an exception to the true will of conformity. Otherwise, taking membership in a fraternity or sorority would contradict logic. This is the same case for those members in the position of innovation. It is not feasible to believe that they would will all fraternity and sorority members to only engage in activity that produces latent function results because universal implementation of such a will would ultimately resemble something more like a social club rather than a fraternity or sorority.

If the ideal position for a fraternity or sorority member is that of conformity, why do members tend to move to either of the extreme positions? In accordance with Kant's (1785) perspective, this study suggests that violations of the categorical imperative are key factors that influence members to take ritualistic and innovative positions within their respective organizations. Fraternity and sorority members do not allow prospective

members the opportunity to act as autonomous agents in their own decision-making process. Although fraternity and sorority members are well aware of the fact that there is not a relationship of conformity within their organizations, they tend to mislead prospective members to believe that such a relationship exists. Manipulation of that sort disregards the prospective members' rational capacities.

Through their unofficial "underground" understanding, prospective members are duped (by current members) into believing that manifest functions are officially professed to the general public while members covertly participate in a homogenous relationship that consists of activities that are related to both manifest and latent functions.

Prospective members are not, however, informed of the division that exists among the current members. Kant (1785) deems this sort of behavior to be manipulation and describes it as being in direct violation of the categorical imperative because it infringes on the autonomy of the prospective members. By disallowing the prospective members all of the relevant details that are necessary for them to make the rational decisions that they are autonomously capable of making, the fraternity and sorority members are acting immorally in the manner in which they are representing their organizations.

All things considered, current fraternity and sorority members tend to lie to prospective members. Certainly, the maxim of lying can't be universally willed because that would ultimately result in prospective members not ever believing anything that they are told by current fraternity or sorority members. And of course they would not want to join ranks with cohorts that they could never trust. Instead, current members want prospective members to believe them while they benefit from exceptions to the rule.

## **Moral Assessment**

Fraternity and sorority members should consider the autonomy of prospective members when recruiting or promoting their organizations in the same way that fraternities and sororities are encouraged to consider the expectations and perceptions of their members when developing policies and sanctions. Fraternities and sororities are immoral to enforce regulations that further the manifest functions of the organization while disregarding the ideals and values of its members. And fraternity and sorority members are immoral when they deceive prospective members by having them believe that their organizations operate through a harmonious balance of manifest and latent functions. In both cases, people are being treated merely as means to an end. The members are being used merely to further the ends of their respective organizations. And the prospective members are being used merely to further the ends of the members and their organization. These kinds of violations of individuals' autonomy are wrong.



## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### **Research Participant Information and Consent Form**

*You are being asked to participate in a research project. Researchers provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.*

Study Title: An Examination of the manifest Functions, Latent Functions, and Dysfunctions of Fraternities and Sororities

Primary Investigator: Carl S. Taylor, Ph.D. (Professor)

Department and Institution: Sociology Social Science at Michigan State University

Address and Contact Information: 316 Berkey Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1111;  
taylor36@msu.edu; 517-353-9237

Secondary Investigator: Roderick D. Thomas (Student Researcher)

Department and Institution: American Studies Program at Michigan State University

Address and Contact Information: P.O. Box 25072, Lansing, MI 48909; thoma338@msu.edu;  
517-214-7490

#### **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:**

You are being asked to participate in a survey that will examine your personal perceptions and expectations prior to becoming a fraternity or sorority member and also your activity within your respective organization. Some of the questions will inquire about sensitive matters such as fighting, alcohol and drug use, and sexual activity. You were selected because you have been identified as a member of a fraternity or sorority. Your name was obtained from a chapter roster or fellow member. Other undergraduate and graduate fraternity and sorority members in Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan have also been asked to participate in the study. In the entire study, 300 people are being asked to participate. From this study, the researchers hope to learn more about the relationship between attitudes and activity. The data will also be analyzed as part of a doctoral dissertation for the American Studies Program at Michigan State University. Your participation in this study will take about 45 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

#### **WHAT YOU WILL DO:**

You will be supplied with a remote transmitter in order to respond to survey questions displayed on a projection screen. After responses have been collected for sections I through III of the survey, the results will be compiled and shared with the group. At that point you will be asked a final series of questions related to your reaction to the results.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS:**

There is no anticipated direct benefit to you for participating in this study. But the researchers are hopeful that the results of this study will provide additional information to aid in understanding of the overall structuring of fraternities and sororities. Furthermore, your participation in this study may contribute to organizational policies and procedures that could prove beneficial to the functions of fraternities and sororities.

**POTENTIAL RISKS:**

The researchers don't anticipate any risks because your responses will not be linked to you or your organization.

**PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The data for this project are being collected anonymously. The researchers listed above are the only people who will have access to the data. Neither the researchers nor anyone else will be able to link the data to you or your organization. The potential risks for this study are minimal because no identifiable information has been linked between you and your response transmitter. Your identity, as well as the identity of your organization will remain strictly CONFIDENTIAL. Results from this research will be stored in a locked file cabinet for three years on an encrypted data drive using TrueCrypt software and 256 bit AES encryption algorithms. The data will be properly destroyed after that time period.

**YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW**

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. There is no penalty for refusing to participate in this research, nor will it result in loss or gain of any privileges or benefits. You will be told of any significant findings that develop during the course of the study that may influence your willingness to continue to participate in the research.

**COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:**

You will be compensated for your participation upon completion of the survey according to your order of arrival: 1-50 (\$10); 51-100 (\$5); 101-300 (\$2).

**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS**

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher (Roderick Thomas: P.O. Box 25072, Lansing, MI 48909; [thoma338@msu.edu](mailto:thoma338@msu.edu); 517-214-7490).

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail [irb@msu.edu](mailto:irb@msu.edu) or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

**PLEASE DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT. IT HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR YOUR PERSONAL REFERENCE.**

By continuing participate in the study, you indicate the following:

Your participation is voluntary.

You are at least 18 years of age.

You have read the above statements.

You are participating in a survey that will examine your perceptions, expectations, and activities in regard to fraternities and sororities.

You are aware of the potential benefits and risks.

You may withdraw at anytime without penalty.

You accept the compensation that has been offered.

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire

#### PART I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please provide some general information about your background. Your responses will be kept anonymous. However, if you object to responding to any particular question(s), leave them unanswered and continue responding to the remainder of the questionnaire.

1	Gender	____(1) Male	____(2) Female
2	Are you a member of a . . .	____(1)Fraternity	____(2)Sorority
		Less than a year ____(1)	1-5 years ____(2)
		6-10 years ____(3)	11-15 years ____(4)
3	How long have you been a member of your fraternity or sorority?	16-20 years ____(5)	21-25 years ____(6)
		26-30 years ____(7)	31-35 years ____(8)
		36+ years ____ (9)	
4	What was your academic status at the time that you were inducted into your fraternity or sorority?	____(1)Undergraduate	____(2)Graduate
5	What is the gender makeup of your fraternity or sorority?	Male Only ____(1)	Female Only ____(2)
		Co-ed ____(3)	
		Predominantly White ____(1)	Predominantly Black ____(2)
6	What is the racial makeup of your fraternity or sorority?	Predominantly Hispanic ____(3)	Multi-racial ____(4)
		Other (Please Specify):____ ____(5)	
7	Are you currently enrolled in a college or university?	____(1) Yes	____(2) No
8	What is your race or ethnicity?	African-American ____(1)	White ____(2)

		Asian ____(3)	American Indian ____(4)
		Hispanic ____(5)	African ____(6)
		Other (Please Specify): _____ ____(7)	
<hr/>			
		18-23 ____(1)	24-28 ____(2)
		29-33 ____(3)	34-38 ____(4)
		39-43 ____(5)	44-49 ____(6)
		50+ ____(7)	
<hr/>			
		Freshman ____(1)	Sophomore ____(2)
		Junior ____(3)	Senior ____(4)
		Graduate ____(5)	post-Graduate ____(6)
		Other (Please Specify): _____ ____(7)	
<hr/>			
		Christianity ____(1)	Islam ____(2)
		Judaism ____(3)	Buddhism ____(4)
		Hinduism ____(5)	None ____(6)
		Other (Please Specify): _____ ____(7)	
<hr/>			
		NorthEast US____(1)	Southern US____(2)
		Midwest US ____(3)	West Coast US ____(4)
		Europe ____(5)	Asia ____(6)
		Africa ____(7)	South America ____(8)
		Other ____(9)	
<hr/>			
		0-19,999 ____(1)	20,000-29,999 ____(2)
		30,000-39,999 ____(3)	40,000-49,999 ____(4)
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	50,000-59,999	60,000-99,999
	____(5)	____(6)
		100,000 +
		____(7)

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## PART II. PRIOR EXPECTATIONS

This section will request responses in regard to your perception and expectations of fraternities and sororities prior to becoming a member. Please circle only one response that most accurately reflects your opinion of the statements.

		Definitely True (1)	Somewhat True (2)	No Opinion (0)	Somewhat False (3)	Definitely False (4)
12	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity brothers and/or sorority sisters had close friendships.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
13	Prior to becoming a member, I thought each fraternity or sorority had distinct types of members. (Example: smart, lively, attractive, athletic, etc.)	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
14	Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because they are so much alike.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
15	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were hazed in order to be fully accepted into their organizations.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
16	Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because of their pledging process.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
17	Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority provided a support network that could be used in times of need.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
18	Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority offered social power.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)



19	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members generally had more sex partners than non members.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
20	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members had tremendous amounts of fun.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
21	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were great dancers.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
22	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities placed extensive effort on community involvement.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
23	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to serve as positive role models.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
24	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities tended to place strong emphasis on business goals.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
25	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members did not practice hazing because it is prohibited.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
26	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to possess higher academic records than non-members.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
27	Prior to becoming a member, I thought the most successful individuals in America were fraternity or sorority members.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
28	Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority was	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)

	conducive to greater success in matriculating through college.					
29	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities recruited individuals that were outstanding citizens.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
30	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were eager to assist others.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
31	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities worked to eliminate social problems.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)

### PART III. PERCEPTION OF OTHERS' PRIOR EXPECTATIONS

Please recall your beliefs about other fraternity or sorority members' attitudes prior to learning the results of this study. How do those beliefs compare with other respondents' answers to the following questions? Please select only one response that most accurately reflects your opinion of the statements.

		EXACTLY AS EXPECTED (1)	SOMEWHAT AS EXPECTED (2)	NO OPINION (0)	SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED (3)	TOTALLY UNEXPECTED (4)
32	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity brothers and/or sorority sisters had close friendships.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
33	Prior to becoming a member, I thought each fraternity or sorority had distinct types of members. (Example: smart, lively, attractive, athletic, etc.)	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
34	Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because they are so much alike.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
35	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members pledge in order to be fully accepted into their organizations.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)

36	Prior to becoming a member, I thought the bond between fraternity and sorority members was so strong because of their pledging process.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
37	Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority provided a support network that could be used in times of need.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
38	Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority offered social power.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
39	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members generally had more sex partners than non members.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
40	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members had tremendous amounts of fun.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)

41	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were great dancers.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
42	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities placed extensive effort on community involvement.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
43	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to serve as positive role models.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
44	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities tended to place strong emphasis on business goals.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
45	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members did not practice pledging because it is prohibited.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
46	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members tended to possess higher academic records than non-members.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)

47	Prior to becoming a member, I thought the most successful individuals in America were fraternity or sorority members.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
48	Prior to becoming a member, I thought membership within a fraternity or sorority was conducive to greater success in matriculating through college.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
49	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities recruited individuals that were outstanding citizens.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
50	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternity and sorority members were eager to assist others.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)
51	Prior to becoming a member, I thought fraternities and sororities worked to eliminate social problems.	(1)	(2)	(0)	(3)	(4)

#### PART IV. ACTIVITIES

This section will request responses in regard to your current activity associated with your fraternity or sorority.

52	Have you ever pledged another individual(s) for membership into your organization?	Yes (1)	No (2)
53	Have you, or would you, report known instances of pledging?	Yes (2)	No (1)
54	Did you pledge prior to taking membership in your organization?	Yes (1)	No (2)
55	Do you regularly attend parties hosted by your fellow fraternity or sorority members?	Yes (1)	No (2)
56	Have you ever heckled or publicly insulted members of other fraternities or sororities?	Yes (1)	No (2)
57	Have you ever fought members of other fraternities or sororities?	Yes (1)	No (2)
58	Do you regularly drink with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?	Yes (1)	No (2)
59	Do you regularly use drugs with your fellow fraternity or sorority members?	Yes (1)	No (2)
60	Have you ever engaged in group sexual acts with fellow fraternity or sorority members?	Yes (1)	No (2)
61	Have you ever given special benefits or favors to a member of your fraternity or sorority in a situation in which your authority required that you treat all patrons equally?	Yes (1)	No (2)
62	Do you regularly attend business meetings hosted by your fraternity or sorority?	Yes (1)	No (2)
63	Do you regularly participate in community involvement projects?	Yes (1)	No (2)
64	Do you actively urge your fellow fraternity or sorority members to improve their way of doing things either socially or within the organization?	Yes (1)	No (2)
65	Have you ever voiced opposing views with two or more of your fellow fraternity or sorority members in regard to organizational issues?	Yes (1)	No (2)
66	Have you ever advised an interested individual not to seek membership in a fraternity or sorority?	Yes (1)	No (2)
67	Are you selective about the fraternity or sorority members that you socialize with?	Yes (1)	No (2)
68	Have you ever assisted another member of your organization with a course assignment?	Yes (1)	No (2)
69	Have you ever encouraged another member of your organization in regard to academic progress?	Yes (1)	No (2)
70	Have you served as a mentor since you've been a member of your organization?	Yes (1)	No (2)
71	Have you made personal charitable donations since you've been a member of your organization?	Yes (1)	No (2)

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