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Why do alumni continue to give back: The influencers of civic engagement of fraternity and sorority members

Jacqueline Carson Mullen

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Why do alumni continue to give back: The influencers of civic engagement of fraternity and

sorority members

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A commitment to advancing civic engagement has been evident throughout the history of the U.S. higher education system. Civic engagement is a part of the mission of fraternity and sorority organizations. Because of this commitment to civic engagement, the purpose of this study is to understand what is happening in the development of civic engagement of fraternity and sorority alumni, specifically the role fraternity and sorority life plays in this development. The research questions that guide this study include: 1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from their undergraduate college experiences?; 2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek participation play in their current commitment to civic engagement?; 3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Levering key perspectives from Astin's (1984) Person-Environmental Theory, Baxter Magolda's Self-Authorship Theory (1999), and Musil's Spiral Model (2009), the literature review synthesizes research on civic engagement inputs and outcomes into a new conceptual model for understanding the complex process of longitudinal civic engagement commitments via

iterative precollege, college, and postcollege experiences. The design of this study comes a from a constructive-development pedagogy lens, that used focus groups to collect data from the narratives of 25 alumni members of fraternity and sorority organizations from a single institution site broken down by Council membership of the National Panhellenic Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and the Inter-Fraternity Council.

The themes from the results included that most participants took part in a variety of civic engagement experiences prior to college; their commitment to civic engagement grew due to the influence of other chapter members and other student organizations during college; membership commitment due to the foundational leverage of internal commitment to civic engagement; and current environments and previous lived experiences had an impact on participants' current civic engagement commitment and identity. Additional research should be conducted to determine if this research could be replicated at other higher education institutions and fraternity and sorority communities to better understand the long-term impact of these experiences on alumni's civic engagement identity.

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate my dissertation to my parents, Jim and Patsy Carson. From the beginning, they have showed me unconditional love and support while serving as the best role models. They sacrificed so much so that I could take advantage of great education and countless life opportunities. I am so thankful and appreciative that they have guided me well in life and gave me all the tools I needed to make my own decisions and be a leader.

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I want to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Danielle Molina, Dr. Eric Moyen, Dr. Myron Labat, and Dr. Thomas Bourgeois. I especially want to thank my advisor and dear friend, Dr. Danielle Molina, for taking on her first doctoral student with high energy, long meetings, and countless revisions. Your commitment to this field and your students does not go unnoticed and so thankful for your support and encouragement during my career and writing this paper.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

In the context of college student learning, civic engagement "refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" (Adler & Goggin, 2005, p.236). It is a specific type of pedagogical tool that educates students on being part of a larger societal context, helping them understand the responsibilities as leaders in that environment, and encouraging them to put these commitments into practice (Spiezio, Baker, & Boland, 2006). As such, civic engagement has been associated with positive outcomes ranging from service participation and civic mindedness (Cruce & Moore, 2012) to commitment to helping others, influencing social values, and participating in community action programs (Sax, 2008). Therefore, there is a great deal of support for incorporating civic engagement into practices in learning spaces both in the classroom and outside of the classroom, in different branches of academic and student affairs (Spiezio et al., 2006).

Civic Engagement in Higher Education

Dialogue around civic engagement and its role in educating college students was boosted in 2011 by a report from the Department of Education sent to colleges and universities asking for national priority in civic learning and democratic engagement to avoid the country from entering a *civic recession* (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Institutions of higher education were

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offering civic learning courses as electives rather than a part of the core curriculum (U. S. Department of Education, 2011). Campus life programs, such as residence halls, student organizations, student affairs offices, athletics, and fraternity and sorority organizations, also are known for impacting the higher education experience amongst students (Weinberg, 2016). Problems persist despite the importance of civic engagement for college students and the fact that fraternity and sorority life professionals have wholeheartedly incorporated these goals into their practice. For instance, over the past decade questions have been raised about whether civic engagement is a worthy goal for higher education to impart upon college students and whether the outcomes justify the effort put into advancing the goal (Cress, 2012). Moreover, the outcomes achieved via civic engagement are only partially evident when students are in college. Greater gains may be more evident from students who have departed college and from students maybe even years down the line.

The goal of civic engagement in college offers an important opportunity to socialize graduates to actively contribute to society beyond college. In fact, scholars have argued that it is the educators' duty to further civic engagement among students (Astin, 1997; Beaumont, 2004). For instance, engagement in college positively correlates with efforts to seek knowledge and opinions about political processes and actively engage in these processes (Hillguys, 2005). As the reports from scholars like Mayhew et al. (2016) show that college graduates participate more in civic behaviors than their peers who do not attend college, there are scholars that show a trend of diminishing civic returns from the previous decades (Long, 2010). Understanding the reasoning why this trend is changing is important in knowing the future impact of civic engagement in our society. Students need civic engagement in and out of the classroom to understand and develop their skills in order to give back to their communities and organizations.

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Civic Engagement in Fraternity and Sorority Organizations

Fraternity and sorority life organizations, as well, are known to influence the experience of their members. Fraternity and sorority organizations claim that Greek students have higher grade point averages, learn about people from different backgrounds, and have opportunities for leadership experiences that others do not (Kuh et al., 1996). These claims also help explain the findings from the work of Astin (1997) that reports peer groups are known as the most influential on students. Peer groups, like fraternity and sorority organizations, were founded on democratic principles to make change through the process of broad participation and shared decision-making in order to explore new opportunities and learn relevant issues (Roberts & Huffman, 2005). Finding ways to implement change and help important issues is still be relevant today with fraternity and sorority organizations' key aspirational goals and learning outcomes for civic engagement.

The question of civic engagement also feeds into a larger deliberation about the utility of fraternity and sorority life. Although these organizations have been around for over 200 years, higher education scholars and university administrators still question the impact these organizations are having on their members. McMurtie (2015) asks whether fraternities and sororities should even exist on college campuses, and other critiques, like O'Donnell (2009), question the real benefits of the experiences in a fraternity or sorority organization. Reports of Greek students participating in racial chants, contributing to student deaths due to alcohol and drugs, and organizing social functions that lead to sexual assault activities do not illustrate Greek organizations in a positive light (McMurtie, 2015).

As these stories play out in national news, people are calling for higher education administrations to reexamine how colleges and universities are creating leaders for society and to

make a change. Higher education administrations, student affairs professionals, and Greek organizations must take a step back and evaluate the long-term influence these organizations have on their members. These organizations have long been the place where people became engaged citizens and influenced others in their postgraduate personal and professional lives. Fraternity and sorority members also have experiences outside of their membership and networking circles that may have long-term impact on these members' civic engagement work beyond college.

Members of Greek organizations have become Chief Executive Officers of large companies and political officers shaping the direction of our country. As such, their leadership is an important facet of civic engagement beyond college, and the values they develop in their formative experiences as fraternity and sorority leaders will, no doubt, shape their priorities for the communities they serve postgraduation. However, what is not known is whether the commitments to civic engagement instilled by fraternity and sorority programs evolve and deepen over time such that they manifest in parallel commitments with civic engagement postgraduation. We also do not know how the value of civic engagement instilled by fraternity and sorority programs combines with other academic, developmental, and life experiences and continues to manifest postgraduation. The reason we may not know this information is because a lot of research on civic engagement relies on current college students, when the outcomes we hope for is really evidenced in who students become later on down the line, potentially after they leave higher education institutions. Further, researchers may have stayed away from this population since it is much harder to collect data from alumni than from current students.

This study provides an opportunity to question whether there is evidence that our work in student affairs with civic engagement, is working on the ground and what those experiences

yield, not only in the short-term but in more long-term perspectives. By taking a look at the narratives of alumni members of fraternity and sorority organizations and their development of civic engagement after college, it provides an opportunity to understand the long-term effect of fraternity and sorority membership. Fraternity and sorority organizations claim to have a strong impact on civic engagement but what happens and what is the impact beyond the university environment?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to close this gap and understand what is happening in the development of civic engagement, specifically the role fraternity and sorority life plays in this development. By analyzing the retrospective accounts of fraternity and sorority alumni, this research aspires to establish the degree to which fraternity and sorority participation played a role in their development of civic engagement and whether any of those seminal fraternity and sorority experiences continue to resonate in alumni postgraduation. By learning more about the specific experiences, factors, or influencers that developed the civic engagement of fraternity and sorority members, there is an opportunity to advance this information for more service learning initiatives and aid in the development of purposeful civic engagement for societal needs.

Greek administrations hope that the seeds they have planted in their fraternity and sorority life communities will resonate with students after college. This study will demonstrate whether Greek administrators, as well as higher education officials, have contributed to the development of civic engagement amongst these former students. Further, this research considers both the positive and negative contributions fraternity and sorority participation may have had on students' longitudinal development of commitment to civic engagement. Institutions of higher education and their supporting entities, like national Greek organizations, can evaluate the

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current forms of programs and course offerings that may or may not contribute to the educational mission to support national priority in civic learning and democratic engagement. The research questions below will help guide this study.

Research Questions

This study will use a qualitative constructivist strategy that will draw upon the retrospective narratives of fraternity and sorority alumni to understand the following:

1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from their undergraduate college experiences?

2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek participation play in their current commitment to civic engagement?

3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Significance of Study

The framework of these questions will allow the participants in this study to form their own narrative about their lived experiences, especially the influences during their collegiate years and how these experiences connect to their more recent lived experiences after college. The results from this study will offer higher education institutions information to evaluate their current programs and civic engagement activities to align with the outcomes participants claim contribute to their civic engagement after college.

The perceptions of alumni and how their college and postgraduate experiences as fraternity and sorority members may advance the literature and knowledge around the outcomes associated with civic engagement. By understanding what institutions are doing or not doing to prepare students for civic engagement after college, higher education institutions and fraternity and sorority organizations could use this information to evaluate their current programs in order to realign and ignite the continued effort of higher education to support sustaining civic engagement efforts across the nation. Data from these alumni can provide higher education administration and fraternity and sorority officials the tools that they need to make educated decisions about the collegiate and fraternity and sorority life experiences of their current students.

Dissertation Preview

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The first chapter includes an introduction of the importance of studying the experiences of fraternity and sorority members and their development of civic engagement postgraduate. Chapter II begins by understanding the historical and foundational relevance of fraternities and sororities and the general outcomes associated with these organizations. Further, the literature review defines civic engagement and the types of civic engagement contributing to higher education. This chapter will then report the influences of civic engagement and how other outcomes are influenced and then conclude with a conceptual model to illustrate the impact of various experiences on alumni of these fraternity and sorority life organizations.

The next section of the dissertation, Chapter III, describes the methodological approach, from a constructive-development pedagogy lens, that used focus groups to collect the data from narratives of alumni members of fraternity and sorority organizations from a single institution

site. The results of the study will be reported in Chapter IV, which focuses on the themes that most participants took part in a variety of civic engagement experiences prior to college, their commitment to civic engagement grew due to the influence of other chapter members and other student organizations during college, and current environments and previous lived experiences has an impact on participants' current civic engagement commitment and identity.

The final chapter, Chapter V, summarizes and concludes that previous lived experiences, whether experiences through their fraternity or sorority organization or other experiences, contribute to continued civic engagement work and development of the participant's identity. This initial foundation work offers further recommendations for future higher education administrators in practice and future research ideas for continuing the development of this information.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to help us understand whether the commitment to civic engagement over time happens due to fraternity and sorority life experiences or other college and life experiences, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from their undergraduate college experiences?

2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek participation play in their current commitment to civic engagement?

3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Included in this literature review is scholarship that enhances our understanding of fraternity and sorority organizations. Further, there is information on relevance of civic engagement and how it is defined for this study. The next sections reflect the various influences on civic engagement broken down into personal characteristics and college environments. The current research will allow us to form a new conceptual model to set up this study to help understand the various stages that people may experience as they develop their identities related to civic engagement.

Fraternities and Sororities on College Campuses

It is important to understand what fraternity and sorority organizations are and what the literature says about this community of organizations on college campuses. Fraternity and sorority organizations are student organizations located on college campuses and serve as social clubs for students to get involved in during their undergraduate programs and later as alumni (Whipple & Sullivan, 2002). Fraternities are typically connected to male organizations while female organizations are associated with sororities (Whipple & Sullivan, 2002). They have Greek letter symbols that designate their distinction between each organization and historical references (Whipple & Sullivan, 2002). Each Greek organization is connected to a type of affiliation, whether they are a social fraternity, social sorority, or Black-Greek Lettered Organization (Jackson & Iverson, 2009). Typically, each organization is governed under a Council where certain policies and procedures are followed amongst members of each Council (Whipple & Sullivan, 1998). For this paper, we discuss three Councils: Inter-Fraternity Council, the National Panhellenic Council, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council. The National Panhellenic Council organizations are made up of predominantly White female members, while National Pan-Hellenic Council are made up of Black-Greek Lettered Organizations with members of sororities and fraternities.

Evolution of Social Fraternities and Sororities

Social fraternities were founded as literary societies that challenged the strict codes of faculty, and they allowed white students to get away from college eyes in more private settings (Kimbrough, 2003). Fraternities were founded for two main purposes, which included literary/intellectual pursuits or camaraderie/brotherhood (Syrett, 2009). Further, another founding purpose of social fraternities included providing their members environments where

there were opportunities for personal growth and learning to understand interdependence for the sake of developing good citizens (Mauk, 2006). Social sororities were also a place for a small number of white women entering college to bond with activities designed suitable for women (Kimbrough, 2003). These activities mostly centered as study sessions and afternoon gatherings in order to create space for supporting women in the college environment (Kimbrough, 2003). Social sororities and fraternities were founded on having support systems and creating community in brotherhood and sisterhood (Kimbrough, 2003).

Evolution of Black-Greek Lettered Organizations

Black-Greek Lettered Organizations were founded by social activists that were one generation from slavery and modeled the structure of their modern-day student organizations unknowingly from the fraternal and civic organizations of their hometowns (Butler, 2005). The founders of Black-Greek Lettered Organizations did not want to mimic their fraternity structure based on social purposes like the white organizations that had excluded them (Butler, 2005). They focused more on the need for social action that built their core values after benevolent societies, fraternal orders, churches, and civic associations (Butler, 2005). Most of the philanthropy in the African American communities came from the church until Black-Greek Lettered Organizations were founded in supporting their efforts in philanthropy work starting in the early 1900s (Heutel, Hardy, Slater, & Parks, 2019). The Divine 9, also known as the National Pan-Hellenic Council that make up the historically Black-Greek Lettered Organizations, are known for their civic engagement in civil rights activism, shaping civil rights policy, community service, and philanthropy (Heutel et al., 2019). Hence, a core value of Black-Greek Letter Organizations on college campuses today is community service, which is the mechanism used for racial uplift and the hallmark of their activities (Brown, Parks, & Phillips, 2005).

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Contemporary Governing Structures

The national organizations that govern social fraternities, social sororities, and Black-Greek Lettered Organizations promote their guiding principles on their commitment to civic engagement. The North American Inter-Fraternity Conference (NIC, 2004), the governing organization of social fraternities, adopted civic engagement programming in the values for its member fraternities. The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC, 2020a), the governing organization of social sororities, includes in its standards to develop their members through service and outreach. Also, Black-Greek Lettered Organizations, under the National Pan-Hellenic Conference, states that their purpose is for their member organizations to have "community awareness and action through educational, economic, and cultural service activities" (National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2020b).

Comparative Civic Engagement Commitments

While social fraternities, social sororities, and Black-Greek Lettered Organizations may have similar values, their philosophies and founding principles on civic engagement are different. Social fraternities and sororities focus on more philanthropy events and outreach while Black-Greek Lettered Organizations do more hands-on community service work (Kimbrough, 2003). Social sororities like Alpha Delta Pi have established national recognition with organizations like the Ronald McDonald House, and social fraternities like Sigma Chi Fraternity are connected with the Make-a-Wish Foundation (Wiser, 2013). On the other hand, Black-Greek Lettered Organizations, like Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., took on social justice initiatives like "A Voteless People is a Hopeless People" (Wiser, 2013). Black-Greek Lettered Organizations even have a lifetime commitment expectation of their members that they "will attend regular chapter meetings, regional conferences and national conventions, and take an

active part in matters concerning and affecting the community in which he or she lives" (National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2020b). The purpose of these graduate chapters were to continue the chapter affiliation, social interaction, and political action under the name of the Greek organization, and most of the members joining after graduation were already involved in community service and politics in their respective community (Whaley, 2010).

Although there are differences in how civic engagement is prioritized, it is unclear how members of social fraternities, social sororities, and Black-Greek Lettered Organizations view civic engagement as a part of their fraternity and sorority life experience. Wiser (2013) created a study to understand the differences in civic engagement behaviors of social and cultural fraternity and sorority members. Through this quantitative dissertation study, the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), the Social Change Behaviors Scale, and the Socio-Cultural Discussions Scale were administered in 2009, and 3,954 members of social fraternities, 7,453 members of social sororities, 533 members of cultural fraternities, and 917 members of cultural sororities were included in the dataset (Wiser, 2013). The results from the study indicate that there are significant differences in the engagement of members' behavior of social and cultural fraternities and sororities, but the differences are minor for gender, membership type, and interaction of gender and membership under the guided research questions on engagement of civic behaviors, social justice, and diversity (Wiser, 2013). Although the study acknowledged differences among social fraternities, social sororities, and cultural fraternities and sororities, the author confirms the need to understand the more specific factors that form the members' behaviors and even perspectives (Wiser, 2013).

General Outcomes Associated with Fraternity and Sorority Participation

The research on the fraternity and sorority experience is conflicting on whether there are benefits and positive outcomes to participating in these organizations. Students that are members of fraternity and sorority life organizations may experience educational outcomes, like higher academic performance. Routon and Walker (2014) discussed the influence Greek membership has on students' academic performance and overall college experience, while also addressing postcollege influences. Routon and Walker (2014) collected data of 103,292 students from 463 different institutions utilizing the Higher Education Research Institute (Astin & Astin, 1996), specifically from the Freshman Survey prior to students' memberships in a fraternity and sorority and then the College Senior Survey after graduation from students' institutions (Routon & Walker, 2014). Male Greek students showed a lower grade point average compared to the female Greek students while Greek students were more likely to advance their degrees and graduate in 4 years compared to non-Greek students (Routon & Walker, 2014). Further, Greek students showed a higher rate use of alcohol, tobacco, and hours of partying during weekdays that affected their health and behavior outcomes (Routon & Walker, 2014). Additionally, Greek membership resulted in a higher rate of students indicating they would work full-time after completing college compared to non-Greek students (Routon & Walker, 2014). Greek membership did influence the college experiences of its members including their grades, health and behavior trends, and postcollege plans (Routon & Walker, 2014).

While this study shows that the academic performance of Greek students resulted in higher level of degree attainment than non-Greek students, Hevel, Martin, Asel, and Pascerella (2011) reported no influence on the educational outcomes (moral reasoning, cognitive development, intercultural effectiveness, inclination to inquire and have lifelong learning, and psychological well-being) of Greek students. 1,786 first-year undergraduate students from 11

liberal arts institutions participated in the study that collected data using the American College Testing Program, Inc., National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, and the Student Experiences Survey (Hevel et al., 2011).

On a larger data collection research study, Pike (2003) completed a study with 6,782 first-year and senior-level undergraduate students from 15 American Association of Universities to show comparable data by using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Pike (2003) compared the relationship amongst fraternity and sorority membership, student engagement, and educational outcomes (Pike, 2003). Pike (2003) concluded that there was no statistical significance among any of the NSSE benchmarks including level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interaction with faculty, personal development and gains, and supportive campus environment benchmarks. Students from this study did not show evidence that the fraternity and sorority life experience influenced their collegiate experiences, including civic engagement or the other potential educational outcomes.

While some studies highlight that the fraternity and sorority experience positively influenced some educational outcomes, Alexandra Robbins (2004) described that the fraternity and sorority life experience negatively influenced students during college. During an ethnography study, Robbins (2004) discovered how social groups played an important and complicated role in the behavior and experiences of women associated with Greek organizations. As an undercover author and through personal relationship building, Robbins (2004) illustrated the situations and dilemmas that sorority women faced during their college experience. Robbins (2004) experienced situations of peer pressure, balancing time commitments, learning the politics and polices in a chapter, and understanding the meaning of sisterhood. She experienced many uncomfortable situations throughout her time in the sorority including recognizing some of

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the pitfalls of these social groups "…that instead of enhancing a girl's identity as she shifts from her formative years toward adulthood, the sisterhood could have a tendency to swallow that identity altogether" (p. 175). Robbins (2004) described the women's experiences in the chapter with the recruitment processes, social engagements, chapter meetings, and individual late-night talks of sororities with students experiencing many mixed feelings.

Cashin, Presley, and Meilman (1998) reported that the abuse of alcohol was found as a negative consequence from the fraternity and sorority life experience. The participants included 25,411 students who completed the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey from 61 institutions (Cashin et al., 1998). Greek students consumed significantly more drinks per week, took part in heavy drinking more often, and suffered negative consequences compared to non-Greek students (Cashin et al., 1998). Further, chapter leaders of these Greek organizations consumed more alcohol, engaged in heavy drinking, and experienced further consequences compared to Greek members (Cashin et al., 1998). Fraternity and sorority members felt that alcohol was a way to friendships, social activity and sexual activity, when compared with non-Greek students (Cashin et al., 1998). Greek students used alcohol as a tool to connect with people for social needs rather than utilizing the experience for other educational outcomes.

Participants throughout these studies demonstrated conflicting data on the influence of the fraternity and sorority life experience to general outcomes. Although the studies from Astin (1993), Kelley (2008), and Long (2012) reported positive influence on growth in leadership abilities and leadership skills, Robbins (2004), Cashin et al. (1998), and parts of Routon and Walker (2014) reported negative influences on the educational outcomes of fraternity and sorority members. Hayek et al. (2002), Hevel et al. (2011), and Pike (2003) used the NSSE as a way to benchmark the fraternity and sorority life experience, although their various findings

were conflicted. Although the NSSE is a powerful tool to illustrate a large sample of participants, students missed the opportunity to explain why and more specifically what about their fraternity and sorority life experience and even other collegiate experiences influenced their general outcomes.

Leadership Development and Commitment to Civic Engagement

The programs and initiatives within fraternity and sorority organizations are influential factors that contribute to students' commitments to civic engagement even though the scholarship on fraternity and sorority experiences both challenges and supports these various programs and initiatives. Although national fraternity and sorority organizations promote that their mission and vision statements emphasize leadership development through their membership experiences (Harms, Wood, Roberts, Bureau, & Green, 2006), the ideal educational outcomes that are developed do not always lead to positive influences on students' leadership development. Astin (1993) and his sample of over 20,000 students showed being a member of a fraternity or sorority had positive effects on self-reported growth in leadership abilities, the leadership personality measure, status striving, hedonism, and alcohol consumption, but negative effect on liberalism. Further, fraternities and sororities offered opportunities for volunteerism and leadership development (Astin, 1993).

Kelley (2008) reported on the experience of 134 former fraternity presidents' leadership development 10 years after their positions. Participants from 105 different colleges and universities completed a survey questionnaire packet that included questions on demographics, university attendance, chapter affiliation, and current occupation and Leadership Practice Inventory and Leadership Acquisitions Form (Kelley, 2008). Chapter presidents felt that their leadership role had a positive influence on their leadership skills (Kelley, 2008). Chapter

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presidents listed that running the day to day operations of the fraternity house, such as collecting payments, managing food service, completing house maintenance, and meeting fire and safety codes as activities, attributed to their leadership development skills (Kelley, 2008). Although the research did not offer insight as to whether the fraternity presidents obtain jobs or engage in civic involvement after college, the perception from the students provided evidence that meeting management and conflict management, teamwork, and interpersonal skills were the most important skills learned during their experience (Kelley, 2008). Further, the fraternity presidents did not explain the reasoning why they felt that their experience contributed to their commitment to service and what other factors may have also contributed during college.

Long (2012) backs up Astin's (1993) and Kelley's (2008) research that the fraternity and sorority life experience influenced students' leadership. Long's research (2012) explored how the fraternity and sorority experience contributed to the areas of leadership, scholarship, service, and friendship. The participants in the research included 9,380 college students from 15 Southeastern institutions that took part in the 2008/2009 AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment (Long, 2012). Overall, fraternity and sorority members did experience gains in all four areas (Long, 2012). In relation to the area of service, members exhibited an overall 'good' fraternity and sorority experience as it related to their commitment to service (Long, 2012). Although this study was conducted while students were in college, fraternity and sorority members stated that their current experience in fraternity and sorority life helped develop their commitment to service. The students' perspective draws a connection that students at one time felt that the fraternity or sorority experience influenced their civic engagement, but it is unclear whether this resulted in future civic engagement and whether their fraternity and sorority experience contributed.

Greyerbiehl and Mitchell (2014) explored the influence historically Black sororities contributed to the college experiences of African American women in a smaller qualitative study compared to the larger quantitative studies previously mentioned. Through constructivist phenomenological case study, seven African American sorority women from a large, public, predominantly white institution participated in focus groups and one-on-one interviews to understand their individual experiences (Greyerbiel & Mitchell, 2014). The participants felt that their experience in the sorority provided opportunities for leadership development (Greyerbiel & Mitchell, 2014). Their experience was influenced through family, role models, or mentors, and it gave them access to larger networks and community and provided academic support (Greyerbiel & Mitchell, 2014). Although this pool of participants was small and only from one institution, students felt that learned leadership skills were an educational outcome of their fraternity and sorority life experience (Greyerbiel & Mitchell, 2014). While this study was from the perspective of college seniors, the participants may feel differently about their college experience after college and may attribute other experiences to their engagement in activities, like civic involvement. Further, the participants were minority, female students at a predominantly White institution (Greyerbiel & Mitchell, 2014). The perspective of these participants after college may be different than other female, sorority member students from the same institution.

As a result of these various experiences and leadership development opportunities, students within fraternity and sorority organizations develop outcomes from these various experiences that in some way contribute to their commitment to civic engagement. Hayek, Carini, O'Day, and Kuh (2002) reported that Greek students not only appeared to be equally or sometimes more engaged in community service than non-Greek students but also appeared equally or sometimes more engaged in other areas like academically challenging tasks, active

learning, student-faculty interaction, diversity, satisfaction, and learning and personal development goals. Although the quantitative research used a large participant pool, 42,182 students from 192 institutions with Greek life systems completed The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE; Hayek et al., 2002). The Hayek et al. (2002) study was used as a baseline to understand the level of engagement that the fraternity and sorority organizations offer their members and the takeaways from these levels of engagement during college.

Although these studies are important in understanding the experience of college students, especially fraternity and sorority members, many of these studies were taken from the perspective of college students during their experience rather than after the experience was over. The participants of these studies may not credit postcollege experiences, the same as college experiences that influenced their postcollege educational outcomes, like civic engagement. This is why it is important to study and understand the perspective of these students after their collegiate experience and how this relates to their commitment to civic engagement.

Although relevant literature has included descriptions of the relationships between fraternity and sorority life and civic engagement, it is unclear what civic engagement outcomes come from collegiate experiences, academics, or other life experiences, specifically after college outcomes. Merkel (2013) studied the relationship between involvement in fraternity and sorority organizations and alumni giving and general involvement. Through a qualitative study, students expressed that their interest in alumni involvement was introduced by their fraternity and sorority involvement (Merkel, 2013). Additionally, some students indicated that their involvement in fraternity and sorority organizations had a negative influence with their relationship with the university since they were more inclined to maintain their relationship with their fraternity and sorority chapter after graduation and not the university (Merkel, 2013). While this research

explains the influence of alumni's fraternity and sorority organizations, members of fraternity and sorority organizations did not explain what specific experiences during college lead to their general civic engagement or giving back to their fraternity and sorority organization or alma mater.

Monks (2003) conducted a research study to understand the characteristics and motivation of individuals who were more likely to contribute to their alma mater. Students from the graduating class of 1989 of a private, highly selective university completed a survey of their demographics, undergraduate experience, current activities, and satisfaction with their alma mater (Monks, 2003). Although many characteristics of the participants were found throughout the results, fraternity and sorority membership influenced greater giving (Monks, 2003). Although it is important for universities to understand the characteristics of alumni to potential giving opportunities, Monks (2003) did not report why these alumni contributed to civic organizations, like universities, and what previous experiences helped develop these contributions. Further, the alumni contributed financially to universities, but this does not explain other levels of civic engagement like community service, leadership positions, and time devoted to other civic organizations besides their alma mater.

Further, Soria and Thomas-Card (2014) dove deeper into understanding the reasons for motivation of fraternity and sorority members to serve after college. Through a sample of 7,800 students from nine public research universities, the intrinsic motivators to serve included belief in a cause, commitment to be a good citizen, and intent to make a change in the community (Soria et al., 2014). The extrinsic motivations included the want to develop leadership skills, learn new things, and demonstrate academic requirements (Soria et al., 2014). The participants' fraternity or sorority organization had negative influence on the desire to serve after college

(Soria et al., 2014). Students did not respond well to mandatory requirements and were motivated by personal benefits (Soria et al., 2014). Although the research from Soria et al. (2014) showed the reasons why students would volunteer after college, the sample of the study was taken from students' potential motivators to serve rather than the reasons why alumni engage in civic work after college.

The literature about fraternities and sororities on college campuses provides us an understanding of who these organizations are, and the general outcomes associated with their programs and initiatives. While the information may be conflicting with the commitment to civic engagement during students' collegiate experiences or thereafter, this collective research helps provide us baseline information on what students and alumni contribute to their outcomes from these various experiences and an opportunity to advance our knowledge more specifically on how these fraternity and sorority organizations influence civic engagement.

Civic Engagement

History of Civic Engagement

As noted in the introduction, civic engagement means many things to many people. Looking at the idea of civic engagement over time, we see different ways that higher education has defined or operationalized civic engagement.

Colonial Education to World War II

At a basic level, as outlined in the introduction, civic engagement can be defined as "the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" (Adler & Goggin, 2005, p. 236). Despite the fact that the U.S. constitution has never designated higher education as a specific federal interest, a commitment to advancing civic engagement has nevertheless been evident throughout the history

of the U.S. higher education. Whether in postwar contexts, the context of a shifting global economic landscape, or the societal need to adjust to changing global economies, higher education becomes important when there is a need to fill the gap in society (Cardoza & Salinas, 2004).

The scholarship of civic engagement at colleges and universities started during the colonial college era when civic and religious leaders were developed and prepared (Boyer, 1996). For instance, Harvard's early leaders, along with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, suggested that responsibility of education included preparing students for life of involvement in their communities (Jacoby, 1996; Smith, 1994). Thereafter, the Revolutionary War helped leaders recognize that tools found in higher education could be leveraged to strengthen the country's infrastructure, shifting society from more of an individualized focus to more of a collective endeavor (Boyer, 1994). As both U.S. national identity and higher education in U.S. developed, academic leaders recognized that the liberal arts curriculum could advance civic work (Jacoby, 1996). Specifically, John Dewey advocated for experiential education and hands-on learning in various educational settings (Miettinen, 2010).

By 1862, the federal government recognized that investment in higher education could advance civic development. This investment was represented by the Land-Grant Act of 1862 (i.e., Morrill Act), which supported the development to advance agriculture and industry on the part of an expanding nation (Jacoby, 1996). As such, the Morrill Act was one of the most important legislative policies of its time (Jacoby, 1996). Its successor, the Land-Grant Act of 1890, continued this work post-Civil War by advancing the country's commitment to fighting segregation and discrimination funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Christy & Williamson, 1992).

Influence of World War II and National Policies

Over the intervening years, a focus on the role of higher education in advancing civic engagement waned. As the U.S. entered the Great Depression in the early 1930s, civic engagement was no longer a priority (Jacoby, 1996). But this all changed in the lead-up to World War II. World War II forced a new direction for the country and a renewed focus on civic engagement as the federal government introduced the GI Bill and created the National Science Foundation (Jacoby, 1996). Since World War II called for so many Americans to sacrifice and support the war efforts, the federal government stepped in and in return established the GI Bill to provide educational opportunities for these servicemen after the war (Jacoby, 1996).Through this new policy, the federal government showed its support of its citizens who had sacrificed their lives and time away from their families. Further, the National Science Foundation was formed by the federal government to elevate scientific progress, to improve national health, to form a standard of living for increasing jobs for its citizens, and to maintain a national defense (National Science Foundation, 1945).

With changes in enrollment and a growing awareness of the U.S.'s place in global contexts, student affairs mirrored this sentiment in its *1949 Student Personnel Point of View* (p.17), wherein it established that the goal of higher education was for the "application of creative imagination and trained intelligence to the solution of social problems and to the administration of public affairs" (p. 17). This began to reinforce the need for education inside and outside of the classroom. Community service became relevant for college students and Americans in the 1960s, including organizations like the Peace Corps, YMCA, 4-H, the Scouting movement, campus ministries, and fraternities and sororities (Jacoby, 1996).

Creation of U.S. Department of Education and Service-Learning

In the late 1970s, higher education needed to rebuild, and this started with the creation of the U.S. Department of Education and the support of affirmative action initiatives in college admission processes for minority students, like the United States Supreme Case *University of California v. Bakke* (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2016). The 1980s continued this rebuilding through workforce development and the advancement of community and technical colleges (Trainor, 2015). Higher education also found leaders to respond to tension brought on through the increase of diversity on college campuses (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2016). In the early 1990s, service and academics combined forming civic learning as a curricular goal (Saltmarsh, 2005). Service-learning was coined as a phrase that institutions began using to bring attention to the change of focus toward civically engaged universities (Saltmarsh, 2005). The evolution of higher education continued to support the underlying importance of civic engagement within higher education.

Scholars in American Society viewed college students as focusing more on their individual needs rather than the common good, so groups (e.g., Campus Compact) and legislation (e.g., National and Community Service Act) introduced civic engagement programs into college and universities and even secondary education (Jacoby, 1996). Organizations, previously listed, refocused college campuses and increased efforts in the 1990s to solve problems and create more engaged universities (Jacoby, 1996).

This refocus was carried out into the twenty-first century where higher education administrators have had to review the application of these new techniques to ensure that the needs of the country were being met and to quantify that what higher education is doing is actually helping. Reports, like the Carnegie Report (2006) from the Carnegie Foundation for the

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Advancement of Teaching and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, showcased that the civic mission of colleges and universities should include "…being good institutional citizens that serve their communities in multiple ways; providing forums for free democratic dialogue; conducting research on democracy, civil society, and civic development; and educating their own students to be effective and responsible citizens." Higher education throughout the years not only has helped students learn basic facts and figures but also has helped prepare students how to address the issues and needs facing communities (Cardoza & Salinas, 2004). Thus, all entities associated with higher education institutions, like fraternity and sorority organizations, have a call to be knowledgeable of the historical events from the past that influenced civic engagement in higher education and the obligation to shape people to be engaged in our societal leadership today.

Definition of Civic Engagement

From the beginning, civic engagement has been defined as "the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" (Adler & Goggin, 2005). At a more advanced level, civic engagement is a concept that can have multiple meanings and examples across different levels of analysis. Although there are many different definitions of civic engagement, civic engagement can be broken down into individual, institutional, and system levels that conclude with a process of developing civic engagement.

Types of Civic Engagement

It is important to understand a few areas of civic engagement that need clarification on meaning in this paper. Community service is "participation in voluntary service to one's local community" (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Service learning is "integrating community service with

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school curriculum and gives students the opportunity to get academic credit for participating in volunteer activities" (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Service-learning is typically more structured and planned out while community service and other forms of civic engagement can be less formalized and truly volunteer work based on interest or passion for the civic engagement area. Civic engagement is the overarching form of both community service and service learning but also can expand to social change and political involvement (Adler & Goggin, 2005). For the purpose of clarification of this paper and the use of term civic engagement, civic engagement is the broader term that encompasses but is not limited to examples of civic engagement like service-learning and community service.

Concept of Civic Engagement

When thinking of the ways civic engagement is operationalized, it can happen at three different levels. These levels include the individual level, the institutional level, and the system level.

Individual Level. From the individual level, civic engagement builds upon the basic level definition mentioned above that discusses that civic engagement is the different ways citizens participate in their communities to support and shape the needs of the communities (Adler & Goggin, 2005). As we focus on civic engagement within college campuses, students on college campuses can participate in their communities through community service, social activism, service-learning, or politics (Adler & Goggin, 2005). While an individual takes the initiative to get involved in these civic engagement forms, the student can volunteer either individually or in groups. At times individuals can be influenced by their peers or other members of their community to participate in different forms of civic engagement (Klofastad, 2010).

Typically, individuals or groups get involved in a specific civic engagement because they share a common interest or belief for their involvement in an issue, an organization, or a community need (Soria et al., 2014). From these various experiences and opportunities, students either continue to work within a specific civic engagement area that may result in the development of skills, knowledge, values, or a new commitment level for the individual as well as an impact on the civic engagement area. Further, these individual and group level settings may result in new aspirations and actions as they engage with others or their communities.

Institutional Level. From the institutional level, civic engagement is typically seen through the various programs and activities that you may find within a community, an educational institution, or a formal organization. In the college setting, formal programs generate from academic based initiatives like service-learning programs within classroom settings (Stukas et al., 1999). These service-learning programs offer students a chance to learn about civic engagement and connect this back to practical hands-on experiences with academic credit (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Other program offerings may be offered more informally through student affairs or athletic departments that provide both passive and active programs for students to participate in at different levels (Weinberg, 2016). All these different programs or initiatives ultimately can shape the civic engagement culture on an individual college campus.

As a result of these various initiatives and programs, there is an interlocking set of organizations and individuals that then create the larger culture of civic engagement that then influences other surrounding entities like the local community, town, family members, and so forth. Campus environment can have a positive impact on values and beliefs while also having an indirect effect on civic engagement activities (Billings & Terkla, 2011). This influence can set

expectations for others within the community and in turn create new aspirations for individuals or groups and action from the interlocked set of individuals and organizations.

Fraternity and sorority chapters are also organizations that can and do influence the impact of their members and their civic engagement further impacting the surrounding other entities (Hayek et al., 2002). These organizations are structured for a commitment to civic engagement through their officer tiers, their formal and informal connections to local and national charities, and their overall general membership requirements for civic engagement (Kimbrough, 2003; NIC, 2004; NPC, 2020a; National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2020b). Ultimately, the structures of these organizations have taken civic engagement under its wing of responsibility to influence within its various communities and nationwide.

System Level. From the system level, civic engagement is analysis of the interactions across all institutional domains and how all of these entities play together to influence the greater society. Individuals, institutions, groups, community partners, government, and fraternity and sorority organizations are all examples of entities engaged in civic engagement work that coincide with the creation of our cultural society. In other words, civic engagement at the systems level is "the interaction citizens with their society and their government" (Adler & Goggin, 2005). These interactions can come in the form of policies, procedures, volunteerism, and political participation known as different types of civic engagement (Adler & Goggin, 2005).

Fraternity and sorority organizations are located on various higher education institution campuses. As mentioned previously in the History of Civic Engagement section, some higher education institutions were founded as land-grant institutions through federal government's program of the Land-Grant Act of 1862 to incentivize higher education institutions to help the societal needs of agriculture and industry (Jacoby, 1996). Additionally, 28 years later, the federal

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government created the policy of the Land-Grant Act of 1890 to again incentivize the support for the creation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Christy & Williamson, 1992). These two higher education examples reinforced the policy work of civic engagement and how this ultimately affected the entire system of America. Even today, the work of academics with civic engagement is addressing "social, environmental, educational, and economic issues" (Cress, 2012). Fraternity and sorority organizations are a small part in the overarching system influencing and creating action within civic engagement in society.

Educational leadership and civic leaders claim that higher education has a responsibility to develop citizens to lead our communities now and in the future (Carnegie, 2006). Although institutions in higher education understand this opportunity to influence societal issues through civic engagement, there is little information to understand the long-term influence specific higher education entities, like fraternity and sorority organizations, have on these societal issues. Current research supports that there is positive correlation between engagement and college and efforts to seek knowledge, have opinions, and participate in political processes (Hillygus, 2005). Further, research shows more participation in civic behaviors amongst college graduates compared to non-college graduates (Mayhew et al. 2016). We need to understand the long-term impact of these organizations beyond college.

Process of Developing Civic Engagement

The models below illustrate that there is a process that happens that develops civic engagement. As previously mentioned, civic engagement can come in various forms from community service, service-learning, involvement in organizations or political movements, or general organizations and community efforts. However, these various forms of civic engagement develop over time and create outcomes, perspectives, beliefs, and actions because of these

various exposures and experiences. More specifically, these models will focus on how students and later alumni may involve themselves in various experiences that develop their commitment to civic engagement over time.

Astin's (1984) Input-Process-Output Model

Astin's (1984) framework for understanding college and its influence on students is based on three categories: inputs, environments, and outputs (Mayhew et al., 2016). Students come to college with inputs that could include demographics, academic preparedness, and predispositions before college (Mayhew et al., 2016). Students in turn then have various experiences in the college environments they interact with, such as institutional culture, climate, and specific educational experiences from the institution (Mayhew et al., 2016). Further, due to college and other precollege experiences, students form outcomes after college that shape attitudes, aptitudes, and behaviors (Mayhew et al., 2016). This framework demonstrates that inputs are transformed into outputs through interactions between the person and the college environment.

Magolda's Self-Authorship Theory

Magolda's (1999) framework knows that students develop during college but also continue to develop and grow after college. There are stages that a student goes through that include prior to coming to college, during college, and after college (Magolda, 1999). Throughout all of the different experiences within these stages, students create their own knowledge in the world based on these experiences (Magolda, 1999). This theory is the linear process that students go through to become authors of their own lives across college and postcollege experiences (Magolda, 1999).

Musil's Civic Learning Spiral Model

The Civic Learning Spiral from the Association of American Colleges and Universities Civic Engagement Working Group explains how the various experiences throughout elementary school and college can establish lifelong civic engagement (Musil, 2009). This lifelong civic engagement can come in different forms like individual or group experiences that include serving at a soup kitchen or joining a student organization that does community service as a group. The six elements of integration and interactivity in the Civic Learning Spiral include the following: self; communities and culture; knowledge; skills; values; and public action (Musil, 2009). These six elements create a spiral form that represent student learning as a fluid, integrated continuum (Musil, 2009). People acquire knowledge in these elements that in turn shape their disposition, dialogue, and activism (Musil, 2009). This model demonstrates the cyclical and constructive nature of development as well as the factors related to the development of civic engagement outcomes (Musil, 2009).

Influences on Civic Engagement and Related Outcomes

The first section of the literature review discusses fraternities and sororities on college campuses and the creation of these organizations. The next section talks about the foundational purpose of civic engagement and the various aspects connected back to fraternity and sorority organizations. This final section before the conceptual model integrates the first two sections to form the outcomes as a result of these areas within higher education. This section will discuss the various influences on civic engagement and the outcomes as a result of these various experiences and factors.

Micro-Level Personal Characteristics

When addressing micro-level, it is what is happening at the psychological level or internally. This includes precollege dispositions and values, dispositions and values developed during college, dispositions and values developed after college.

Precollege Dispositions and Values

Precollege experiences that students bring with them to college can influence the college experience and commitment to civic engagement after college. When examining the ways students become more connected to civic engagement, it is important to take precollege experiences into consideration because we know that students come to college as individuals with partially formed identities. We must therefore be careful in a model of development to acknowledge that students were partially formed when they came to college, complete with values, experiences, and identities established in earlier years. In a study of 3,250 individuals who would have been the age of a college graduate in 1965 (whether they attended or did not attend college), Kam and Palmer (2008) found that precollege life experiences and values were more important for shaping political participation over time than college experiences.

Speaking to the observation that generational identity could influence the ways students understand imperatives for student engagement, Kam and Palmer's study may be skewed since the participants were in high school during the Vietnam War where many political upheavals were happening within society (Kam & Palmer, 2008). Additionally, lack of political interest, lack of education, and a general different political climate may have influenced the data results in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although precollege socialization was a factor that influenced a student to become civically engaged, not all students experience a very dramatic and social influencing war like the Vietnam War. The events and sentiment around the Vietnam War may

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have influenced the students' knowledge and perspective more heavily compared to other generations of students.

While the previous study focused solely on precollege experiences, Bryant, Gayles, and Davis (2012) studied the relationship amongst civic values and behaviors, college culture, and college involvement. Two national college student surveys, the 2000 *Cooperative Institutional Research Program* (CIRP) *Freshman Survey* and the 2003 *College Students' Beliefs and Values* (CSBV) survey, were administered to 3,680 entering first-year college students at 46 baccalaureate colleges and universities and then again 3 years later to those same students (Bryant et al., 2012). High school students' behaviors and values influenced the college culture and their involvement in cocurricular engagement (Bryant et al., 2012). Further, social activism values attributed to engagement in civic behaviors like volunteering; donating money, clothing, or food; and helping friends with personal problems (Bryant et al., 2012).

Overall, students' values develop future charitable behaviors (Bryant et al., 2012). A student's childhood values may influence the future of civic engagement. However, the design of this study does not explain the exact experiences during high school and then later in college that developed those values and charitable behaviors. Knowing the real-life precollege and college experiences may help explain what contributed to alumni's involvement in their communities after college.

Dispositions and Values Developing during College

Students develop dispositions and values toward civic engagement during college. Cruce and Moore (2012) showed a contrasting viewpoint of Kam and Palmer's (2008) research, which showed that precollege service participation and civic mindedness were independent from a college student's propensity and intentions to volunteer. According to Cruce and Moore (2012),

students with high levels of civic mindedness were more likely to volunteer. Further, college involvement, like learning communities and fraternity and sorority organizations, influenced students more than the precollege experiences (Cruce & Moore, 2012). Cruce and Moore's (2007, 2012) research highlighted that there was a positive relationship between first-year college students who live on-campus in learning communities and volunteerism. Further, Cruce and Moore (2012) demonstrated that first-year learning community students have a higher probability to volunteer than nonmembers. Although this research may have limitations since the participants were self-selected, students living in close proximity together and precollege experiences influenced educational outcomes, like civic engagement (Cruce & Moore, 2012).

Astin and Sax (1998) delved deeper into this topic to understand the short-term outcomes that service participation has on undergraduate students during college. During 1990-1994, 3,450 students completed the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey known as the College Student Survey (Astin & Sax, 1998). Although all individual student characteristics and propensity to engage in service were controlled in regression analysis, service participation enhanced a student's academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility (Astin & Sax, 1998). Students who were committed to, had plans to, and had positive opinions around community service at the start of college were more likely to continue this behavior and attitude during college (Astin & Sax, 1998). Further, students who participated in community action programs, helped others in difficult situations, influenced social values and political structure, and volunteered in the community showed a more positive influence on future community service involvement (Astin & Sax, 1998).

Students experience short-term outcomes through their participation with volunteering and community service during college. Dee (2003) studied data collected from the High School

and Beyond Longitudinal Study from the U. S. Department of Education to understand the influence that enrolling in college had on civic participation and volunteerism at a 2-year or 4-year institution. About 12,000 high school sophomores in 1980 participated in the study with follow-up interviews occurring when participants were 20 years old in 1984 and then 28 years old in 1992 (Dee, 2003). College had a strong influence on voter participation from 21 to 30 percentile points but some influence on the probability of volunteering (Dee, 2003). Although this research neglects to show the results of how graduation or overall student experience up until graduation leads to civic engagement, the research does form a foundation that college enrollment, as well as secondary education, can play a part in voter participation and some volunteer contributions.

Further research from Brand (2010) studied the influence of education on civic participation by collecting panel data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and annual interviews from participants between 1979 and 2006. College completion had a positive correlation to time and effort a student contributes towards volunteering and community service (Brand, 2010). Brand (2010) reported that college graduates were 2.1 times more likely to volunteer for civic, community, or youth groups than noncollege graduates. Further, college graduates were 1.7 times more likely to volunteer for charitable organizations or social welfare groups (Brand, 2010).

Lastly, Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) reported the contributions volunteer work during college can have on students after college. A series of surveys were administered to 12,376 students from 209 institutions (Astin et al., 1999). These students completed the surveys within 4 and 9 years after entering college (Astin et al., 1999). Students who completed volunteer work during undergraduate years had positive associations with cognitive and affective outcomes 9

years after college (Astin et al., 1999). Further, the hours that students volunteered during college had a direct correlation to the amount of time that they volunteered after college (Astin et al., 1999). Students who volunteered 6 or more hours per week on volunteer work during their last year of college doubled their chance of volunteering after college (Astin et al., 1999). Additionally, students who completed volunteer work frequently during high school were twice as likely to complete volunteer work 9 years after college (Astin et al., 1999).

The students in this study who volunteered during college have a correlation with attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, giving back to their alma mater, and socializing with diverse groups of people (Astin et al., 1999). Volunteer work in college also was associated with helping others in difficult times, associating with community action and environmental programs, promoting racial understanding, and creating a meaningful life (Astin et al., 1999). Astin et al. (1999) revealed that volunteer work helps alumni to become socially responsible, empowered within their communities, and supportive of education. While this information provides more descriptive general findings, the large pool of participants is unable to reflect on the specific experiences and long-term outcomes that contributed to their civic engagement after college.

Dispositions and Values Developing after College

The research of Astin et al. (1999) transitions further that students and later alumni develop dispositions and values around civic engagement after college. Pascarella, Ethington, and Smart (1988) studied the long-term influence of college on humanitarian and civic involvement. The development of students was tracked over 9 years with the measures including student preenrollment characteristics; institutional characteristics; college academic and social experiences; degree attainment; and postcollegiate occupation (Pascarella et al., 1988). About

10,326 students at 487 colleges and universities completed the 1971-1980 Cooperative Institutional Research Program survey prior to entering college and completed a follow-up survey based on the initial survey as well as educational attainment and current occupation questions (Pascarella et al., 1988). Neither institutional selectivity nor predominant race had an influence on developing humanitarian and civic involvement values (Pascarella et al., 1988). However, college grades, social leadership experiences, and faculty and staff interaction had at least one significant direct effect on humanitarian and civic involvement values (Pascarella et al., 1988). Institutions can influence students' civic values, but this quantitative study does not reveal what specific ways students get involved in civic engagement due to the influence of experiences at the institution.

There are postcollegiate outcomes within civic engagement that occur amongst alumni after college. The characteristics of alumni who participate in civic engagement, specifically for their institution, can be connected to their post-collegiate outcomes. Weerts and Ronca (2008) explored the characteristics of alumni who supported their alma mater by volunteering, offering professional expertise, and engaging in political advocacy. Undergraduate alumni from a large doctoral/research institution participated in the *Alumni Connections* survey administered by the Wisconsin Center for Advancement of Post-secondary Education (Weerts & Ronca, 2008). The alumni who supported their institution lived in close proximity to the university, were connected to the university through high quality academic programs, and were more likely to volunteer due to their service orientated and civically engaged status (Weerts & Ronca, 2008). Weerts and Ronca (2008) were unable to conclude in their quantitative study more specific information on the experiences during college that may have led to their civic engagement after college. They

were also unable to report the alumni's college involvement in specific organizations and activities.

Further, Bea, Hough, and Jung (2016) analyzed variable data sets including alumni giving data, alumni demographic data, athletic winnings, and college rankings to understand alumnus gift-giving behaviors. Athletic and academic prestige influenced alumnus gift-giving behaviors, but membership in a fraternity or sorority membership did not influence giving (Bea et al., 2016). Older, male alumni contributed more than younger, female counterparts while college majors also played a role in giving behavior by alumni (Bea et al., 2016). Although these studies demonstrate important alumni personal characteristics that lead to civic engagement after college, all of these studies miss the opportunity to understand what specific collegiate experiences, programs, or events played a factor in their giving back to civic organizations including their alma mater.

Meso-Level College Environment

Meso-level considerations focus on the interaction of students within their environment. These include institutional environment and culture as well as classroom environments, and specialized programs focused specifically on service-learning. These also include the environments encountered in student organizations, specifically where fraternity and sorority experiences are involved.

Institutional Environment and Culture

Institutional culture and commitment to civic engagement also has the potential to influence a student's disposition toward civic engagement while enrolled in college. Institutions have long used civic engagement as a way to contribute to the needs of society and a growing global world. Graduates between 1996 and 2001 at Grove City College, a liberal arts college,

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participated in a study to understand the university's effectiveness toward its mission of service and engagement (Powell, 2008). The university lacked diversity, had limited classroom connection to service, and fractionation of service in the curriculum (Powell, 2008).

Further, the participants felt that Grove City College did not provide experiences for students to be exposed to different backgrounds or perspectives or many opportunities for students to connect classroom work to service, and the residence halls had great influence on the student's identity development but did not serve as a cocurricular activity (Powell, 2008). Clubs or organizations including Greek organizations influenced some participants' service exposure (Powell, 2008). Students valued institutions shaping their college experience, specifically civic engagement. Although this study uncovered the perception of students' civic engagement experiences during college, the research study only evaluated one university's mission and service participation.

Classroom Academic Experiences

Although the current research is conflicting, academic majors and faculty members can also influence college students' civic values and beliefs. Rhee and Kim (2011) completed a study of 12,378 undergraduate students from 106 four-year universities from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program panel that showed the collegiate influences on the civic values of students. Overall, students' civic values had a positive correlation between academic and social involvement (Rhee & Kim, 2011). Further, certain academic majors may or may not influence civic and community attitudes and engagement (Rhee & Kim, 2011). Students who majored in engineering or physical sciences demonstrated negative association with civic values, which included influencing political structure, social values, and helping others (Rhee & Kim 2011); while, Cruce and Moore (2012) reported conflicting research where they found a null

relationship between students who majored in science and volunteering. Further, Rhee and Kim (2011) and Lott (2013) showed consistent reports that social science departments have the most consistent influence on student values. Lott (2013) added additional research that students' civic values were influenced by taking women's and ethnic studies classes as well as institutional influences like selectivity, size, and attending a private institution. Additionally, Cruce and Moore (2012) found that majoring in education was related to positive volunteerism. These results indicate that the external factor of students' majors and academic courses may contribute to students' civic values and beliefs, but there are also other influencers to consider.

Although faculty influence was not discussed in the previous research, Astin and Antonio (2004) examined the influence faculty have on forming students' civic and social values. Astin and Antonio (2004) conducted research on students entering their freshman year of college in 1997 and then 4 years later at the end of their college experience. Women in this study showed higher level of civic and social values, completed more volunteer work, and designated a better understanding of others than male counterparts (Astin & Antonio, 2004). Gender and institutional types influenced students' character development including civic and social values (Astin & Antonio, 2004). For example, institutions with a religious focus have a positive effect on students' civic and social values and goals and as well as volunteerism, but more selective institutions have negative effect on the development of civic and social values (Astin & Antonio, 2004). Additionally, Astin, and Antonio (2004) reported that when faculty offered emotional support to students and students performed volunteer work in college, these levels of student engagement were predictors of character development.

Rhee and Kim (2011) also showed that there was a small effect on academic peer interactions on civic values. Although the study did not mention peer influence on civic values,

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peer engagement and interactions were influenced by diverse structures and cocurricular engagement that fostered the development of civic and community values (Rhee & Kim, 2011). Further, Rhee and Kim (2011) reported that faculty and student time together had a small effect on civic values. Although faculty interaction influenced students' civic values in one study, faculty only had a small influence on the development on a students' civic values in another study.

Ishitani and McKitrick (2013) studied the perspective of 2,443 college graduates to compare the relationship between academic programs and institutional characteristics to civic engagement behavior of postgraduates. Ishitani and McKitrick (2013) reported that majors including political science and history showed lower estimates for civic engagement. Academic programs, not institution type, had a significant influence on the civic engagement of students after college (Ishitani & McKitrick, 2013). Alumni in the field of education were more likely to participate in civic engagement after college (Ishitani & McKitrick, 2013). Black students were more interested in socially beneficial activities after college (Ishitani & McKitrick, 2013). Participants did not have the opportunity in this study to list all possible collegiate activities that influenced their civic engagement since the collegiate activities were predetermined in the study and there was not an opportunity to fill in additional experiences.

Although various research shows that academic majors can influence civic engagement after college, Ishitani & McKitrick (2013) reported that one's academic major was not a positive contributing factor for future civic engagement. With the use of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1998, students who majored in education; engineering/math; business; physical science; arts and humanities; and applied social science showed lower estimates for civic engagement (Ishitani & McKitrick, 2013). Although these studies showed conflicting

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results amongst classroom academic experiences, alumni were able to voice their perspectives of the long-term influences that these college experiences had on their future civic engagement. The authors in these studies missed opportunities to evaluate more specifically why these academic programs led to civic engagement after college.

Service-Learning Programs

Service-learning is a college experience that combines both academic learning inside the classroom and experimental learning to achieve value added outcomes related to critical thinking, identity development, and college success (Astin et al., 2006). Although the research on academic programs and faculty involvement showed some influence on developing students' beliefs and values, other programs, like service-learning programs, also influenced students' volunteerism in the future. Stukas, Snyder, and Clary (1999) studied the effects that mandatory volunteer programs have on students' intentions to volunteer in the future. The participants of this study included 371 business majors that were enrolled in a service-learning course that completed two surveys in the duration of the course (Stukas et al., 1999).

Students who participated in mandatory volunteer programs were more likely to engage in volunteer work if they had a history of volunteerism and did not feel their behavior was controlled by the program (Stukas et al., 1999). Thus, external constraints, like requirements and rewards to the individual, may reduce volunteer activity in the future (Stukas et al., 1999). Overall, mandatory volunteer programs and restrictions can negatively influence a student's behavior and perspective in future volunteer work (Stukas et al., 1999). However, Myers-Lipton (1996) reported that students who participated in community service during their undergraduate career in higher education enhanced their academic development. Although the authors in these studies reported that specific programs, like service-learning programs, influenced students' civic

engagement, the question remains unclear what specifically about these service-learning programs contributed to their level of civic engagement.

Service-learning programs influence civic engagement of alumni after college. Alumni that were management and marketing majors from a regional Midwestern university from 1998 through 2003 participated in a study on the university's service-learning requirement and future volunteer work of alumni (Tomkovick, Lester, Flunker, & Wells, 2008). Volunteer work was a determinant for future volunteer behavior (Tomkovick et al., 2008). Further, students who had participated in volunteer work prior to the service-learning program showed a higher level of volunteerism after the completion of the service-learning program (Tomkovick et al., 2008). Volunteers expected personal outcomes due to their volunteer work (Tomkovick et al., 2008). Last, the participants who took part in the service-learning project felt more willing to volunteer in the future if there was great value in the project to the organization (Tomkovick et al., 2008). Overall, alumni wanted to see the value in their service beyond just volunteering but leading to long-term outcomes for themselves and the service organization (Tomkowick et al., 2008).

Fenzel and Peyrot (2005) studied the implications of previous community service work and service-learning programs on students' attitudes after college. During a study at a religious-affiliated liberal arts college, 481 alumni participated in a phone survey to understand current and past behaviors with service and alumni's current attitude toward service (Fenzel & Peyrot, 2005). Alumni who had participated in community service and service-learning in college demonstrated a positive correlation with attitudes toward social and personal responsibility (Fenzel & Peyrot, 2005). Further, alumni showed involvement in community service and service-related careers after college (Fenzel & Peyrot, 2005).

Further, service-learning programs not only influence a student's future volunteer work, but service-learning programs contribute to personal benefit outcomes. There 416 freshman and senior level students participated in a survey during college and then 13 years after college (Bowman, Brandenberger, Lapsley, Hill, & Quaranto, 2010). Students who participated in college volunteering and service-learning programs had a positive, indirect influence on their well-being (personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and life satisfaction) after college (Bowman et al., 2010). Additionally, students indicated subsequent adult volunteering and prosocial orientation because of the college experiences (Bowman et al., 2010).

Service-learning programs as well as academic majors influence future civic engagement in a final study. Through this study, 8,400 individuals from 229 higher education institutions completed a survey as entering first-year students, then as senior college students, and then again 6 years after college (Astin et al., 2006). Astin et al. (2006) studied the long-term effects of college on civic engagement and sense of civic responsibility. Astin et al. (2006) reported that 80% of participants volunteered during their senior year of high school while only 74% of participants volunteered by their senior year of college, and 68% of participants volunteered after college (Astin et al., 2006). Further, community service experiences were shown to have a stronger influence than service-learning programs while there was a positive correlation between majoring in history or political science and civic engagement after college (Astin et al., 2006). Undergraduates and alumni viewed that their academic majors and community service influenced their civic engagement after college (Astin et al., 2006). Service-learning programs, unlike previous research on service-learning programs during college, were shown not to be as influential to future civic engagement (Astin et al., 2006). Community service and service-learning programs have a positive influence on alumni's future civic engagement, but the authors

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are still unable to explain why alumni listed these college activities as influencing their civic engagement contributions after college.

Collegiate Activities on Civic Engagement

As student affairs professionals can confirm, there are benefits to college students when they participate in various college activities. Sax (2008) studied that college activities influenced the development of students' civic values and beliefs. Students who were more invested in college activities compared to those disengaged were committed to social activism that included commitment to help others, influence social values, and participate in community action programs (Sax, 2008). Whether these activities come from academics and faculty involvement, student organizations, or other diverse collegiate experiences, students' values and beliefs are shaped by these various experiences.

Other college activities like student organizations also influence college students' civic values and beliefs. College students who participated in student government and other student organizations showed moderate to strong impact on charitable behaviors (volunteering) of college students (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Further, Astin et al. (2011) established that spiritual practices like meditation, prayer, and religious/spiritual reading had moderate effect on the charitable involvement and ethics of caring. Astin and Antonio (2004) also reported that involvement in religious services and activities contributed to character development and volunteerism. Although the students demonstrated and attributed the formation of their civic values and beliefs on these various college experiences, the authors neglected to explain why these students felt that these experiences contributed their civic beliefs and values.

Weerts, Cabrera, and Megias (2014) further explained the reason for college students' civic action was based on the subgroups or classes of students that had similar civic participation

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profiles. The final sample included 1,876 students who completed a survey after graduating college from 1999 to 2003 (Weerts et al., 2014). Civically engaged students were members of organizations that were more volunteer-focused (charity paradigm), and other students were drawn to organizations that were more focused on advocacy (social change paradigm) (Weerts et al., 2014). Although some participants could be interested in both paradigms, the eight types of organizations included the following service; environmental; political; social; cultural; youth; professional; and community (Weerts et al., 2014). Alumni self-reported their participation in certain civic behaviors while attending college, but Latent Class Analysis (LCA) was utilized to connect the similarities in patterns of behaviors to the eight types of organizations (Weerts et al., 2014). Even though students did not have the opportunity to answer follow-up questions as they identified their civic involvement during college, these students preferred to serve through involvement in projects (project paradigm) and were more interested in the charity paradigm to solve immediate problems instead of the social change paradigm that involved deeper commitment (Weerts et al., 2014). Lastly, students that were more engaged in civic and social activities were a part of long-term change/advocacy agendas that were more likely to be members of political, environment organizations, and those students involved in more charity-based programs were more likely to be members of service, community, and youth organizations (Weerts et al., 2014). Students attributed their involvement in collegiate activities, like student organizations, as factors that impact their civic behavior during college, but students did not explain how these categories and civic patterns may lead to future civic engagement.

Lastly, diverse experiences and interactions with other people influence students' civic values and beliefs. Bowman (2011) reported a positive relationship between college diversity experiences and civic engagement. Further, exposure to racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity had

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a positive effect on social activism commitments (Sax, 2008); civic values and interests (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Rhee & Kim, 2011); political and social involvement (O'Neill, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); character development (Astin & Antonio, 2004); and ethic of caring (Astin et al., 2011). Additionally, Hurtado (2005) reported that positive diversity interactions developed social change, care for public good, and the concern for civic contributions. When people interact with different people, these various backgrounds and experiences of students can shape a college student's behavior for future civic engagement.

Klofastad (2010) discussed the influence of peer influence on civic participation, particularly on roommate conversations. Klofstad (2010) conducted a study to understand "civic talk" between roommates. "Civic talk" included the discussion of politics and current events (Klofstad, 2010). "Civic talk" amongst roommates showed to influence civic participation, the involvement in voluntary civic organizations (Klofstad, 2010). Further, this "civic talk" between roommates during their first year of college resulted in an increase in civic participation years later (Klofstad, 2010). College activities, like roommate interactions, was a factor to consider in how students shape their values and beliefs and future civic engagement over time. Klofstad (2010) did not report whether these values and beliefs were only developed during or after college.

Students who participate in study abroad programs, another college activity, can provide students exposure to different cultures and experiences. Lott (2013) informed that study abroad programs had a positive influence on civic values like contributing to the political structure, cleaning up the environment, and getting involved in community action programs. Short-term immersion trips helped students make meaning of social issues, stereotypes, and privilege; thus, students experienced the world "beyond the bubble," encouraged boundary crossing, and

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personalized lived experiences of others (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Ireland, Niehaus, & Skenfall, 2012). Students in these studies provided more specific reasoning for their level of civic engagement, but it is still unclear if students after college will credit these same experiences during college to their civic engagement contribution after college.

Fraternity and Sorority and Civic Engagement Activities

A relationship does exist between fraternity and sorority life and civic engagement. Moreover, students credited the formation of their values and concerns for civic work to their experience in the fraternity and sorority community (Jackson & Iverson, 2009). Students at a private, research institution in the Midwest contributed their involvement within their fraternity and sorority life community to their knowledge about social concerns, shaping their values, and understanding of getting involved in their community (Jackson & Iverson, 2009). Sixteen predominantly White students between the ages of 18-23 years old participated in focus groups and individual interviews (Jackson & Iverson, 2009). "Participants views on citizenship were evident in their descriptions of gaining awareness, understanding the values of their community and how these values informed their decision-making, recognizing they are part of and accountable to something greater, and taking action and making a difference in their community" (Jackson & Iverson, 2009, p. 10). Although Jackson and Iverson (2009) reported a relationship between the fraternity and sorority life experience and formation of their civic values (Jackson & Iverson, 2009), students did not express the reasons why and what specific collegiate experiences contributed to the value that they placed on the importance of civic work and social concerns. The small pool of participants from the study by Jackson and Iverson (2009) offered a foundational look in the ways college students feel their collegiate experiences influenced their civic engagement.

Although the study from Jackson and Iverson (2009) shared only one research lens, Baier and Whipple (1990) also studied the perspective of students who are members of fraternity and sorority organizations versus non-Greek students and the formation of their values. Greek affiliation did not contribute to the formation of positive values of their members (Baier & Whipple, 1990). Further, Greek affiliated students' values and attitudes did not change from their freshman year and throughout the rest of the college experience (Baier & Whipple, 1990). Baier and Whipple (1990) reported that Greek affiliated members continued a fraternal system that isolated different cultures to limit societal issues or concerns in order to protect the welfare of these organizations (Baier & Whipple, 1990). Although the research from Baier and Whipple (1990) offered an alternative finding to the value formation of these students, both the research from Baier and Whipple (1990) and Jackson and Iverson (2009) only offered perspectives on the formation of students' values and not understanding exactly the reasons why students become involved in civic work.

Fraternity and sorority members participate in community service, but it is unclear whether community service during college influenced civic engagement further. Asei, Seifert, and Pascarella (2009) studied the relationships between affiliation, engagement, and learning outcomes. A large sample of 3,153 students from a large Midwestern, public, research university participated in a web-based survey during their freshman and senior years of college (Asei et al., 2009). Further, Greek students participated in social involvement during college but limited the diversity of relationships. However, fraternity and sorority students were associated with higher levels of community service (Asei et al., 2009).

Greek affiliated students in other research tended to volunteer more than students who were not Greek (Astin et al., 2011; Cruce & Moore, 2007, 2012; Hayek et al., 2002). Cruce and

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Moore (2012) reported that fraternity and sorority members had a probability of volunteering 22 percentile points greater than non-Greek affiliated students during the first year of college. However, the probability of students does not always lead to volunteering, especially if students are required to volunteer by their fraternity or sorority life organizations.

Sax, Astin, Korn, and Mahoney (1996) further developed the relationship between fraternity and sorority life and civic engagement by research that highlighted external influencers, like other clubs and organizations, influenced the community service of fraternity and sorority members. Students who tended to join fraternities were more likely to have participated in clubs and organizations as well as completed previous volunteer work (Sax et al., 1996). Through the data collected from the American Council of Education's 1996 freshman survey, students in fraternity and sorority life and involved in clubs and organizations have a positive correlation to volunteer work (Sax et al., 1996). Although the research found through this section of the literature shows a connection to the fraternity and sorority life and civic engagement, the authors were unable to explain the outcomes resulting from civic engagement and what exactly fraternity and sorority students attributed to their commitment to civic engagement after college.

Macro-Level College Environment

The macro-level involves a students' interactions with their environment beyond the university. These include generational identity and societal disposition toward civic engagement.

Generational Identity

While development of civic engagement identity may take shape before, during, or after college, participants are influenced from what is happening around them in society as well, which can be unknowingly directly or indirectly. Howe and Strauss's (1991) generational theory

also explains that events in history are connected with generational personalities. Each generation personality creates a new era every 20-22 years, which in turn creates a new social, political, and economic climate (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). Each generation in turn has generation personality that is built from common age location, common beliefs and behaviors, and perceived membership in a common generation (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). These distinct generational personalities can in turn influence the values, beliefs, behaviors, and viewpoints of each member of that generation.

This generational theory helps explain the literature that shows that civic engagement is perceived and practiced differently by each generation (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002). A 2001 report from the Pew Charitable Trusts entitled *The civic and political health of the nations* showed that 50% of the 55 year old population or higher is civically engaged in some form while the boomer generation is only slightly more engaged and the other two younger generations are disengaged overall from the average of those civically engaged (Ketter et al., 2002). The study further explains that older generations are more involved in electoral activities than the other generations while younger generations tend to complete more community service activities than the older generations (Ketter et al., 2002). These different levels of civic engagement may play a role in the influencers and factors that affect the data conclusions in this study.

Further, this research from the Pew Charitable Trusts breaks down the historical events that occurred during each generation (Ketter et al., 2002). For this study's purpose, the report shows that DotNets, the generation of people that make up the Millennials, Generation Next, and Generation Y that are currently on campus or recently graduated, are shaped by events in the past where they can easily search through the Internet (Ketter et al., 2002). More recent research

discusses Millennials have been impacted by not only the Internet but also improved communication tools and social media networking (Johnson, Grossnickle & Associates, 2012). The historical events of the millennial generation include the events of September 11th, Enron scandal, and school mass shootings (Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012). All of these changes in society affect the experiences and perspectives of individuals going to college, at college, or having completed college.

Societal Disposition toward Civic Engagement

After college, college graduates are shaped by the various environments that they get involved in whether in the workplace, community groups, church, or friend circles. These societal influences after college may have an effect on how alumni shape their commitment to civic engagement. Alumni have experiences and reasons for engaging in civic organizations after their collegiate experience, one being personal benefits. Bryant, Rockenbach, Hudson, and Tuchmayer (2014) conducted a study to compare types of service work and motivational factors to understand the effects on service behaviors after college. Through the 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study from the U.S. Department of Education, the sample of the study included 16,700 students who entered college between 2003 and 2004 (Bryant et al., 2014). The intensity of service during college and working with children created extrinsic and intrinsic benefits (Bryant et al., 2014). Alumni with extrinsic benefits, vocational and career development, tended to only volunteer if required and did not get in the way of life goals (Bryant et al., 2014). Alumni with intrinsic benefits, social consciousness and compassion, were associated with those who wanted to help individuals and community by volunteering with religious organizations (Bryant et al., 2014).

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Although personal benefits may be a key factor in why alumni participate in civic engagement, alumni data could be skewed as values and behaviors may change over time. During a study of over 12, 376 student participants from 209 colleges and universities that used the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, Sax (2004) reported that students' civic values and behaviors changed during and after college (Sax, 2004). Of entering college students, 57.3% considered helping others in difficulty a "very important" or "essential" life goal, while 68.1% of these same students during college had this level of commitment to helping others (Sax, 2004). College students had a commitment to attending church, doing service work, attending class, and participating in recreational activities because of the commitment for social activism by the institution (Sax, 2004).

Overall, when an institution showed a commitment to service and activism, students were more willing to participate in university and surrounding community programs that influenced this behavior (Sax, 2004). Thereafter, these same participants' level of commitment nine years after college dropped to 60.8% (Sax, 2004). The values instilled by the institution for civic behavior may be temporary for some (Sax, 2004). However, the study is unable to reveal whether the former students' commitment level to service has changed after college and whether their values before and after college remain intact. Additionally, what experiences do these students feel contributed to their level of commitment to helping others after college? This study misses the opportunity to understand what influences students' value as well what contributes to a commitment to civic engagement after college. Further, the survey highlighted volunteer trends and political interest of college students through the quantitative methods but negated to understand the specific influencers and narratives on these areas of civic engagement.

Weerts and Ronca (2007) only brushed the surface on the reasons why alumni participate in civic engagement, particularly on why alumni give back to their alma maters. Over 1,400 alumni responded to a survey conducted at a Doctoral/Research University defined by Carnegie Classification, and those alumni felt that they were expected to support the institution in some way (Weerts & Ronca, 2007). Additionally, alumni were 9.28 times more likely to agree with one of the following two statements: (1) "Alumni should support their alma mater through charitable giving and volunteering;" (2) my institution "needs my volunteer and financial support" (Weerts & Ronca, 2007, p.30). The study, however, did not elaborate on what factors played a role in the alumni's expectations to give back to their institution and focused in on alumni more willing to donate and volunteer their time compared to alumni not on their radar to give or donate their time.

While the perceptions of alumni do not reflect concrete civic engagement outcomes, the perceptions of alumni do impact future alumni behavior. A questionnaire survey and collection of precollege ACT data were administered from 7,083 alumni within 31 Appalachian College Association institutions (Johnson, 2004). A positive relationship was found between perceived contributions of college experiences to learning and cognitive development and participation in cultural and political organizations (Johnson, 2004). Further, a negative association was found with perceived college contributions to social responsibility and alumni involvement in cultural and political organizations (Johnson, 2004). Finally, the perceived contribution of the college experience to expanding awareness has negative correlations to alumni involvement in service activities, but there was a positive correlation between perceived college contribution to the development of entrepreneurial skills and social responsibility and alumni involvement in service activities (Johnson, 2004).

Although the sample of this study was taken from smaller demographic schools under 3,000 student enrollments, the experiences in college influenced alumni's future behavior (Johnson, 2004). Weerts and Cabrera (2015) further backed up this research through their study to segmented groups of alumni by their non-monetary support behaviors. Through cross-tabulation analysis, 1,441 alumni were selected to complete a survey based on their high commitment level to their alma mater (Weerts & Cabrera, 2015). Alumni exhibited similar levels of engagement like they did during college (Weerts & Cabrera, 2015). Political Engagers were students who were involved in political action in college while Apolitical Recruiters were students who volunteered in college and avoided politics (Weerts & Cabrera, 2015). Students who were involved in multiple areas of college were Super Engaged Alumni, and Disengaged Alumni were not involved during college (Weerts & Cabrera, 2015). If students had a history of volunteer work during college, they will continue to participate in that same activity.

Overall, there are real educational outcomes after college as a result of college experiences. According to Brand (2010), college graduates were more likely to volunteer for civic, community, or youth groups than noncollege graduates while Dee (2013) reported the college had a strong influence on voter participation but only some influence on the probability of volunteering (Dee, 2003). Alumni who supported their institution were showed to more likely volunteer due to their service orientated and civically engaged status (Weerts & Ronca, 2008) while others contributed due to extrinsic and intrinsic benefits (Bryant et al., 2014). Gender and age demographics as well as college majors influenced alumni's giving behavior (Bea et al., 2016). Overall, the experiences in college influenced alumni's behavior in the future (Johnson, 2004), and alumni exhibited similar levels of civic engagement during and after college (Weerts & Cabrera, 2015). However, current research continues to miss the opportunity to understand

what specific experiences, organizations, societal influences, or programs contributed to an alumni's commitment to civic engagement.

Conceptual Model

As a result of the influence of Astin's (1984) framework, Magolda's (1999) self-authorship theory and the Civic Learning Spiral (Musil, 1999) contribute to the development of civic engagement of students. Again, these experiences happen at different stages in college while students form their perspective, beliefs, and commitment levels; in turn, these various experiences and factors shape their outcomes or outputs. Students come to college with some previous experiences but mainly the experience during college form the foundation of civic engagement work. This begins for many the process of developing various outcomes because of this engagement.

Integrated Model: Longitudinal Development of Civic Engagement by Fraternity and Sorority College Students

The current research understands the development of civic engagement longitudinally. If a student participates in a certain activity or civic engagement program, then the end result will equal a student having a higher level of commitment to civic engagement. The development of civic engagement is different for each student, and the current research shows that there are a variety of factors before, during, or even after college that may influence a student's short-term and long-term commitment to civic engagement after college.

However, the literature does not show how fraternity and sorority students after college make sense of their commitment to civic engagement. It is unknown whether students process their commitment to civic engagement due to experiences all from college or whether students form this level of engagement with civic engagement process their commitment due to a

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combination of lived experiences before, during, or after college. We need to not only study what is happening between years 1 and 4 of college, but we need to understand the impact of these experiences after college. Development and impact of college do not stop. We need to go one step further and help people understand their meaning making of their experiences and how it plays into their contemporary identity. The alumni of institutions and how they make meaning and understanding of their experiences before, during, and after college will help understand how these experiences influence their current life experiences, especially commitment to civic engagement.

Delineating the Stages of Development for Civic Engagement

Stage One: Developing Civic Engagement Identity in P-12

Astin's (1984) framework for understanding college and its influence on students not only forms the foundation for this study but also tells us that students develop their civic engagement identity through inputs, process, and outputs model. Stage one of the conceptual models shows that students development their civic engagement identity prior to college that make up the inputs in the conceptual model. The research shows that previous life experiences and family influence before college shape a student's values and civic mindedness for volunteerism as well as high school behavior. The various environments exposed prior to college can influence their civic engagement development whether that environment includes the influence of family, friends, or organizations; environmental influence from high school institutions, curriculum, and extra-curricular factors; or overall events happening in society.

Stage Two: Building on Civic Engagement Identity in College

Stage two of the conceptual model shows that students also develop their civic engagement identity during college. The microenvironment influencers during college include

students' peers, student organizations, and general commitment to civic engagement through community service work. The institutional influence through academics and grades, faculty and staff interactions, study abroad programs, and academic majors as well as collegiate activities and general fraternity and sorority experiences make up the mesoenvironment level. The macroenvironment from societal perspectives and general community disposition form the various experiences that students have through their diverse experiences and interactions in community service work, faculty interactions, and global experiences. Through various higher educational influencers and collegiate experiences including fraternity and sorority life, students are then transformed from the environment within the institution that develops new knowledge, experiences, and skills.

Stage Three: Continued Civic Engagement Identity Postcollege

Stage three of the conceptual model shows that civic engagement development continues after college. The environmental influencers include the diverse people that alumni associate with both professionally and personally; the organizations that they get involved in whether recreational, spiritual, or civically engaged groups; their alma mater interaction; the volunteering and community service work; the fraternity and sorority postcollege involvement; and general social consciousness and compassion influence from general societal disposition. These various environments and influencers in turn continue to shape the values, perspectives, knowledge, and skills of these former students.

Integrating the Frameworks under Each Stage
Magolda's (1999) Framework

During each of these stages, these individuals are meaning making of the various inputs that are contributing to the development of their civic engagement identity whether they are

consciously aware or it is unknown at the time of meaning making or the process. Although Astin's model may demonstrate that a student's civic engagement develops longitudinally, Astin does not talk about the meaning making or process that happens before, during, or after college. However, Magolda's (1999) framework is designed for students to create their own knowledge within the world, which in turn influences the development of their identity. Students may create their own new knowledge while forming their own identity without external influencers but still being able to engage with other people (Magolda, 1999). Magolda (1999) understands student development as not only a function of growth that continues after college but she believes that students go through stages where they experience different things like socializing in groups; community service work; academic studies; professional work; and student organization involvement (Magolda, 1999). At the intersection of these different stages, students find their identity whether that is grounded in a commitment to civic engagement, family responsibilities, career, or other engagement opportunities (Magolda, 1999).

Magolda (1999) helps explain that we need student development as opposed to the larger body of literature around human development across not only when the seed is planted in college but also as someone transitions out of college. Building from Astin's (1984) model, Magolda's (1999) self-authorship shows that students develop meaning making because of precollege, collegiate, and postcollege experiences and then these same students make meaning of these experiences throughout each timeframe.

Musil's Civic Learning Spiral Model

The other foundational framework, Civic Learning Spiral, builds upon Astin's (1984) and Magolda's (1999) theory as the Civic Learning Spiral looks at self (cognitive, identity, and social identity) with community and action. Civic Learning Spiral integrates students' different

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attributes that may include their knowledge, skills, environment, and values, and in turn these attributes shape students' disposition, dialogue, and activism (Musil, 2009). Astin (1984) and Magolda (1999) reflect linear approaches to meaning making of development over time while Civic Learning Spiral (Musil, 2009) helps show that the development and influence of values, skills, knowledge, or action may happen continuously in a spiral rather than in a step by step process. Students may make meaning at various stages of their lives and may be unaware of this meaningful experiences and impact on their identity until an unknown time frame in life. The seed was planted a long time ago, but participants are not sure how and when this has affected their life or identity until other life experiences also influenced them. Although it is difficult to isolate just one cause for the development of civic engagement, students come to a crossroad within their identity and begin to connect the influencers with their commitment to civic engagement.

New Conceptual Model

This new conceptual model reflects that the development of civic engagement is influenced by the various inputs through these three stages as well as the Howe and Strauss's (1991) generational theory that shows generational influence from societal perspectives and behaviors as well as historical events. Thereafter, the students are meaning making from these various experiences and influencers that then creates a new action, value, behavior, or viewpoint. The literature shows that whether the experience happened before, during, or after college, there are outcomes as a result of these various experiences. The short-term outcomes include voter participation organizations; involvement in service groups, religious, and even university work; higher degree attainment; and socializing with diverse groups of people. The long-term outcomes established in the literature include volunteering; professional work experience; political

advocacy; giving back to universities; social consciousness and compassion; and the contribution or lack of contribution of the fraternity and sorority experience.

The result of this new conceptual model further develops that there is a baseline that all fraternity and sorority members receive the same education, requirements, and overall community experiences, but what then changes is the threshold of becoming an adult happens and other experiences, people, or knowledge are mixed into the dynamic. The development of an identity or commitment happens longitudinal and is sparked before or in college and then continues to evolve in life after college. This study in turn requires reflective looking back even though the students may have been meaning making of their experiences throughout the different stages in their lives. The nuance is that student development does not just happen in the years that students are in college. Student development is something that ignites in college and continues to grow over time. This offers an opportunity for this study to have participants reflect back on their experiences and make meaning at a different time in their life after college with other lived experiences.
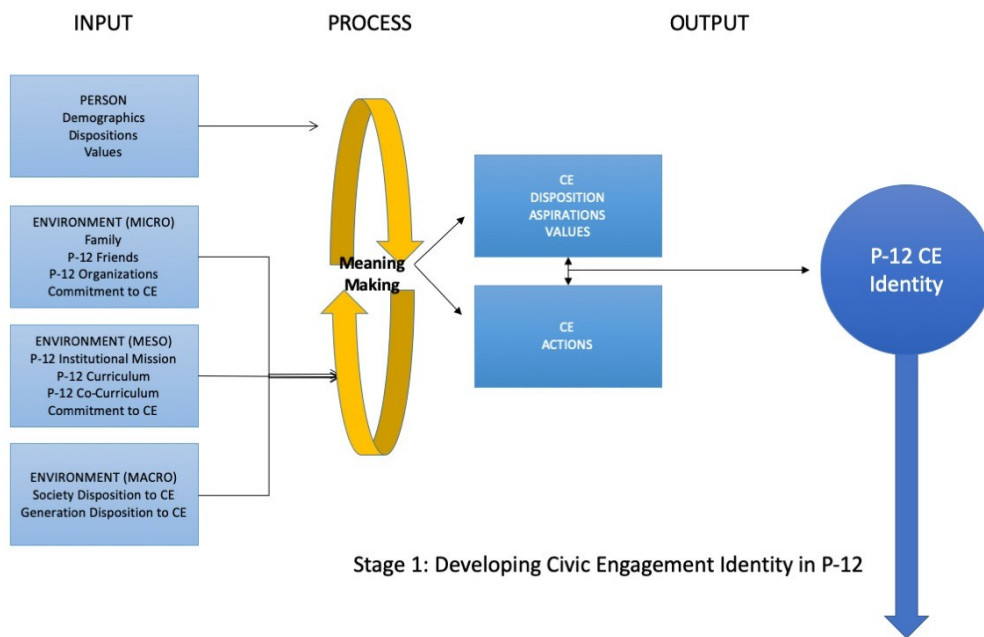
Figure 1.   Stage 1: Developing civic engagement identity in P-12.
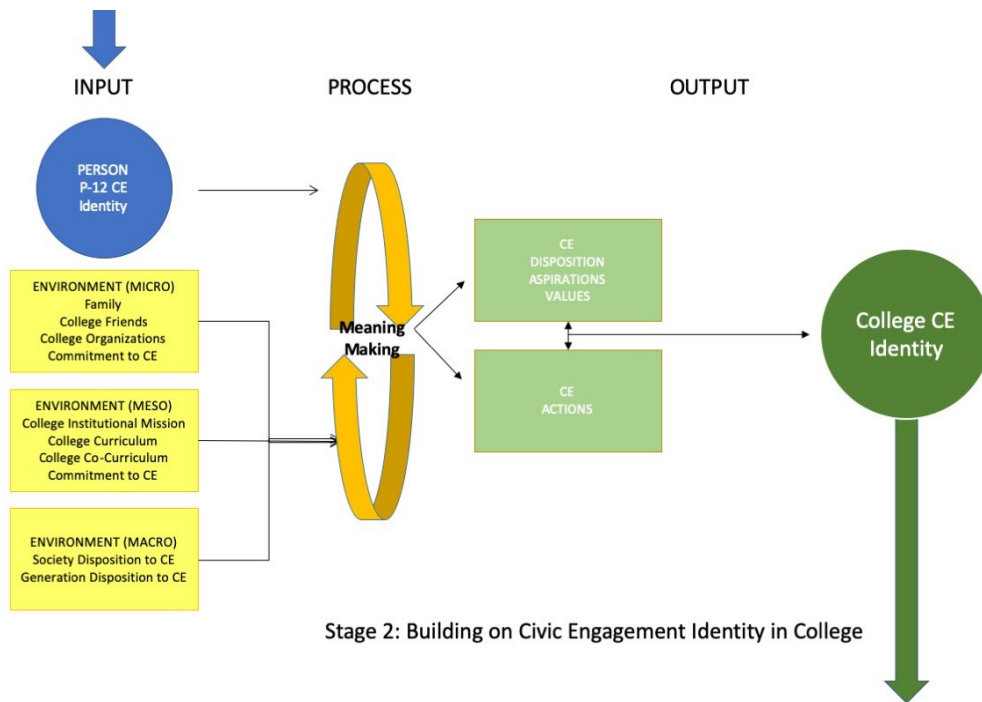
Figure 2.   Stage 2: Building on civic engagement identity in College.
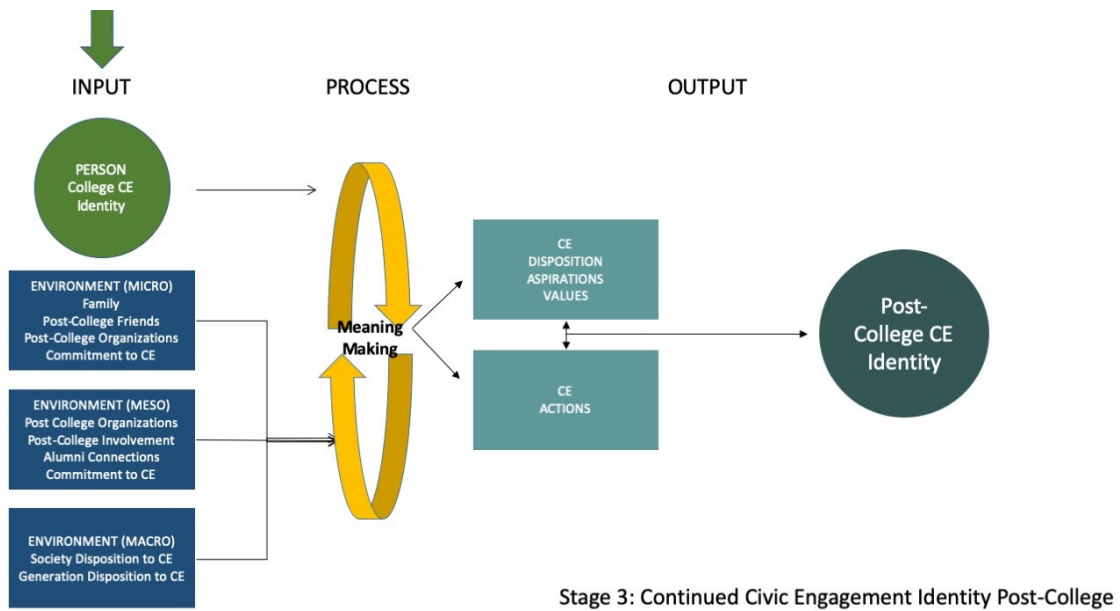
Figure 3.   Stage 3: Continued civic engagement identity in postcollege.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

American history shows that the mission of postsecondary education was to improve

society both economically and socially (Boyer, 1996). Higher education organizations, like

fraternity and sororities, claim to support this mission of higher education to influence their

members in various collegiate and post-collegiate outcomes including civic engagement. This

study seeks to understand the development of civic engagement of fraternity and sorority

members over time and how these members make meaning of these various experiences.

Experiences do not just happen during college, but there is a culmination of various experiences

before college, during college, and after college that contribute to a member's lifetime civic

engagement.

Overview of Research Questions

By understanding these perspectives and having college graduates reflect on their lived

experiences as it relates to civic engagement, this study helps address these research questions.

The research questions that guide this study include the following:

1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from

   their undergraduate college experiences?

2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek

   participation play in their current commitment to civic engagement?

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3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Since the research questions are designed to make meaning out of the lived experiences of the participants in this study, Magolda's (1999) self-authorship framework, Astin's (1984) framework for understanding college and its influence on students, and Civic Learning Spiral (Musil, 2009) were utilized to address these questions. The participants of this study were asked to offer their own perspectives related to their lived experiences and how these experiences developed their civic engagement over time. The conceptual model introduced in the literature review also reflects the factors and influencers of the development of civic engagement.

This chapter begins with the methodological approach that explains the ontological and epistemological foundations for this study and the qualitative methodological approaching to collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. The concluding section of this chapter deliberates the methodological limitations inherent to the study.

Research Paradigm

Ontological and Epistemological Perspective

Through constructive-development pedagogy lens, this study is developed from the literature review that recognizes that college students have different and unique influencers and experiences before college (Bryant et al., 2012, Kam & Palmer, 2008); during college (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 1999; Cruce & Moore, 2012; Dee, 2003; Pascarella et al., 1988; Powell, 2008); and after college (Astin et al.,1999; Brand, 2010, 2008; Bryant et al., 2014; Soria et al., 2014; Weerts & Ronca); and these experiences and influencers develop various outcomes for

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these students. For the purpose of this study, the ontological approach was used in order to create knowledge subjectively (Williamson, 2006). It was important that alumni provide answers to the questions based on their own experiences and perspectives during these various stages in their life and how this has influenced their civic engagement identity development. The data provides knowledge that is based on the perspective of the participants.

Since this study includes how people form new knowledge based on their experiences, the foundational philosophy of this study is based on the constructivist epistemology from the theory that people construct their knowledge and meaning based on various experiences (Williamson, 2006). This knowledge can happen at any time, and with other people involved, but the knowledge developed is from the opinion or perspective of each individual participant and how he or she creates the world around him or her.

Overarching Methodological Strategy

The methodology for this study is comparative qualitative strategy that uses focus groups. Comparative qualitative research helps gain understanding of the motivations, reasons, or opinions of the participants involved in the study (Williamson, 2006). In order to recreate a familiar community setting for participants based on Greek affiliation and selected site institution, focus groups, a strategy of qualitative research, was utilized to collect the data for this study. Focus groups offer an opportunity for participants to make meaning of their lived experiences through dialogue with other participants and follow-up questions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Lastly, by using comparative case studies as an approach with the focus groups, it allowed the study to explore comparative opportunities since contextual conditions existed between the membership of participants in three different Greek councils (Daniels, 2016).

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Focus groups are important in exploratory research like this study when there is little known about a specific topic (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). While focus groups create a way to gather background information on a topic, focus groups can also help create new ideas and creative concepts on a topic that a researcher may not have considered during the study (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Additionally, comparing the different perspectives based on fraternity and sorority affiliation allows the researcher to find things that are similar or different from these experiences to create a basis for comparative analysis.

While this study aspires to understand a longitudinal process of meaning-making based on the conceptual model previously mentioned, observations or review of documents over time would be prohibitive within the scope of this study. Therefore, the study relied upon alumni reflections to develop insights about the journey to postgraduation civic engagement. A weakness of this approach is that participants may selectively remember events and/or even remember experiences incorrectly. However, that may not be important when thinking about long-term change. A strength of this approach is it is a more expedient way to study longitudinal development than to follow current students as they go through experiences in real time. By having alumni look back on their time in college, they can distill and make sense of the elements most salient to their current way of thinking. Retrospect and wisdom help focus reflections on what did matter rather than what might matter. This is why this study focuses on alumni rather than current students.

Further, focus groups create an opportunity for participants to deliberate intentionally or unintentionally their thoughts and feelings. The focus groups allow for other participants to hear the experiences from other members of the focus group that may trigger or offer guidance for other participants as they formulate their responses to the guided questions rather than just single

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interviews (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The researcher can clarify responses directly with participants, follow up with questions, and probe responses (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). In turn it creates a community conversation on the experiences of alumni and their commitment to civic engagement.

Site Selection

In order to broaden the scope of this topic and to find opportunities to compare multiple perspectives, the site location for this study originally included parallel fraternity and sorority communities from two large, public, research universities in the South. These similar attributes were based on land-grant status, the importance of southern culture and campus traditions, and the value of Southeastern Conference athletics at each of these two institutions. Further, the selected institutions were based on access to potential participant contact information from records held by the institutions since the potential participants will have graduated from the selected site institutions.

The advantage of multiple site research is to test the relativity of a theory and make it applicable to other settings (Jenkins, Slemon, Haines-Saah, Oliffe, 2018). Further, multiple site research enhances trustworthiness and transferability for possible future research to conduct this study amongst other institutions (Jenkins, et. al, 2018). By comparing institutions, there is more depth of description and analysis as well as maximizing generalizability amongst participants (Jenkins et. al, 2018). Although it is important to understand the unique perspectives of the participants, there is also an interest in comparing these experiences and meaning-making amongst all participants.

In the process of engaging a second institution in the research, however, I found that fraternity and sorority alumni information is sensitive and difficult to access from outside

institutions. During the data collection process, an attempt was made numerous times to work with two other host institutions with similar attributes listed previously, and I was unable to secure participants from these other host institutions. One potential site received permission from the fraternity and sorority life office, but the Alumni Affairs department would not approve access to the contact information of alumni from 2012-2106. Also, they were unwilling to send an email out on my behalf to ask alumni from this time frame to participate in this study. Another potential site also received permission from the fraternity and sorority life office, but when the Alumni Affairs office sent requests to alumni from 2012-2016 from the institution many, of the e-mail correspondence was inaccurate with inefficient contact information. I was unable to utilize a multiple site research plan that I originally proposed in my study.

I had to abort my original plan and decided to move forward with one host institution and to interview as many alumni from this one institution. As an insider within the host institution, I had access to the information and potential trust of the participants due to my professional role at the institution. I decided to stick to one institution as I felt that there was enough participants willing to participate where I could still compare data based on the different Greek affiliations from the participant pool that agreed to take part in this study. It still meets the basic goal of my research to understand the perspectives of fraternity and sorority alumni from a similar institution, but I was able to use comparative data analysis based on the different council membership amongst the respective organizations.

Participant Selection

The participants of this study include alumni of fraternity and sorority organizations from one large, public research institution. More specifically, purposeful sampling and criterion sampling were utilized to meet the small pool of participants with specific characteristics and

objectives for this study (Merriam, 2009). Because I recognize that generational differences can impact the way students understand civic engagement, I limited my participants to students who had graduated college between 2012 and 2016. This is reflective of the call from the report in 2011 by the U.S. Department of Education that brough national attention to college universities to increase their civic learning and democratic engagement. By evaluating 1 to 5 years after this report, this time frame offered a chance for participants to discuss their experiences when they began college as well as describe and make meaning of their experiences after college to see if this national directive from the U.S. Department of Education established a contemporary benchmark for the expectations for both students and institutions around civic engagement.

Further, another identifying factor of participants included their Greek affiliation in the respective governing Councils of the National Panhellenic Council, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, and the Inter-Fraternity Council. The membership in the National Panhellenic Council and Inter-Fraternity Council organizations includes mostly white students while membership in the National Pan-Hellenic Council includes mostly Black students. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, current literature exists to show that Black Greek organizations are different in background characteristics, and membership experiences compared to predominantly White organizations (Wilder & McKeegan, 1999). By grouping participants from their respective Council memberships, then participants can be amongst other participants who experienced similar events; missions; structure of organization; membership requirements; and social networking. This helped in the conversations as participants compare themselves to others' lived experiences within similar Greek organizations and institution as well as created an opportunity for data analysis amongst the different Greek affiliations.

Participant Recruitment

Participants for this study were recruited by contacting the Executive Director of the Alumni Association at the host site institution. A request was sent asking for access to the e-mail contact information of alumni who graduated between 2012 and 2016 and who are members of the chapters governed by the National Panhellenic Council, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, and the Inter-Fraternity Council. Instead of the researcher sending out direct e-mails to the participants, the Alumni Association sent an e-mail from their e-mail distribution listserv to these specific alumni that included an explanation of the purpose of the study, a request for participation in the study, a link to a Doodle form, and my contact information as the e-mail sender. The purpose of the Doodle calendar was for potential participants to fill out their availability and interests in participating in my study as well as provide a way to receive names, e-mail addresses, and chapter organization information of participants with similar times divided by Councils.

Forty-eight participants completed the Doodle calendar. The names and chapter membership information was verified with the Alumni Database from the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. After the times were narrowed down from the Doodle calendar for each focus group based on councils, I was able to complete a total of four focus groups, one Inter-Fraternity Council, one National Pan-Hellenic Council, and two National Panhellenic Council. It is not surprising that I had more women sign up to participate in the National Panhellenic Council focus groups as the ratio of Panhellenic women membership is higher compared to the other councils. Further, sorority participation is higher, which is reflective in sororities' philosophy to get involved, attendance, and general structure of organization for extensive engagement opportunities.

I confirmed with each participant based on his or her availability and when I received a confirmation back from the participant, I then shared the Webex link to each individual focus group along with instructions and consent document, Appendix B. This consent form was not only e-mailed but it was also referred back to during the beginning instructions of each focus group.

Although I knew many of the participants through my professional position at the institution, it was clear throughout the focus groups that many of the participants also knew each other or even referred to participants as good friends or influencers of their collegiate experience. Within the four focus groups, eight alumni of the Inter-Fraternity Council, five alumni of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, eight alumni of the National Panhellenic Council, and then again a final group of four alumni from the National Panhellenic Council participated in this study. The chapters that they make up include national organizations such as Pi Beta Phi Sorority; Sigma Chi Fraternity; Phi Mu Sorority; Chi Omega Sorority; Kappa Delta Sorority; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; FarmHouse Fraternity; Delta Delta Delta Sorority; Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority; Delta Gamma Sorority; and Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity. Their names are organized by pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality with their responses and experiences.

Research Procedures

Once participants agreed to participate in the study, they were asked to fill out a doodle calendar with their availability during a respective time frame, and then a time and date were selected based on the availability of the participants. They participated in 90-minute virtual focus groups, video groups. The advantage of virtual focus groups allowed for "lower cost, faster recruitment, greater geographic diversity, enrollment of hard-to-reach populations, and reduced

participant burden" (Rupert, Poehlman, Hayes, Ray, & Moultrie, 2017). By utilizing virtual focus groups, then the geographical location of the site did not limit the accessibility of participants to this study. Virtual focus groups became very useful as participants were located all over the country. Further, during the data collection period, the COVID-19 pandemic was happening where many participants were at home due to state and local guidelines for travel restrictions.

I had 25 participants representing the three fraternity and sorority communities that were split amongst four focus group interviews. In order to create a virtual community setting, participants were in focus groups with alumni who attended the same institution and who are also member of an organization under the three governing councils of Greek organizations focused in this study: National Panhellenic Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and Inter-Fraternity Council. The National Pan-Hellenic Council had five participants; the Inter-Fraternity Council had eight participants. One of the National Panhellenic Council groups had eight participants while the final focus group had four participants.

The purpose of hosting focus groups where participants have similar backgrounds was to have comparable characteristics to like organizations and institutions in order to see what differences or similarities may exist amongst how they make meaning of their experiences and commitment to civic engagement over these various stages in life. Further, fraternity and sorority organizations are centered around the importance of community and familiar support systems, which is why I wanted to recreate opportunities for them to engage in a conversations within their communities that were both safe and familiar to the participants. By conducting different focus groups, this validates the credibility of the study by using the triangulation method. Credibility of qualitative research includes the adequate representation of the participants'

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perspectives, and by utilizing the triangulation method, there are multiple perspectives that will be evaluated during the data analysis (Wildemuth, 2017).

The facilitator of the focus group was the author of this study. Each focus group conducted began with the facilitator introducing herself to the participants and explaining the purpose of the study. Next, the facilitator let the participants know that the focus group would last 90 minutes, and she acknowledged that all participants had received the consent form for participation in the study. The facilitator also let participants know that they could remove themselves from the study at any time and that participants would be assigned a pseudonym name where their responses would be recorded and stored under a password protected Duo-approved computer system at all times.

Once all participants had agreed to the study, then the facilitator asked each participant to introduce themselves to each other in order to help participants connect with each other. The introductions included name, the institutions where they graduated, their organization name, and anything else they wanted to share about themselves to the group. If participants felt that they could be open and honest with other participants and the facilitator, then they would open up more and be more forthcoming with their experiences amongst people that they may not have known. Even though virtual focus groups may offer more accessibility for participants, virtual focus groups can reduce participation, have higher cancellation of participants, and can have participants not connecting with the technology as they would in person (Rupert, et. al, 2017). This could limit the interactions amongst participants and the facilitator of the study.

Semi-structured protocol was utilized during each focus group to create structure and consistency, but it allowed for the focus group to have unanticipated and organic conversations from the participants (Franz, 2011). Following the introductions, the facilitator let the

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participants know that she would ask a series of questions that included follow-up questions based on the responses and conversations from the participants. The facilitator asked that the participants show courtesy to each other as participants respond to the questions. The focus group questions, found in Appendix C, were derived from the conceptual model found in the literature review of this study and guided participants through their civic engagement development. The purpose of organizing the focus group questions by the conceptual model was to help guide participants through different periods of their lives and to offer opportunities for them to reflect on these various time frames and unique experiences.

The focus group protocol was built upon the conceptual model developed in Chapter 2 as a guide for understanding the different stages that may be involved in developing civic engagement across precollege, college, and postcollege experiences. The first section of focus group questions walked participants down the various experiences they had as a child or in high school and the factors or people that influenced their civic engagement during this time. The second section of the focus group questions came from stage two of the conceptual model that built upon their civic engagement identity in college. The questions included explanations of what civic engagement they did during college, how the fraternity and sorority organization impacted their civic engagement, and the impact the institution's culture had on their civic engagement during college. The final section of focus group questions was from stage three of the conceptual model that continued the discussion on the development of civic engagement identity after college. The questions included what civic engagement they were involved in now, their motivation for this engagement, and an opportunity to reflect on experiences during these stages that may have impacted their current perspective of their civic engagement identity.

The focus group interview protocol allowed the facilitator to walk the participants through the various time frames in their lives and how the participants make meaning of these experiences impacting their commitment to civic engagement. The focus group concluded with the facilitator thanking participants for their involvement in the study and again acknowledging that the study was recorded and data collected would be stored under a password protected Duo-approved computer system at all times. The facilitator signed off each person from the focus group computer software, Webex.

Data Organization Strategy

After each focus group was completed and recorded, the researcher transcribed the data into individual word documents. I decided to use Excel to organize the data into various categories or codes. All documents were stored on a password protected I Drive hosted on the MSU computer system.

A separate Excel sheet was created for the purpose of connecting the real name of participants to their pseudonym name (a fictitious name that the researcher created for each participant). The pseudonym name was the identifier used throughout the study and final data report. Pseudonym is a way to maintain confidentiality of the participants but also provide a human connection with a real name reference in place of the actual participant name (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The excel file includes the name of the participant, pseudonym name of each participant, the chapter name, graduation year, and name of host institution. The Excel file of participant information is storied along with the transcriptions from the focus groups and the category codes of organizing the data collection.

The data collected during this study will be kept with the researcher indefinitely as this may create the foundation for future research on this topic. In order to replicate this study

amongst other institutions and participants, a detailed description of how this study was conducted provides dependability to this study. Dependability is the consistent internal process and the way in which the researcher can identify changing conditions (Wildemuth, 2017). Further, a detailed audit trail throughout the collection of data was conducted during the entire study. The researcher took detailed notes during each focus group, observations of participants, individual correspondence with each participant, and overall experiences during the data collection process. This may help future researchers in identifying more efficient and useful ways to conduct this study as well as provide more information on the individual participants to upload to the participant profile.

Data Analysis Strategy

The focus group transcriptions, researcher notes, and demographic information were uploaded into an Excel documents. In order to continue with consistency with the focus group questions as well as the conceptual model, the data began with a Level 1 coding, open coding. Open coding includes the large quantities of raw qualitative data that are labeled at the beginning of the coding process (Hahn, 2008). The open coding began with organic labeling based ON the focus group questions organized by time frame of alumni attending college, before they attended college, and thereafter. General labels were placed on the data that helped describe and interpret the information found during each segment of the data collection. In order to keep things organized but not constrained to these beginning labels, the data was organized to make sense of the questions asked and to piece information together from the focus groups under each stage of development.

The next level of coding, category coding, shaped the next section of coding in this study. Category coding is reexamining the original labels from Level 1 coding to further focus the data

(Hahn, 2008). By revisiting the data and original labels, this gave me an opportunity to determine what new codes or themes needed to be created to organize more like-minded new codes. These code themes were categorized by the questions and similar stories provided by each participant. This organization structure helped identify the themes within the time frames of each participant in the study and what new ideas were created from the original codes. The researcher looked for similarities amongst the participants, especially from the respective Greek Council affiliations. However, code themes were also created based on differences amongst participants and their narratives. These anticipated codes guided the beginning of the coding process as the data analysis began to help determine the narrative results from the participants of the study and how they made meaning of their various experiences to their commitment to civic engagement.

The next level of coding, Level 3, axial coding, reexamined the labels from Level 1 and the new codes from Level 2. Axial coding included studying the previous codes to develop high refined themes (Hahn, 2008). By utilizing the codes from Level 2, these codes were evaluated based on whether new codes need to be created for better descriptor or themes or whether Level 2 coding themes needed to be eliminated and/or combined with other codes. Further, it was important that the codes answered the research questions and connected back to the conceptual model. In some instances, if new codes or themes originated, then these revised code themes were named as the data was reorganized and analyzed during this stage. Further, Level 3 coding helped solidify the results of the study to create the bigger picture from the data collection in order for the researcher to write this information as the data analysis continued.

The final stage of data analysis strategy was the theoretical development. Theoretical development includes taking the information collected from the data to emerge saturated categories and themes (Hahn, 2008). This final stage gathered all of the data collected and then

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in turn showed new findings and results from the participants. This study emerged with information from the participants based on their perceptions of their experiences and how these experiences and perceptions connect to their civic engagement. New findings developed from these narratives to form the findings chapter of this study.

Overview of Methodological Limitations

The previous sections laid out a detailed description of the research process in order for this study to potentially be replicated in the future. Transferability, a method within qualitative research and data analysis, is the extent that a researcher's theory may be applied in other context (Wildemuth, 2017). Because of the researcher's background as a staff member in a fraternity and sorority life community at the host institution, the researcher had access to participant contact information as well as established relationships with some of the participants. However, since the researcher is very involved in this community, this positionality allows for this study to potentially have more weight in the results from members of the fraternity and sorority life community as well as participants that have been more forthcoming to the researcher.

Although the researcher brought both an emic and etic perspective to this study, the data analysis contained a balance of information as an insider of the group being studied as well as someone observing and analyzing data from an outsider perspective. The researcher is Greek-affiliated and has had experiences related to civic engagement before, during, and college. It was imperative that the researcher utilized the transcriptions to create confirmability in order for the researcher to be looked upon on relying on perspectives rather than her own biases. Confirmability includes establishing confidence level in a study that biases identified, and participant perspectives are the accurate representation of the data (Wildemuth, 2017). However,

it was also important for the researcher to bring in her own experiences and life lessons into the research to explain and evaluate nuances from the data collection.

The methodological limitation of this study began with the broad range of lived experiences that participants narrated during the data collection. Although the study included participants from different council organizations, the participants had some similarities based on institutional experience as well as time frames of some of their experiences. Each participant may have participated in similar programs, civic engagement initiatives, or none at all while in college, but all participants had at least been a member of a fraternity or sorority organization while in college. Further, civic engagement programs and membership programs for these participants varied during these short years since the institution provided different levels of civic engagement opportunities during the time of the participants' years in college. Civic engagement opportunities were limited for participants after college and even before college depending on the uniqueness and size of each participants' town or city.

Although focus groups offer an opportunity for participants to share their experiences amongst the fraternity and sorority community of the institution, focus groups can influence the narratives and insights that participants may share because of hesitation in their responses or influence by what others are saying (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The data can be skewed where participants agree with others in a group think setting or may be triggered to respond in a way that they normally would not due to outside influence or a dominant responder (Stewart & & Shamdasani, 1990). The real issue is that the narratives from the participants remain truthful and real or constructed into a new narrative or study. It was imperative for this study for the researcher to find the truth from the participants instead of misrepresentation, especially with the lapse of time that has occurred prior to college, before college, and thereafter.

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CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Through constructive-development pedagogy lens, this qualitative research study

includes the narratives of alumni members of fraternity and sorority organizations from the host

site institution for this study. Four focus groups were conducted to have participants reflect back

on their lived experiences before, during, and after college and have an opportunity to make

meaning and reflect on these different experiences in their life after college. I used the following

research questions to frame the focus groups as well as connect the conceptual model to the

findings from this study:

1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from

their undergraduate college experiences?

2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek

participation play in their current commitment to civic engagement?

3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college,

postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to

civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Findings

The findings from this study will evolve similarly as the focus groups were organized to set up a gradual process for reflection during time frames of the participants. Themes have been captured in this section based on the responses from the participants during respective times in their lives before, during, and after college. The conceptual model will set the framework for the organization of these findings and narratives from participants to tell their stories and to show how these participants make sense of what they experienced in their life until now. By understanding how they developed their civic engagement identity in each of the stages of life, I will be able to reflect on the research found in the conceptual model to the findings from this study.

Stage 1: Developing Civic Engagement Identity in P-12

Stage one of the conceptual model, developing civic engagement identity from preschool to high school, reflected previous research that showed that previous life experiences and family were influential in their development prior to college. Students' values and civic mindedness for community service was reflective in their high school behavior, which built a foundation prior to entering college. Further, the different environments around family, friends, organizations, and extra-curricular factors were also influential to a student's civic engagement identity during those childhood years.

Many of the same things found in the literature around student's experiences prior to college were like the findings in this study. In the beginning of the focus groups, participants were asked questions related to their identity and experiences before college, more specifically their time in the high school environment stage. Many participants commented that before college they were very involved with various organizations that they were a part of whether from

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their high school or other community organizations. Since many high schools and communities strive to provide extracurricular activities to keep young people engaged and busy during and after school, these results were similar from other current research.

Since mentorship programs are important in higher education settings, the students from the National Pan-Hellenic Council, all African American participants in this focus group, acknowledged that they were first-generation college students and members of their family or community organizations impacted their lives. While I came into the study understanding that African American students often felt strong connections to influential community members designated as members, the data demonstrated the degree to which this force was influential for African American fraternity and sorority members than for the predominantly White fraternity and sorority participants. One participant mentioned that, "when I did Delta Jaguars, I ended up ya know most of those women ended up becoming my mentor. So they pushed me to go further, and they kinda of exposed me to a lot of things." Mentor programs that originated from the collegiate and alumni graduate chapters of the National Pan-Hellenic Council were influential for a few members of the African American fraternity and sorority organizations.

More participants agreed that "family" in general influenced them before college, whether in general life support or encouragement in civic engagement experiences. One participant had an interesting comment about the influence of her grandma. She said, "My grandma really pushed me to, like, get out of my [small private high school] and church bubble." The participant went on to say "while my parents were cultivating the environment, my grandma was just like, get out of the environment and do what you want." This really encouraged the participant to find the things that mattered to her and not necessarily her family, although their

support and direction were important to her growing up. Her grandmother helped her get out of her environment and looked for ways to impact herself and others.

Similarly, participants from all councils talked about the influence of church members and people in their community that were influential, which was something I felt that all councils shared in common as the influence of various important people in their lives influencing their development. Throughout the conversations related to the factors that influenced them prior to college, it was consistent that various people in the participants' lives influenced them in some way, whether that was general involvement in high school, community service work, or developing their identity. This confirmed to me the importance of mentoring young people in various settings and the lasting impact these relationships have, especially during a confined amount of time prior to college.

It was apparent as the questions narrowed more specifically on civic engagement awareness and experiences before college that two themes emerged. Participants either had very little exposure to the idea or a very high sense of what this idea entailed. I was interested to learn that some participants may not have always known that their community service hours or participation in civic organizations were civic engagement work. Further, there were times that participants would reflect on their experiences and they could not connect their time before college to any civic activities or programs. I did not get the sense that high school civic engagement work was more memorable than their college.

Knowing how influential members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council students and alumni are to civic engagement work and the foundational influence of these organizations from the beginning, I was intrigued to hear the different levels of civic engagement and awareness prior to college within this community. A few other participants agreed with each other during

the NPHC focus group that, "as far as being engaged in any type, ya know, uplifting in the community or just engaging our services for the community, it was not much of a thing." Some participants grew up in small towns, so events around civic engagement were not always as visible and prominent in their community.

During this same focus group, however, another participant was surprised by the responses since civic engagement experiences and awareness were different. In response to their comments he said, "interesting, because I lived up the road for a while from both of them, so [small town] there actually a great deal civic engagement." Although the communities may have been close in proximity, the cultures of each of these towns were different around civic engagement awareness and even availability. This was not only surprising to one of the participants; it was also interesting to me that communities, especially African American communities in the same state, would not have more of a connection to civic engagement within similar proximity of each other. Further, this is a great example of how focus group methodology works in a value-added qualitative way.

Summary of Stage One

Although there were a few areas in the findings that were nuances from previous research, many of the findings from this study were reflective of the findings from current research on student's experiences around civic engagement prior to college. Most participants mentioned some type of civic engagement experience that they participated in during high school whether that included community service projects, school activities, family projects, or general community organizations including church groups. While these various activities and the people involved in these programs and events influenced these participants uniquely prior to college, the participants in this study reflected similar experiences to various participants from other studies

and data collections. However, it was apparent that high school did not have the impact that secondary educators may strive to attain in educational settings.

Stage 2: Building on Civic Engagement Identity in College

As the conceptual model shows, stage two, building on civic engagement identity in college, highlights previous research around the influencers of students' commitment to civic engagement during college. The various environments that students either found themselves in or worked toward influenced their experiences and outcomes whether these influencers were from micro, meso, or macro environments. However, the findings from this study demonstrate some nuances that really resonated during the data collection.

Participants from all councils felt getting involved from the beginning of college was very important and influential to the them, especially the initial involvement through the fraternity and sorority experience. Also, faculty and staff advisors were also influential to the collegiate experiences of the participants. It was interesting to see how impactful the participants talked about older members in the chapter influencing their collegiate experience. Although peer support was found in the current leadership, it was unique to hear how every aspect of the fraternity and sorority experience, from joining, civic engagement work, and even influencing the joining of other student organizations involvement, was because of the support or suggestion from an older member within the chapter.

Whether students saw how impactful the experience was for another student and they wanted that same experience for themselves or they were just asked and encouraged to join the Greek community as they built a network, the impact of older members' influence in joining their chapters resonated with some of them still today. Further, many of them credited older members of the organizations for making them show up to an event, join other student

organizations, and complete civic engagement work. They felt that their commitment to civic engagement may be different if it was not for the support and drive for older members influencing the younger members.

This commitment from older members to young members continued to resonate during the focus groups as the participants felt that the fraternity and sorority experience laid the foundation for their civic engagement work today. While I would have thought academic programs, high school community service projects, or other service organizations in college would have resonated more with the participants, they credited across all councils their civic engagement started with the influence of their fraternity and sorority chapters. Whether that was from the influence of older members, organized community service projects, or chapter philanthropy events, there were various ways that these alumni participated in civic engagement within their chapter.

One alum mentioned the following while another member of the same focus group agreed, "It wasn't until I was an Omega, 'til it felt like me as a member of a community helping my community." The joining together with other students with similar interests supporting the same cause helped initiate and create opportunities for civic engagement. The insight was gained that students feel comfortable with other students that share common values and concerns, which builds the foundational influence of their commitment to civic engagement.

Another finding from this study came from members of the NPHC focus group that shared some different civic engagement experiences that the other focus groups did not discuss. Members of the NPHC community shared their civic engagements focused on addressing needs in the community, especially around inadequacies within their respective hometowns or university community. For example, one participant shared that one of her civic engagement

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memories from college was when she "petitioned I guess the Dean of Students as well as Vice President, but I noticed that there was no real structure on how our organizations were being charged for events after talking to my peers in IFC and Panhellenic." The students at the time turned their attention toward advocacy rather than community service projects and events as another student mentioned, "It was different for a Black-Lettered organization versus the white Greek organization on campus." Although all focus groups discussed the various organizations and projects that they participated in during college, the NPHC focus group discussed social change movements that still impact its civic work today. This description of civic engagement as a social change movement was unique in the findings from this study since current literature did not include these types of unique experiences during college playing a part in influencing participants' future civic engagement.

While members of the NPHC community shared their chapter involvement in social change movement experiences during college, there were also events that resonated amongst participants that included both members of the NPHC community as well as the other participants from the councils involved in the focus groups. Participants spent some time during the discussions to share the influence of their civic engagement and viewpoints from national events like the election of Barack Obama. A few students agreed that this was a major event that they remember from their time in college where one student shared the impact the presidential election had on him in college. He said, "the election of President Obama. But not just the election of President Obama, but what we saw, like, the things that we saw about the community and about our society as American people when we elected the first Black President." He specified this in terms of the inequality and racism that was present after his election and how this was brought more to a light when he was in college.

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Another participant in a different focus group also mentioned the election of President Obama when she was in college. She said,

>…when Barack Obama was elected President and you know that was a very historical time. And being in college that was I guess my first time to be able to vote, because my birthday's in February, so I would have turned 18 in February, started college in August, so just seeing the importance of, you know. For a long time, I just grew up thinking what my parents thought, and in terms of political views and so that was really a clue to me, like ok, I really can make a difference. I need to form my own opinions and I need to use college, as I an experience, to shape my opinions and beliefs and which then effects my engagement.

This election not only brought up conversations on various topics, but it also raised the importance of young college students getting involved in their communities, voting for the first time, and forming their own perspectives on civic issues.

The election of President Obama also took place during a time for many of these participants who were in college when other national news events happened like the killings of Travon Martin and Mike Brown. One alum mentioned that the events of "Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, those things happened when I was in college" and shared more that these events still influence their feelings towards civic engagement and other areas of civic issues on race, inequity, and poverty. Along with national news, another participant shared an on-campus event that influenced him in college was "Natalie Jones, one of the most vocal members of the Black community." The participant shared that this event of the Lucky 7 "really brought up some ugly moments that we had kinda brushed over in our community." A group of African American students were calling out inequities in the university community and demanding action to be

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taken by administrators. While we think that on-campus experiences that we design through academics or student affairs will have an impact on our students during college, outside political events, social movements, and tragedies in the world can also influence students not only while in college but can still resonate in the minds of these alumni over 10 years ago. These narratives may have weight more than any other collegiate experiences.

While events during college still resonate with some of the participants, I many experiences during college continue to resonate with participants today as these fraternity and sorority experiences prepared them for life after college. Some participants shared that being in a leadership role in their chapters impacted their collegiate experience. Whether this helped the student create long term outcomes or even immediate outcomes in college, being a leader in the chapter created skills and life lessons for some of these participants. One participant mentioned "my time in leadership in my sorority probably prepared me for the real world." Further, she goes on to say that "chapter leadership helped me, like find not only my voice, but like thick skin and dealing with different personalities." Whether these lessons came from meetings or having to discipline a student, some participants agreed that having these opportunities during college influenced their involvement in the chapter and developing various skills that they use today including communicating in front of people, social networking, and decision making.

While Greek life experiences developed students' skills sets, I was intrigued to hear the overwhelming sentiment where former students felt a deeper connection to civic engagement work due to their individual chapter. This information resonated with me the most so far in the findings as it confirmed the impact that the fraternity and sorority experience can have on student's future civic engagement work. The sacrifices that some students remember from their time in college also stood out as significant. When one participant discussed his involvement in

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college he said, "There are some nights that I would have liked to have gone out to hang out with people, and I was helping to craft a textbook policy for [the state governing board for the university]." He went on further to say, "Am I glad I did it? Yes, but there were things that I would have liked to have gone and done." The participant felt that he made sacrifices during college for some of his civic engagement experiences and missed out on other activities due to these commitments. However, these types of experiences provided a deeper development of his skills and future opportunities that help him today in his career pursuits and commitment to civic engagement.

Summary of Stage Two

Experiences during college, especially within fraternity and sorority organizations, also influenced a student's commitment to civic engagement as he or she continued to build upon civic engagement exposure as seen in the conceptual model. Students had various experiences within their fraternity or sorority organizations and other student groups, formed relationships within the different communities, and were exposed to various national and local events that caused them to question what was important, what they believed and valued, and where they wanted to go after college. Although these experiences happened for some 8 to 10 years ago, this opportunity to reflect on these previous experiences brought attention to their own perspective and views that they had not thought about until this focus group. It was clear, however, that their commitment to civic engagement really began for most during college and was the building block for further commitment after college.

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Stage 3: Continued Civic Engagement Identity Postcollege

The final stage of this conceptual model, Stage Three: Continued Civic Engagement Identity Postcollege, demonstrates the commitment to civic engagement after college. This stage combines all stages together as an opportunity to reflect on the experiences during participants' lifetime and how these experiences make up the participants' various identities, especially as it relates to their civic engagement identity. Their identity can be impacted from environmental influencers in both professional and personal settings which in turn shapes the values, perspectives, knowledge, and skills of these alumni.

During the final section of the focus group questions, participants spent a lot of time discussing and reflecting on the past and how that impacts them today. Some participants reflected all the way back to high school where they were taught early on that volunteering and giving back was important. One participant said,

> …from high school to college, it's kinda of just a thing engrained in me so long, that volunteering is so important. Where even now with having a small baby too, just kinda of echoing what everyone is saying. Your priorities change, but I need to do something. It doesn't need to be massive and I don't need to be involved in 50 things either. But just I know through my life, I want to be able to give back in some way, and I know that is so important. And that can look different at different times, but just want to continue giving back to my community, if I can.

The foundation was formed during pivotal years as a teen and then reinforced later in college, which has instilled the importance of giving back to the community today as well as influencing their career decisions.

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As participants reflected more on their college years, some participants agreed that their time in college helped develop them into the people that they are now. Whether they learned something about themselves, learned of differences of others, or went through the motions of general experiences, they are now able to discover the various ways that they were involved helping shape them. One participant shared that,

> I was a student in college. I was a sponge soaking up the water right, and now that I have gotten out of college. I am still a sponge. So I can still soak up water, but now I, kinda, can let the sponge out and, ya know, release what I have learned. And so, I will forever be a sponge. I will forever be soaking up knowledge, but also giving it out. So that is how I, kinda, how I look at my civic engagement from high school to college. I was really just, kinda of, soaking it all in and, just kept learning what this is about. And now, I am active participate, more so, than I was in college.

This time in college for these participates helped them experience new things, learn more about themselves, form important relationships, and develop important attributes. While this sentiment is not surprising, it did confirm what higher education administrators hope in that students discover and learn from through the various involvement opportunities in college.

Further, civic engagement provided participants leadership opportunities in college as well as a way to spend their time in between classes and other personal interests. This resonated today as participants look for ways to be leaders in their career or to find ways to get involved now to occupy their time. Some participants agreed that getting involved in civic engagement or student organizations was a way to occupy their time since they were used to a time in college that they did the same thing. Their involvement in college set the tone for decision making after college on getting involved and staying busy as this was the normal thing to do in life.

Although some participants were looking for ways to get involved after college, I took note that some explicitly took a break from civic engagement after college. Some participants were burnout from college while a few others had a hard time figuring out where they wanted to spend their civic engagement time. The participants expressed feeling like they had done so much in college they wanted a chance to regroup. In essence, while they valued and appreciated their fraternity and sorority civic engagement experiences, the intensity of these experiences was overwhelming in some cases. This time after college gave them a chance to reflect on their past and plan for new goals and aspirations after college. This burnout can be seen at times during college when students have overextended themselves or even taken on too much with academics but again it was interesting to see that transcends past college.

As students previously reflected generally on their collegiate experience, other participants reflected that the experiences within their fraternity and sorority organizations set the direction for their civic engagement work now and made them think differently about the world they live in today, the fraternity and sorority experiences in the chapter built the expectations that you get involved at all points in your life because that was what you were taught to do in the chapter. This same sentiment was reflected as they discussed their commitment to civic engagement during college, and now after college there is this same sentiment that giving back and volunteering with your time is what is expected as members of a fraternity and sorority organization. There is evidence to show that fraternity and sorority organizations do not result in the positive outcomes that they are set out to achieve; the findings from this study demonstrate that the fraternity and sorority experience can have positive and lasting outcomes on its members.

The participants went on further to discuss the impact general campus involvement or experiences from their fraternity and sorority organization has had on their careers. One participant shared that,

> …my entire career path was predicated on my involvement in college. Had I not been involved in SA, and built relationships with Athletics, I would have never have gotten an opportunity to work in athletics. Because typically in my career path works in athletics as a student in college, and I didn't do any of that. But because of my involvement in college, and being able to make real relationships over there, that had a huge impact on me and my ability to actually get a full time job after college.

The decision to move into his professional field came from the college experiences he had in college and the relationships that were formed during those experiences.

The power of networking was a common theme for these participants throughout the findings. The relationships that people formed or the people that supported them along their journey of life had led them to important life moments. Whether participants had influencers in their lives before college, during college, or thereafter, the networking of these participants was very important to their career paths and involvement in certain civic engagement experiences, but it was also important to their individual development as people. Even within these focus groups, there was a social networking that took part organically within each session. Many of the participants knew each other and even at times credited one another for influencing their collegiate or chapter experience. This demonstration of networking and connection to each other reinforced to me that these social networks can be carried throughout college and thereafter.

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While I am not surprised about the impact people can have on others, I gained insight in understanding how this networking can be transcending and developed over a lot of time, which leads to career opportunities, furthering education, and general life experiences.

One interesting narrative from a participant really helped me understand more about the power of mentorship and supporting others even past someone's lifetime. One participant shared the deep impact her former boss had on her professional career by sharing that she admired,

…the way he treated other people and dealt with people that, even if, he may not agree with politically, is just something like working together, and to accomplishing, and compromise isn't a bad thing. Ya know you stick to your guns on the most core values, but ya know, give a little, take a little, and you can work out some kind of solution through legislation and appropriations whatever. So, but also, he was just like a kind person too, and found ways to really just invest in people, his employees. He knew everyone who worked for him, and like remembered details and asked about them, and so like trying to be very initial in the relationships that he had.

This had a profound influence in the way she conducted herself and the issues she got involved in through her professional and personal life. While this former boss had since died, this narrative resonated with me that the life lessons a person can provide someone else can last a lifetime and thereafter. This powerful lesson reinforced the importance of civic engagement work and the people involved in this work.

As these reflections happened throughout the focus groups, a shift occurred where the participants then reflected on their current civic engagement work and the various factors that influence that work. These civic engagement experiences include continued involvement as alumni in their fraternity or sorority organization; community outreach programs or events; work

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involvement; social organizations; church; and host institution alumni networking groups. More participants shared that they are civically engaged within work, which provided opportunities for community service or raising money, while some participants felt that their job was an area of civic engagement work through teaching or university administration. This may have been why more participants agreed to participate in this study as there was an interest in my study as many of them were involved in educational settings.

While many participants participated in civic engagement involvement after college within church settings, work, and general community organizations, other alumni got involved in civic engagement work after college through their alumni groups in their fraternity and sorority organizations as well as the host institution. This included advising a student chapter or participating in community service with members of their organizations as alumni. One participant shared that she is really involved with the Greek community at Stanford University. She said, "I am involved in Phi Mu and I am the chapter advisor at Stanford University." She went on to say, "it's just a great opportunity to meet in and get to mentor young women who are going through a very similar experience that I went through." Participants agreed that these experiences offer them a chance to mentor and give back to their organization in a way that others had done for them while in college. While some alumni gave their time through their individual fraternity or sorority organization, others were involved through the host institution's alumni networking groups located across the country. This served not only as a social outlet but also provided alumni a chance to be civically engaged within their respective cities and towns.

While these various civic engagement connections created opportunity for participants to give back, whether personal or through professional environments, the findings from this study were greatly influenced by the societal events during the time of data collection. As this data

collection took place in 2020 during a pandemic with COVID-19, a huge Black Lives Matter campaign took place due to recent police killings of black community members. It is also a presidential election campaign year, so many of the conversations centered on political movements happening within their respective communities. I think the these events and timing of this data collection influenced the findings in this study as the narratives resonated with many of the participants as I brought up questions on civic engagement involvement in their lives today, and they connected this back to current societal events.

Focus group questions that asked about major events that happened after college shifted the discussion of the conversation to focus more on current events. More members of the NPHC Council focus group discussed how political advocacy current events were influencing their perspective as well as individual work in their community. One participant shared that, "like anytime you pick up your phone. You jump into, ya know, events." During this focus group, the national news was covering police brutality against Black Americans, and this was creating national protests across the world. Further, the same participant shared that, "current times right now would be the major event. 2020." The events during the summer of 2020 alone were a lot of the civic engagement work that some of the participants discussed heavily during the focus groups. Further, the participants shared that these events are important to be a part of and in general it is important for people to be educated about general issues including race relations, poverty, healthcare, and so forth. Education was a key component that drove many of the participants to become responsible within their civic engagement work.

Another participant discussed her involvement with President Donald Trump's decision on the DACA program and her political activism to support the Hispanic community in her city. She shared,

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…that there is a large Hispanic Latin-X population within the community, but also within the University of Northern Colorado where I worked. And it was while I was there, there was a lot of discourse about DACA students and their status and what they were able to receive. And so then, that there was a large protest that was organized by one of the student ambassadors that I worked with as well. Some of the staff that I worked with, and so that was probably the first time that I was ever right in the middle of such passionate protest, and actually what I consider forefront civic engagement, as opposed to, community service more of community change.

More participants shared the need to lead change in this way by educating members of their community around these issues, and the protests were ways to bring education and awareness to others.

While I think my findings may have showed some social change movement participation amongst the focus group members, I think it was more prevalent now with the current events happening within the country at the time of data collection. Without the timing of the data collection in 2020, my findings may have showed what previous research found that included the various reasons why participants contribute, give, or participate in civic engagement organizations or projects. These reasons include a special connection to a civic organization, development of skills or knowledge, and a genuine care to help others. Although participants discussed some of their motivation in participating in civic engagements, including the importance to them; want to help and educate others; leadership opportunities; the aspect of having something to do; and the way it looks good to participate in civic engagement, the findings may not have resulted in more understanding on the social change movement and influence of major societal events facing these participants.

Because of these events after college and even the events more recently, the NPHC focus group participants agreed that they were more aware about civic issues now than they were previously in their lives and more so in college. One participant mentioned the sentiment that others agreed upon by saying, "I am more aware since college." It was not necessarily that they cared more or less than they did previously, but their education, experiences from the past, and current events all contributed to why they were committed to their respective civic engagement involvement.

Because of these events, experiences, and involvement in various organizations over the participants' lifetime, the final discussion of the focus groups reflected on the impacts these experiences had on their civic engagement identity. More participants agreed that their identity had been impacted from civic engagement work. Participants focused what they value and what is important now as opposed to what they knew before college. Their identity has also been impacted by education and career. One participant shared, "I can certainly see an identity change in the person I was in college. What I valued at that time, is different than what I valued this time. But I think I think Robert said it earlier, a lot of what even though it looks different now. A lot of what I do now, is grounded in what I learned during those 4 years." He had made a direct connection that his time in college lead him to where he is now, not only impacting him civic engagement work but also impacting him on who he was as a person. Others shared these same sentiments and they discussed again how college formed the foundation for their civic work and how after college they needed to get involved in the community, which they have since graduating from college.

Education and work also impacted some participants' perspectives on the impact of their identity and civic engagement. One participant shared, "education really formed how I look at

civic engagement, specifically, now within higher education institutions." She went on to say, "learning about different types of people and being able to recognize my white privilege, and who I am, and what my identities are reflecting on that, has really influenced how I view civic engagement." Both the combination of her personal attainment of education and her work in the field of education had influenced how she viewed and thought of civic engagement, which directly impacted her current identity. It was through these various experiences at work and through education in college and graduate school that participants connected their civic engagement work back to their development of their identity.

Even as they reflected on their current identity, there were times that participants mentioned that their civic engagement work was not done or that they still had goals they wanted to meet within their lifetime. Often, younger people are seen as not being ambitious with civic mindedness attributes, but I was proud to hear the stories of participants that felt their work was just getting started or not yet finished. They were understanding and learning more about what was important to them and through this learning turned this into action and results. One particular participant shared,

> …kind of my goal like, where I stand now as a person. When it comes to civic engagement, is now I want to build the bridge, and so Lyndsey mentioned it like lifting as we climb. I want to build the bridge to help get people across, not that I have made it anywhere. I am still traveling obviously, but my goal is to help people to a better point and to help my people to a better point.

Although the participant was actively involved in civic work, he still was not finished and had future aspirations for his civic engagement, especially in helping people in his community be

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better. I felt a sense of pride being a part of these focus groups and understanding how these experiences influenced their civic engagement today.

Summary of Stage Three

The literature shows that whether the experience happened before, during, or after college, there are outcomes because of these various experiences. This study, however, has shown what previous literature did not that alumni do make meaning and process these various experiences. The reflections from high school, college, and current events demonstrate that events happen. However, the nuance is how these participants made meaning of these various experiences in their lives and how this has formed their current identity.

The people and the environments that each participant shared within their narratives demonstrate influential factors that directly impact their current civic engagement work. Whether these environments are at home; in their town or city; work place; church; or other places in their community, these various environments not only play a role in how these alumni are involved but also play a role in their perspective and feeling of relevance around the different civic engagement work.

There were times during the focus groups where the participants really tried to think back and analyze the impact of an experience, an event, or a membership into an organization. There were even times some participants acknowledged that they had not thought about an area in a long time, which brought back great college memories. These reflections and meaning-making evolved during each section of questions of the focus group, which allowed for the participants to analyze how these experiences had impacted their lives today.

For most participants, the experiences throughout their lives, especially during college, had a great impact on their current civic engagement work today and ultimately their identity.

They were more convicted in their beliefs and values, and these convictions evolved from the experiences that led them to their current path. For many of these participants, the fraternity and sorority organizations directly impacted their path while for others key events, people, work, and other student organizations were influencing their lives today. No matter the reason, participants had evolved various experiences from their past into real meaning-making that was influencing the events and actions in the present.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand the development of civic engagement specifically with members of fraternity and sorority organizations. By having alumni of sorority and fraternity organizations reflect back on their experiences before college, during college, and now, it gave these participants in these focus groups an opportunity to share their narratives of their various experiences and the impact these experiences had on their civic engagement development. Magolda's (1999) self-authorship framework, Astin's (1984) framework for understanding college and its influence on students, and the Civic Learning Spiral Model (Musil, 2009) were the theoretical frameworks utilized in this study.

With these theoretical frameworks, along with the conceptual model, the findings show how participants make meaning of their experiences before, during, and after college. Alumni acknowledged some of their knowledge and experiences with civic engagement were formed prior to college, but foundational understanding, commitment, and general perspective on civic engagement formed during college. The experiences within student organizations and fraternity and sorority chapters, relationships in the university community, and various events contributed to this foundational commitment. It was not until after college that their commitment level and civic engagement identity took shape due to people in their lives, previous lived experiences, professional careers, current civic engagement work, and societal events that were shaping their perspective and drive to contribute in some way. Since the research questions were designed to

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make meaning of the lived experiences of the participants in this study, these research questions below have guided this study:

1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from their undergraduate college experiences?

2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek participation play in their current commitment to civic engagement?

3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Since Chapter Four discussed the findings of this study, this final chapter, Chapter Five, will include a discussion of the findings as well as the implications and recommendations for future practice of this study. My hope is that this research will provide the foundational work that could be repeated at other institutions to determine if the findings from this study's host institution is similar or potentially different to the findings at other institutions.

Discussion

Research Question One: Engagement After College Experiences

By utilizing the theoretical frameworks as well as the conceptual model for this study, the results were able to address the research questions designed for this study. The first research question, "How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise engagement upon graduating from their undergraduate college experiences?," showed that participants participate in many civic engagement experiences through their respective communities; churches; professional careers; alumni groups; and social organizations or general community service. The people and the

environments that participants shared within their narratives demonstrated influential factors that directly impact their civic engagement work today. Whether these environments are at home; in their town, city, work place, or church; or other places in their community, these various environments play a role in how these alumni are involved but also their perspective and feeling of relevance around different civic engagement work.

The events that are impacting these participants still center on more local or personal events in their community, especially the responses from participants from the predominantly White Greek lettered organizations. The focus from the historically Black-Greek lettered organizations centered on national protests and social needs of their communities. Members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council focus group felt strongly about current civic movements across the nation as they talked more extensively about how they were involved in these various protests or advocacy organizations in their community or as they organized events and opportunities for others. Again, I think the events happening during my data collection time frame in 2020 impacted the results for this study, especially as participants discussed police brutality against the African American community, inequities in society, and national politics.

Although all participants shared some area of civic engagement that they are part of today, they also shared what motivates them to get involved as well as what steers them away from civic work. The civic engagement work must have purpose and meaning for the participants now, and they need to know that their time and work goes toward causes that are important to them. The results for the first research question supports the theory that fraternity and sorority members do get involved in civic engagement work after college, but this work is based on their interests, needs of their community, and societal events happening across the world. The participants credited the foundational work of their collegiate years, especially with

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their fraternity and sorority organizations, for supporting their current civic engagement work because it built the foundation for the importance of giving back in some way to their communities.

Research Question Two: Greek Participation Impact on Civic Engagement

The second research question, "How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek participation plays in their current commitment to civic engagement?," resulted in understanding that alumni do make meaning and process the experiences from the past that develop their current commitment and involvement with civic engagement. However, I am not sure some of the participants had spent a lot of time on reflecting or making meaning of these past experiences until they were given an opportunity to do so through these focus groups. This is one of the benefits of qualitative research is for knowledge to be created as people reflect and generate new knowledge based on their experiences and life perspectives.

This study provided them the opportunity to think back and analyze the impact of a specific experience, an event, or a membership into their organization. These reflections and meaning-making evolved during each section of questions of the focus group, which allowed for the participants to analyze how these experiences impacted their lives today. It is unclear whether these participants made meaning after each event, experience, networking opportunity, or general lifetime factor, but it was clear during the focus groups and the results for this question that their previous lived experiences before, during, and after college built the foundation that is currently impacting their commitment to civic engagement. Whether the alumni felt that they had gained leadership skills, communication skills, networking opportunities, or just general life lessons, these factors were created from membership in their Greek organizations.

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Further, it is was evident in the results that Greek participation received credit for the foundational impact of why fraternity and sorority alumni have a commitment to civic engagement today. This gave more confidence to the original argument that fraternity or sorority organizations are contributing to civic engagement as a priority in university communities. Whether this was found in the form of influential older members, requirements for participation in events, or the general culture of giving back within the organization, alumni credited the fraternity and sorority experience for showing them from the beginning why civic engagement work was important and that this should be carried out in normal day life because that is what members do in these organizations. I was intrigued that the alumni gave as much credit and admiration to their organizations and network of people for influencing their civic engagement work and even career involvement today. Many participants shared that they would not be where they are today whether in life, jobs, or community work if it was not for the people and Greek organizations that created these opportunities for them.

One final observation included the deep insight I gained when I deliberated the comparisons between National Pan-Hellenic Council and the other Council organizations that are predominantly White. The findings demonstrated different nuances related to the commitment and involvement of civic engagement by National Pan-Hellenic alumni than in the participants representing the social Greek organizations. For National Pan-Hellenic members, civic engagement appeared to be an unfolding personal commitment to each person rather than something external that they were gaining. Often when the idea of civic engagement is discussed in relation to college students, the connotation revolves around engaging with communities outside of the university. When we think about civic engagement in a college setting, we think about it externally where you go out into it beyond college, making big connections. However,

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when a National Pan-Hellenic Council participant talked about civic engagement, they were talking about changing policies at the university setting or their respective communities. Therefore, civic engagement for National Pan-Hellenic Council alumni was exercised at a much more intimate level and focused on engaging with the university, itself. Moreover, the nature of the National Pan-Hellenic Council engagement with the university did not have the same motivation as the motivation for social Greek alumni with external organizations. Their intent was less passive and philanthropic and more social action and social change.

Given the data, it appeared National Pan-Hellenic members leveraged civic engagement to address institutional communities whereas members of the other two councils really only viewed civic engagement through the lens of improving communities external to the university. National Pan-Hellenic members dove deeper into their commitment at times leveraging their organization to fix the problems not just in the world beyond college but even in the world in college. Members of National Pan-Hellenic Council never had to be told to go out and change their community, because they knew that if they did not get involved, it would be hard for them to exist. The world was not designed for members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council like the other two predominantly White organizations, whose privilege was centered on the idea that they never thought about having to engage the community. The community was designed for them unlike members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

Research Question Three: Environments along Academic Pathway

The third and final research question, "What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning-making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?," resulted in an overwhelming support of the narratives that environments do impact fraternity and sorority

alumni's commitment to civic engagement. While the timing in participants' lives looks different, the environments, whether in high school, during college, or after college, impact these alumni. Some mentioned that various experiences prior to college had an impact on their commitment level to civic engagement, but this segment of their lifetime was not as influential as their time in college. This could have been from lack of awareness of civic engagement prior to college or a mix of different environments that the alumni grew up in within their communities.

College was where their first introductory knowledge and relevance of civic engagement was formed and eventually cultivated within their fraternity and sorority organization and other various student organizations. These environments in college, including experiences within their fraternity or sorority organization and other student groups, relationship building with different people, and exposure to various national and local events, built the foundational force to question what was important, what they believed and valued, and where they wanted to go after college. Although these experiences happened for some almost 8 years ago, this opportunity to reflect on these previous experiences brought attention to their own perspective and views that they had not thought about until this focus group. It was also the network of community that was formed during each of these focus groups that influenced the way in which some participants thought about their previous experiences and how other people's perspectives either was similar or slightly different. The community within the focus groups demonstrated the culture of these organizations and how influential people can be to the development of their identity, which in turn influenced the results of this study. Although this may have influenced the results of the study as participants would agree with each other, it did provide commonalities that members of the focus groups could use as they reflected on their past experiences.

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It is now as they continue to develop and experience civic engagement after college that they begin the journey to make meaning of these experiences and how these experiences and awareness impact their identity and civic engagement. For most participants, the experiences throughout their life, especially during college, had a great impact on their civic engagement work today and ultimately their identity. They were more convicted in their beliefs and values, and these convictions evolved from the experiences that had led them to their paths today. For many of these participants, the fraternity and sorority organizations directly impacted their path while for others key events, people, work, and other student organizations were influencing their life today. No matter the reason, participants had evolved various experiences from their past into real meaning-making that was influencing the events and actions in the present. Overall, the results reflect the long-term effects that these experiences can have on civic engagement in our communities.

Limitations

This study looked to understand and explore the collegiate experiences that alumni feel contribute to their current civic engagement after college. This study had some limitations in its findings. Since the participants were limited to only one institution and included only a small sample size from that institution within the fraternity and sorority life community, this study generalizes the larger alumni population across the United States. What may have happened within the fraternity and sorority community at the site location may not be what happened at another institution or all fraternity and sorority communities across the country. Also, since the participants were self-selected, these participants do not represent the experiences of all students from that host institution within their respective communities. These are the specific narratives of these participants and how their experiences impact their civic engagement today.

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Although this study was set up from the beginning to understand the populations of multiple universities, other similar institutions created barriers during the data collection process. I was limited from understanding more about the long-term impact of fraternity and sorority life because of the politics and the barriers to studying this population. Other possible site locations would not allow me to have access to their former students and would not send out a message to their former students on my behalf, which forced me to limit my study to only one host site location and only the participants that attended this single institution. The community of fraternity and sorority life lost an opportunity to learn about the impacts of collegiate experiences and the long-term gain those experiences may have provided their now alumni because of personal and political barriers for educational purposes in this study.

This study also took place during the 2019 to 2020 pandemic of COVID-19 when many people across the world had mandatory stay-at-home orders. Because of these mandates, the population of participants could have been larger if people were in their offices with access to reliable technology, and some potential participants were obligated to take care of children or other loved ones. These obligations could have restricted them from participating in this study like it did for a few participants who could not make their sign-up time because of last minute family obligations.

Further, this qualitative study may have outcomes that are skewed due to the memory lapse of an alumni from the time of their undergraduate experiences. There were times during the study that I could recognize that some of the participants were having to really think about their time prior to college or even during college to share a previous experience. They would ask for clarification on a program, event name, or department name as they shared their experience with the other participants. The findings from the study may just be based off their memory and not

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what actually happened during this time although the meaning-making is an important part of the process of these participants understanding their experiences.

Additionally, I recognize my positionality inside the focus groups, especially within the National Pan-Hellenic Council focus group. As a white female and not a member of a National Pan-Hellenic Council organization, I may have missed information or nuances to this study due to my background and lack of knowledge of the community and experiences of the Black students. I recognize my privilege in the setting and that participants may not have been forthcoming to me as well as I may not have recognized cues or terminology with my limited knowledge on civic engagement within National Pan-Hellenic Council communities as well as Black communities across this country.

Conclusion

Fraternity and sorority organizations have an obligation within higher education to prepare their members to be actively involved citizens. In order to face societal issues and to help others in need, all citizens can contribute to various causes. However, we know that fraternity and sorority organizations do play a part in civic engagement work, but we were unsure to what extent this work was happening. The purpose of this study was to understand the role that fraternity and sorority organizations are contributing to the development and commitment of civic engagement of its members.

The following research questions guided this study:

1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from their undergraduate college experiences?

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2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek participation play in their current commitment to civic engagement?

3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Because the research questions were designed to understand and make meaning of the experiences of fraternity and sorority alumni, Baxter Magolda's (1999) self-authorship framework, Astin's (1984) framework for understanding and its influence on students, and the Civic Learning Spiral Model (Musil, 2009) were utilized as the theoretical frameworks that helped form the conceptual model for this study. The conceptual model outlines stages that fraternity and sorority alumni undergo before college, during college, and after college. Through these stages, alumni participated in focus groups from one host institution to understand the narratives of how these alumni make meaning of their lived experiences and the development of their civic engagement commitment and identity.

The findings from this study show that previous lived experiences do impact fraternity and sorority alumni's future civic engagement commitment. These experiences could come from general student organizations in college, fraternity and sorority membership, networking, general work influence, or general community involvement. The support that fraternity and sorority alumni received from the beginning of their new member process showed to be very important to their foundational civic engagement work and this commitment to civic engagement work. The participants are actively involved in a variety of civic organizations because they are important to them, or societal events have influenced their decision to get involved and care for certain issues

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and movements. Further, we found differences in the commitment levels between the National Pan-Hellenic Council participants and the other two council participants. National Pan-Hellenic Council members' relationship with civic engagement is based on a personal commitment unlike the other Councils which is based on membership requirements and external gains. The fraternity and sorority experience, overall, was seen to be very influential and beneficial for the participants of this focus group.

Implications

After completing this study and learning more about the experiences of these alumni, there are some recommendations for both practitioners and researchers to consider as they work and study with the various populations of students whether they are members of a fraternity or sorority organization or general students within their institution.

Future Practice

For current practitioners and policy makers within higher education institutions, it became apparent during the findings of this study that the experiences during college do impact students' long-term engagement with civic work more than precollege experiences and with the added benefit of postcollege experiences. The data collected during this study reinforces the importance of helping create experiences for students during college that may influence their civic engagement after college, whether through student organization involvement, specific events, service-learning programs, or mentorship programs with faculty and staff. These program areas of the institution were shown as influential to students to help build a lifetime commitment to civic engagement, which in turn helps the many communities that these alumni are involved in now as adults. Whether these programs or experiences are required or not as a part of the

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institutional academic experience, this question should be a considered for policy makers at the institutional level.

For current practitioners and professionals that work specifically with Greek students, intervention programs to instill civic engagement are important in instilling long-term outcomes within civic engagement of these future alumni. Whether these programs are designed from the beginning with new members, community service opportunities within their college towns, or mentorship programs within each individual chapter, the findings from this study prove the relevance of these areas of Greek membership and the impact it has on individuals' long-term civic engagement. Further, evaluating the different civic engagement cultures as a collaborative effort between professional fraternity and sorority advisors and the headquarters staff of a Greek organization allows for the various programs already established to be reevaluated and determines current relevance to the community of participants. This collaborative effort can then determine what programs work in order together to create curriculum and initiatives that instill values into their community to influence the long-term impact of their alumni.

Additionally, we obviously need to train leaders in the field of student affairs to better engage our students how civic engagement works in college and thereafter. One thing we learned from this study is that major events in the environment tend to stick with people for a long time, and tend to make a difference in how they view civic engagement. Instead of shying away from national movements, like Black Lives Matter and national presidential elections, we need to leverage what is going on in this world, and bring it to our organizations for dialogue and discussions. Our civic engagement cannot just be community service and donating money, but should be taking the steps to have difficult and candid conversations within our own chapters, as well as, across all council organizations.

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Staff hiring, training, and programming are the areas that need to be addressed during the development of diversity and civic engagement initiatives. For predominantly White membership organizations, this is an opportunity for members to get out of the bubble and become more aware of the things happening outside their community. This can be created by discussions and dialogues after major events. For programming and initiatives designed for students a part of National Pan-Hellenic organizations, training to sensitize the staff on what is going on, finding ways to help students navigate their leadership within the council, and helping navigate and mediate the different environments around equity issues, are all important things to consider when supporting members of this community. Student affairs offices can too have dialogue as staff members of what is happening in society, and how this may be effecting our students, especially members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. All of the councils could then come together to learn about each other's spaces and commitment to civic engagement and importance of the issues happening within these major events during college.

Future Research

As mentioned previously, future research is needed from the base of this study to understand if there are similar patterns or attributes from other Greek communities. While this study may breach the beginning foundation of the long-term impact of civic engagement of former students, other comparative data is important in the influence of this study in the field of higher education research. It is important to figure out if other Greek alumni feel that same way about their respective experiences or is that just based on the students from the study's host institution. Future research could determine if there is a pattern and if this could be replicated at other institutions. However, it is vital that in order to continue to study this population within

higher education that leaders in fraternities and sororities need access to their alumni database in order for researchers to study this area of higher education.

If civic engagement is our goal as higher education institutions, it is still critical that after each major event or important occasion within each generation that we are taking a snapshot on how these experiences are effecting generations of students. This is an opportunity for more reflections which is a great tool to guide students in the long-term commitment to civic engagement. However, it is imperative that we study alumni experiences rather than just college experiences as these former students are still developing from their college education. If we stop studying alumni, then we will not understand if the academic training, outside classroom curriculum, and financial investments on programs and events during college is impacting these alumni in their careers, family obligations, future educational needs, and institutional connections. There is also an opportunity to understand how these major events and societal issues are influencing alumni across generations, which creates unique opportunities for dialogue between current students and alumni.

Further, there is an opportunity to study the sorority and fraternity experience as a high impact practice like institutions do under service-learning programs, which creates long-term commitments to civic engagement. The U. S. Department of Education (2011) challenged higher education institutions to enhance civic engagement within their respective colleges. Institutions could use this directive to evaluate and determine all service-learning programs, including the fraternity and sorority experience, as a part of their civic engagement initiatives. Higher education institutions could determine what it would take to collect data on this population and the future relevance this could have on supporting civic engagement programs across all colleges and universities. By expanding more voices through additional narratives, this strategy for

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collecting data on this topic can expand the knowledge and insight university officials could have for developing or adjusting current programs that support civic engagement during college.

Narratives from the participants, especially among members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, provided perspectives on their experiences around social justice and major social events. This is clearly an opportunity to build upon how social justice plays a bigger role in fraternity and sorority alumni's civic engagement work and the foundational roots of where this work began. Although students connected their civic engagement work to social justice movements, including protests and societal issues on race relations, inequality, poverty, and health and safety, there is still an opportunity to follow up with these participants and others to focus on the National Pan-Hellenic Council and how participants leverage their civic engagement identity.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Protocol ID: IRB- 19-434

Principal Investigator: Danielle Molina

Protocol Title: Why do alumni continue to give back: The influencers of civic engagement of fraternity and sorority members

Review Type: EXEMPT

Approval Date: May 29, 2020

Expiration Date: May 28, 2025

The above referenced study has been approved. To access your approval documents, log into myProtocol, and click on the protocol number to open the approved study. Your official approval letter can be found under the Event History section. For non-Exempt approved studies, all stamped documents (e.g., consent, recruitment) can be found in the Attachment section and are labeled accordingly.

If you have any questions that the HRPP can assist you in answering, please do not hesitate to contact us at irb@research.msstate.edu or 662.325.3994.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH FOR EXEMPT

RESEARCH

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IRB Approval Number: IRB-19-434

Title of Research Study: Why do Alumni Continue to Give Back?: The Influencers of Civic Engagement of Fraternity and Sorority Members

Researcher(s): Jackie Mullen, Mississippi State University, and Dr. Danielle Molina, Mississippi State University

Procedures: You will be asked to join an online focus group discussion with the researcher and 5 other Greek alumni from your institution scheduled at a time convenient to all those who agree to participate. The focus group will last for 90 minutes. Completing the Doodle Poll and participating in the Focus Group discussion will indicate your consent to be audio/video recorded.

<u>**Questions:**</u> If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Jackie Mullen at 662-617-3339 or jmullen@saffairs.msstate.edu

Voluntary Participation: Please understand that your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to

participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You

may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.
If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent. Please keep this form for your records.

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*The MSU HRPP has granted an exemption for this research. Therefore, a formal review of this consent document was not required.

Research Participant Satisfaction Survey

In an effort to ensure ongoing protections of human subjects participating in research, the MSU

HRPP would like for research participants to complete this anonymous survey to let us know

about your experience. Your opinion is important, and your responses will help us evaluate the

process for participation in research studies. ***https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M5M95YF***

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Steps Prior to Focus Group Starting:

1) Participants will receive a link to connect to virtual focus group room where they can see other participants including facilitator. This link will come in an email that was provided to facilitator by participants as well as confirm their designed time and date based on their provided availability.

2) Also included in the same email regarding the link to the virtual focus group will be an electronic consent form for participants to fill out that will include demographic information that will include age, gender, academic major, collegiate involvement, university name, member organization name, and career choices. All participants must fill out this form to participate. A copy of the consent form is located in Appendix B

Steps Once Focus Group Begins:

1) The facilitator of the study will begin by introducing herself to the participants and letting them know the purpose of the study and that the focus group will last 90 minutes.

2) The facilitator will let the participants know that at any time they can remove themselves from the study and thank everyone for their participation.

3) Further, the facilitator will let them know that each participant will receive a pseudo name when reading the results of the final study so everyone's real name will not be identified. The facilitator will let them know that the focus group will be recorded and stored under a password protected Duo-approved computer system at all times.

4) The facilitator will ask the participants to introduce themselves including by sharing their name, the institution where they graduated from, their organization name, and anything else they want to share about themselves to the group.

5) Once all introductions have been made, then the facilitator will tell the participants that she is going to ask a series of questions to the group and that anyone may answer during each question. She will ask the participants to show courtesy to others as they are talking and to try not to interrupt. The facilitator may ask follow-up questions to the group or individual participants based on the responses.

6) The following focus groups questions below will be utilized based on foundation from the research questions and conceptual model. Follow-up questions will be utilized based on the responses from the participants and the conversations happening within each focus group.

Research Questions:

The research questions that guide this study include the following:

1) How do fraternity and sorority alumni exercise civic engagement upon graduating from

their undergraduate college experiences?

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2) How do fraternity and sorority alumni make meaning of the impact past Greek participation plays in their current commitment to civic engagement?

3) What impact do environments along the academic pathway (e.g., high school, college, postcollege) have on the longitudinal process of meaning making around commitments to civic engagement for fraternity and sorority alumni?

Focus Group Questions:

Stage 1: Developing Civic Engagement Identity before college

1) Tell me a little bit about who you were before you came to college.

2) What type of civic engagement experiences did you have during before college?

3) What were the factors or people that influenced your civic engagement before college?

4) How aware were you of civic engagement before you got into your chapter?

Stage 2: Building on Civic Engagement Identity in College

1) What experiences did you have during college that incorporated civic engagement?

2) What were the factors or people that influenced your civic engagement during college?

3) What experiences in your fraternity or sorority organization influenced your level of civic engagement?

Stage 3: Continued Civic Engagement Identity Postcollege

1) What civic engagement are you involved in now?

2) What is the motivation for civic enjoyment now?

3) How has your journey evolved and influenced your commitment to civic engagement?

4) What are the benchmarks that happened as a student that now resonates and continues with your professional or adult life?

5) What are the things that blended with your college experience and fraternity and sorority life experience that may influence your commitment to civic engagement now?

6) Were there any major events or societal influences in your lifetime that impacted your perspective on civic engagement?

7) Has your civic engagement identity changed after college?

At the end of the Focus Group:

1) After all of the questions have been answered by the participants, I will thank them for their participation and acknowledge that this focus group has been recorded and the information shared during the focus group will be stored under a password protected Duo-approved computer system at all times.
2) I will sign-off each participant in the virtual focus group by closing down the computer software system.