ABSTRACT

Title of Document: A MULTI-CASE STUDY EXPLORATION OF THE MOTIVATIONS AND RACIALIZED EXPERIENCES OF MULTIRACIAL WOMEN IN MONORACIAL SORORITIES AT A PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTION

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The purpose of this study was to explore the motivations and experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution. Utilizing a multi-case study methodological approach and a Critical Multiracial Theory lens, the major research questions guiding this study were: What motivates Multiracial women to join and stay in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution? What are the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution? Through a demographic questionnaire and individual semi-structured interviews with twelve Multiracial women attending the same predominately white institution, participants identified various motivating factors for joining their respective sororities and the racialized experiences they endured as members. Findings indicated that Multiracial women across sorority councils were motivated by monoracial women, racially diverse chapters and a desire for sisterhood while women in National Panhellenic Council/Multicultural Greek Council (NPHC/MGC) sororities indicated a desire to maintain or build stronger connections to one of their racial heritages through cultural Greek letter affiliation. Participants in Panhellenic Association (PHA) sororities explicitly or implicitly expressed the following racialized experiences: (a) Multiracial erasure (being

forgotten), (b) a need to cultivate Women of Color only spaces and feeling pressure to conform to white standards of beauty. Participants across sorority councils felt tokenized by their organization. The findings from this study contributes to our understanding of the complex ways Multiracial women students navigate their collegiate environments and their unique experiences at a predominately white institution. Implications for theory, policy, practice and the institution, as well as recommendations for future research are presented.

A MULTI-CASE STUDY EXPLORATION OF THE MOTIVATIONS AND RACIALIZED EXPERIENCES OF MULTIRACIAL WOMEN IN MONORACIAL SORORITIES AT A PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTION

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Dedication

To my mom and dad, thank you for going on this journey with me and for keeping God, love and our family at the center.

I love you more.

Acknowledgements

Throughout this arduous process a few things have remained constant— God's grace and mercy and my parent's unconditional love and unwavering support.

To my mama and daddy - My entire life, you both have supported and loved me unconditionally. Thank you for every encouraging word, every plane ride home, and for sacrificing precious time away from me to let me complete this dream. Thank you for supporting every single venture I've attempted even if you didn't fully understand what I was trying to do or for the many times you saw me in pain and wanted to make it go away but couldn't. I felt your presence with me every step of this journey. Your belief in me helped get me over many hurdles. You have given me the world. This degree is as much yours as it is mine. I love you both forever.

To my brother, our relationship has not always been easy but as I grew up, I realized that you are truly one of my greatest supporters. In your special way, you always made sure I knew that you were proud of me and it did and continues to mean the world to me. Dayle thank you for being the best partner for my brother! You complete our family!

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deserve but I pray you always know the light you bring to others, the inspiration you are to women like me and the gift you are to our community. I am grateful to do life with you. Thank you for always making me feel like I deserved to be in this program and for helping me cross the finish line.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

"To describe something as being Black and white means it is clearly defined. Yet when your ethnicity is Black and white, the dichotomy is not that clear. In fact, it creates a grey area. Being Biracial paints a blurred line that is equal parts staggering and illuminating," (Meghan Markle, 2015).

In her 2015 essay for ELLE magazine, Meghan Markle, a U.S. American actress recently married to Prince Henry of Wales, opens a window into her experience as a Multiracial woman. Meghan shares the challenges she faced navigating family, grade school teachers, fellow college students and her acting colleagues as a "racially ambiguous" Black/white[1] Biracial woman (Markle, 2015). The recent resurgence of conversations and multi-media projects centered on Multiraciality (Barris, Saji, Ellis Ross & 2019; Cooper-Brown, 2019; Harris, 2019b; Noah, 2016; Schwartz & Mandero, 2018; Welteroth, 2019) is due, in part, to Markle's status as the "first" Multiracial member of the British royal family[2], belies the long and at times indeterminate history of the Multiracial population in the United States.

Most people around the world have a Mixed ancestry[3] (Cornell & Hartmann, 2007; Garrod et al., 2014). For example, an estimated one in four African Americans have an ancestor not of African descent (Smedley, 2007). Similarly, Mexico is a Multiracial country of Indigenous and Spanish ancestry (Cornell & Hartmann, 2007). The exact number of Multiracial Americans is nearly impossible to measure given the

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[1] APA rule notwithstanding and as a way to honor the MultiCrit framework, I choose to capitalize "Black," "Asian," "Multiracial," "People of Color," "Students of Color" as a "form of linguistic empowerment" for minoritized populations (APA, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991; Harris, under review, p. 1). I do not capitalize "white" to challenge white supremacy and "reject the grammatical representation of power capitalization brings to the term 'white'" (Pérez Huber, 2010, p. 93).

[2] The racist attacks and commentary demonstrated by segments of the British media after their union, due to Markle's African American racial heritage, has since caused Harry and Meghan to officially distance themselves from the royal family (Smith, 2020).

[3] Ancestry "refers to a person's self-identification of the ethnic origin, descent, roots, heritage, or place of birth of the person or of the person's ancestors." (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017)

historical erasure endemic to slavery and the fluidity of racial identity based on time and place (Harris & Sim, 2002). Although problematic[4], the U.S. Census has been the marker by which scholars have measured the racial make-up of the United States population. From 1850 to 1920, for example, Mixed racial categorization was determined by census takers based on arbitrary instruments. Some enumerators self-selected particular racial categories based on perceptions in their communities or by internalizing rules based on the amount of "Black blood" or Black heritage they were assumed to have, known as the One Drop Rule. Most U.S. with Mixed ancestry were either assigned a monoracial classification or one of the only "Multiracial" options at the time (i.e. mulatto, quadroon or octoroon[5]) (Parker et al., 2015). These labels were significant because they helped to uphold white supremacy and racial categories by spotlighting who was Black, but more importantly who was *not white* (Daniel, 2002; Omi & Winant, 2014). Only beginning in 1960 could American people select their own singular racial category. The 2000 U.S. Census, however, marked the first-time Multiracial people could mark more than one of the five U.S.-designated racial categories for themselves. Prior to this shift in the U.S. Census classification, only monoracial categorization was acknowledged by the U.S. government, rendering Multiracial people invisible both in the Census and subsequently, in institutional practice and policy efforts (Krogen, 2016).

[4] Prior to 1960s, white, male Census takers administered the Census. They determined one's racial categorization. Additionally, the Census only contains five racial categories and 2 ethnic options all of which neglects to capture the full breath of one's heritage.
[5]According to U.S. Census instructions, "The word 'Black' should be used to describe those persons who have three-fourths or more Black blood; 'mulatto,' those persons who have from three-eighths to five-eighths Black blood; 'quadroon,' those persons who have one-fourth Black blood; and 'octoroons,' those persons who have one-eighth or any trace of Black blood." (U.S. Census Bureau, 1890).

The percentage of the U.S. population that identifies as Multiracial is growing at a rapid rate. In 2000, almost 3% or 6.8 million people marked more than one racial category on their census (U.S. Census, 2001). In 2010, the total self-identified Multiracial population grew 32% to 9 million people (U.S. Census, 2010). Still, these figures likely do not capture the full Multiracial population, given that many people of Mixed heritage may not claim their Multiracial identity on the Census for various reasons, including the historical erasures of Mixed heritages, sociopolitical connections to a monoracial group, geographic location, familial challenges, among others (Museus et al., 2016). The growth in self-identification can be attributed to many factors: growing acceptance of Multiraciality as an identifier, the increased acceptance of interracial marriages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), or increased dialogue, awareness and acknowledgement of Multiraciality as a lived experience. Regardless, Multiracial people are presently the fastest growing population in the United States (Jones & Bullock, 2013; Wehrly, 2003). According to the 2015 Pew Research Center report, Multiracial Americans are "growing at a rate three times as fast as the population as a whole" posing a challenge and opportunity to institutions and stakeholders alike (Parker et al., 2015).

Multiracial people represent a rapidly growing college student population (Jaschik, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001; 2010; Wehrly, 2003). The 2010 Census revealed the median age of people within the "Two or More Race" population to be 23.4 years old, suggesting that a disproportionate number of people who identify as Multiracial are young and are either enrolled or preparing to enroll in higher education (Jones, 2005). The National Center for Education Statistics (2013) found that from 2010 to 2012 the number of Multiracial people enrolled in degree granting post-secondary

institutions grew 55%. Furthermore, the 2016 NCES found that from 2010 to 2014, Multiracial student enrollment in U.S. postsecondary institutions increased by 97% (NCES, 2016). The increase in college bound students who identify with their Multiracial heritage underscores the need for greater understanding of their college experiences in hopes of deconstructing and problematizing current conversations about race and social justice in higher education.

Higher education research on Multiracial students is limited. Scholarship primarily explores the general experiences (Nishimura, 1998) and identity development behaviors of Multiracial students (Chaudhari & Pizzolato, 2008; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; King, 2008; Renn, 2000, 2004, 2008; Talbot, 2008). Traditionally, psychological and sociological scholars have conducted most research on Multiracial student experiences. Most research within these fields focuses on familial and peer interactions (Jackson, 2009; Jourdan, 2006; Nishamura, 1998; Rockquemore, 2002; Root, 1992; 1998; Talbot, 2008; Thompson, 1999). These perspectives are critical in understanding the complexity and fluidity of their racial identity as youth, however, we know less about how Multiracial students navigate discrimination, prejudice, and racism on college campuses (Harris, 2015; 2016a; 2016b; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011; Museus et al., 2016). Monoracism, is a crucial term to understanding the scope of my own project. Monoracism is "a social system of psychological inequality where individuals who do not fit monoracial categories may be oppressed on systemic and interpersonal levels because of underlying assumptions and beliefs in singular, discrete racial categories" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 125). Just a few studies focusing on discrimination, prejudice, and racism on college campuses have been empirically tested

(Chang, 2014; Gray, 2017; Harris, 2015; 2016b; 2017a; 2017b; Museus et al., 2016). Johnston and Nadal's (2010) seminal work on Multiracial microaggressions was a major contribution to understanding Multiracial student experiences on campus yet was not empirically tested. Later in 2011, Nadal and colleagues conducted a quantitative study which verified the aforementioned Multiracial microaggressions. While Museus, Sariñana, Yee, and Robinson (2016) identified Multiracial student experiences as marked by discrimination and prejudice, they neglected to name these experiences as racism at the hands of white imperialist structures (Harris, 2016a). Jessica C. Harris (2015) was the first to empirically investigate the racialized experiences of Multiracial women at a predominately white institution (PWI). Utilizing narrative inquiry, Harris explored how Multiracial women navigate and cope with racialized experiences on campus. Her research lead to the development of a new iteration of Critical Race Theory (CRT) named Critical Multiracial Theory or MultiCrit (Harris, 2016a). Harris' study charted new terrain in higher education scholarship by spotlighting Multiracial women in college and identifying new research opportunities not yet explored in Critical Race Theory to be more inclusive of those who fit outside monoracial paradigms.

This study builds on previous research about the lived experiences of Multiracial college students. Specifically, this dissertation study investigated the experiences of Multiracial women in a sorority context. Greek-letter organizations are often criticized for their lack of cross racial membership (Park, 2014). Studies that address cross racial membership have only examined monoracial members or refrained from spotlighting their Multiracial participant experiences. Additionally, Greek-letter organizations (GLOs) perpetuate a monoracial paradigm of race, the notion that people exist in strict racial

categories through historical exclusionary laws by white students and contemporary practices by monoracial GLOs. Given that monoraciality is perpetuated through GLOs and that GLOs hold major influence on college campuses, they serve as a valuable context to investigate the experiences of Multiracial students. By analyzing the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in Greek-letter organizations from a Critical Multiracial lens, this study illuminates how higher education spaces are perpetuating monoracism in structural ways. Additionally, this study helps us understand how Multiracial women navigate college campuses and raced organizations.

College is an important developmental time academically and socially for students (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Higher education institutions provide a unique context where students can explore their personal and social identities (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1956). They can support students through their identity development stages, expose them to people from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, impart intellectual values, critical thinking, and tolerance of various social identities (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Multiracial students add to the structural diversity of college campuses, and their membership in monoracial Greek-letter organizations increases opportunities for greater intergroup interactions thus improving student engagement opportunities (Bowman & Park, 2014). Regardless of the type (racial composition) of Greek-letter organization, a Multiracial member inherently represents a member outside the monoracial majority.

I argue that monoracial Greek-letter organizations represent a unique context to explore the decision-making processes and racialized experiences of Multiracial students at PWIs. Greek-letter organizations require financial sacrifice and extensive time

commitments with their fraternity or sorority members. Financial commitments vary based on type of Greek organization, council, chapter, geographic location, annual budgets, number of new members and whether or not the chapter provides housing at their respective institutions. Different formulas are used to determine new member costs and annual dues after initiation. According to Powell (2016) at U.S. News and World Report, membership fees for Greek chapters can range anywhere from a couple hundred dollars to more than $3,000 per semester – depending on the school, chapter and whether students live in the chapter house or not. Students in the Greek letter community may spend their entire collegiate experience (and beyond) with their fraternity and sorority members, making this community of students critical to their retention, development, and matriculation through college (Astin, 1999). Additionally, research suggests students who participate in clubs and organizations, such as Greek-letter organizations increase their levels of engagement and involvement (Asel et al., 2009; Harper, 2009; Pike, 2003) leading to a greater sense of belonging and retention (Astin, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2010).

While their constitutions and bylaws no longer allow legalized racial discrimination, Greek-letter organization membership still mirrors the monoracial composition of their founding chapters and subsequent membership (Hughey, 2007; Park, 2008). Scholars have explored the experiences of non-white students in historically white Greek-letter organizations (WGLOs) as well as white students who join historically Black Greek-letter organizations (Chang, 1995; Chen, 1998; Cockrell & Gibson, 2019; Guardia & Evans, 2008; Hughey, 2010; Park, 2008, 2012; Thompson, 2000). When it comes to discussing Multiracial students, however, racial essentialism, "the belief that

races are real, invariable, immutable, fixed, natural, and empirical" (Storrs, 1999, p. 203) pervades the available research. For example, when Multiracial students are identified as participants in a study, their narratives are combined with monoracial People of Color, thus invalidating their unique experiences as individuals with multiple racial heritages which could add depth and nuance to the study's findings (see Guardia & Evans, 2008; Laybourn et al, 2017).

In addition to limited scholarship centered on Multiracial student experiences with race, prejudice, and discrimination on college campuses in general, much less exists on their experiences in Greek-letter organizations (Harris, 2015). Multiracial women's voices are often silenced within a monoracial Women of Color narrative making their experiences all the more distinct and complex. This study specifically reveals how Multiracial women uniquely navigate raced and gendered spaces on campus illustrating how the "additional challenge of being Multiracial exacerbates the status of being an ethnic female in this race and gender conscious society" (Hall, 2004, p. 238). This study fills a gap in the literature by centering Multiracial women in higher education.

Statement of the Problem

Multiracial women face a unique form of racism and sexism as they navigate college campuses (Harris, 2015, 2016a; 2016b; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2010). Multiracial women are racially categorized by their family members, professors, administrators, community members, strangers and most importantly, their peers (Chang-Ross, 2010). While scholars have spent considerable energy examining the racial identity development (Osei-Kofi, 2012; Renn, 2003) of Multiracial students, higher education at

the institutional level are not presently equipped to address how Multiracial students negotiate their experiences with racism in monoracial spaces on campus.

Studying Multiracial college students is necessary because discourse, policies and practices continue to perpetuate monoracial paradigms of race thereby excluding Multiracial people. Universities perpetuate monoracial thinking through affinity-based organizations for monoracial minoritized groups (Malaney & Danowski, 2015), external imposition of racial identity (Museus et al., 2016), refraining from disaggregating statistical data to account for Multiracial students, a lack of education, pedagogical practices, counseling services, or other resources available to and about Multiracial people (Payson, 1996). There is a lack of recognition of Multiracial student experiences and voices in all aspects of the university environment.

Recent controversies[6] surrounding Greek-letter organizations and racist acts calls for higher education administrators to pay closer attention to the interpersonal interactions taking place within the GLO context. GLOs, specifically sororities, represent a context in which Multiracial women are likely to experience racism in unique ways. The legacy of racial exclusion in white Greek-letter organizations has permeated higher education for centuries (James, 2000; Ray, 2013). Historically white Greek-letter organizations (WGLOs) maintain a host of ethnocentric, prejudicial, and exclusionary practices against persons of different races, religions, and other social identities (Hughey, 2010; Maisel, 1990). These practices exist through their structures and activities, which encourage homogeneity and discourage interactions across difference (Laird, 2005;

[6] For example, racist themed parties by Greek organizations (Park, 2012), nooses found on college campuses (Baltimore Sun, 2017; CNN, 2017; U.S. News & World Report, 2017), and racist chants (Washington Post, 2015) among others.

McCabe, 2011). Similarly, historically Black Greek-letter organizations (BGLOs), Latinx Greek-letter organizations (LGLOs) and Asian Greek-letter organizations (AGLOs), while deeply rooted in social justice and community building, also face challenges of inclusivity and transparency. Studies show that Greek-letter organizations, broadly, can have positive impacts on student leadership (Astin, 1993; Chang, 1995; Kimbrough; 1995) and identity development (Guardia & Evans, 2008), however, there is no research on the impact that Greek letter organizations can have on Multiracial students and their experiences within the Greek letter organization system on college campuses. This study fills this important gap in the literature by situating the racialized experiences and motivations of Greek letter affiliated Multiracial women within a PWI. My dissertation broadens the scholarly narratives of Multiracial student experiences by exploring the racial climate at a PWI through the specific lens of Greek life for this diverse group of students in today's hypervisible political and racial climate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this single site case study was to explore how Multiracial women experience race and racism in racially homogenous sororities at a public PWI in the Mid-Atlantic region. The lived realities of these students offer insight into how Multiracial women navigate, discuss, and interact with race and racism in these spaces. This study was guided by two primary research questions.

1. What motivates Multiracial women to join and stay in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?
2. What are the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?

Answering these questions not only adds to the scholarly conversations around higher education, Greek-letter organizations, and critical race studies, but informs college campuses on how to better support Multiracial women throughout their time in college. I utilized a comparative multi-case case study (Merriam, 1998) to investigate the racialized experiences of 12 Multiracial women in sororities at a predominately white institution (PWI). Each participant represents a distinct case within three different Greek councils at a large research I, PWI in the Mid-Atlantic region, which will hence forth be referred to as State University (SU). Of the approximately 30,500 undergraduate students enrolled at SU, 45.5% are white, 10.6% Black/African American, 15.3% Asian, 8.1% Latinx, and 3.9% marked "Two or More" racial/ethnic categories. Nearly 20% of SU's undergraduate student population participate in a social fraternity or sorority. Selecting an institution with a substantial Greek life participation percentage and structural diversity was important in order to ensure the highest potential to find participants for this study.

Through the use of a demographic questionnaire, participant interviews, an observation and document analysis, I created case profiles for each participant and offered critical analysis of their motivations and racialized experiences in their respective sororities. I synthesized my research to identify discrepancies and possible themes through triangulation. This process aligns with the case study methodology which encourages the use of multiple sources of information in data collection to provide in-depth description and explanation for each case (Merriam, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Multiracial Theory (MultiCrit)

This study was guided by Critical Multiracial Theory (Harris, 2016a). Critical Multiracial Theory (MultiCrit) draws from Critical Race Theory (CRT), which directly addresses systems of oppression, injustice, and racism (Tate, 1997). CRT highlights racial inequity in U.S. institutions and illuminates the fact that racism permeates every aspect of society from law to education and beyond. Commonly held tenets of CRT include racism as permanent, interest-convergence, differential racialization, intersectionality, counterstorytelling or experiential knowledge, a call to social action, and challenge to ahistoricism. From the perspective of CRT, WGLOs are systems of exclusion that perpetuate privilege and contribute to social and racial stratification on college campuses and society at large (Hughey, 2010). However, even a brief understanding of the historical context of racial politics in the early 1900s reveals that BGLOs were created to empower and uplift the African American community at a time when WGLOs excluded them. Subsequently, Latinx and Asian American Greek-letter organizations were created to fill similar gaps among their communities.

Jessica Harris (2016a) contended that CRT may perpetuate monoracial paradigms because Multiracial people are not fully accounted for or validated in CRT. Under Critical Multiracial Theory, the tenets of CRT are reframed for Multiracial people within a higher education context. For example, the experiential knowledge tenet centers the narratives of Multiracial students and uses those narratives to deconstruct monoracial ideologies that are often perpetuated in the educational system. Additionally, interest convergence under MultiCrit helps researchers understand how the interests of PWIs converge with the visibility of Multiracial students as “safer” People of Color or palatable

minoritized[7] individuals for diversity initiatives. MultiCrit provides a lens by which to assess and evaluate how racism impacts Multiracial people rather than focusing simply on their identity development (Harris, 2016a). Furthermore, "MultiCrit allows for a critique of the role that white supremacist structures play in the (re)construction of Multiraciality" (Harris, 2016a, p. 3). Critically, Harris (2016a) adapted the eight tenets of CRT to be more inclusive of Multiracial people. These tenets include 1) challenge to ahistoricism; 2) interest convergence; 3) experiential knowledge; 4) challenge to dominant ideology; 5) racism, monoracism, and colorism; 6) a monoracial paradigm of race; 7) differential micro-racialization; 8) intersections of multiple racial identities (Harris, 2016a).

MultiCrit provides a lens to address the role of race among participants who do not fit within the dominant monoracial paradigms constructed in society. MultiCrit also centers the voices of Multiracial people in an intrinsically racialized Greek-letter system. This dissertation study illuminates participant voices given their unique positionality within their sorority contexts. Critical Multiracial Theory is explained in greater detail in Chapter II.

Significance of the Study

This study has implications for future research, policy, practice, and theory. Conducted during a time of renewed attention to racial issues in the 2018 political environment, this study coincided with increased racial tensions and hate incidents on

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[7] Minoritized is used rather than minority to denote the treatment of People of Color in the United States. People who are minoritized endure mistreatment, and face prejudices that are enforced upon them because of situations outside of their control. Minority is a misnomer given that African Americans, for example, "minority status" (less than 50% representation) can fluctuate given time and place and is socially constructed (Benitez, 2010; Stewart, 2013).

college campuses and across the United States. Now more than ever, it is important for scholars to understand the distinct ways that racial encounters inform student experiences particularly surrounding race and Greek-letter organizations. College administrators across the country are debating whether or not to eliminate Greek-letter organizations on campuses (Horowitz, 1987; Martin et al., 2011; Syrett, 2009). Particularly as fraternities and sororities come under serious attack as a bastion of hazing, sexual violence and racial intolerance, this study comes at an opportune time to engage in these conversations. Additionally, while racial stratification and implicit and explicit forms of racism have always been present on college campuses, the recent rise in such incidents suggests that higher education scholars and practitioners should devote increased scholarly attention and funding to understand how various Communities of Color are experiencing racism on college campuses in a multitude of contexts. While motivated scholars have produced copious amounts of research to address the racialized experiences and coping mechanisms for monoracial Students of Color on college campus (Banning et al., 2000; Harper, 2012; Patton, 2016; Quaye & Harper, 2014), scholars and practitioners still know little about Multiracial student experiences with racism (Brackett et al., 2006; Nishimura, 1998; Museus et al., 2015; 2016) and even less about Multiracial women (Harris, 2015). While some might argue that Multiracial people are the embodiment of a post racial society[8] the sheer breath of experiences of Multiracial people directly counter that assertion (Anderson, 2015; Daniel & Kelekay, 2017; Harris, 2016; Joseph, 2013; Osei-

[8] Multiracial people have often been described as the embodiment of a post racial utopia, the antidote to racism itself and a result of a post racial society (Joseph, 2013; Osei-Kofi, 2012; 2013; Spencer, 2006). Spencer (2006) writes, "From sources as diverse as popular magazines and the federal government, we are told that racial divisions are breaking down and that a new multiracial population is rising in our midst" (p. 83).

Kofi, 2012; 2013; Spencer 2006). Post racial rhetoric materially harms this group of students who often encounter racism on a daily basis (Harris, 2016).

My study advances higher education research in several ways. First, it expands Multiracial student literature by exploring how race and racialization manifest in the experiences of Multiracial women in Greek-letter organizations of which they are members and among their college peers. This study also adds to a growing body of literature on the experiences of Multiracial students on college campuses (Museus et al., 2016; Renn, 2004, 2008), and the racialized experiences of Multiracial women (Harris, 2015). Additionally, this study contributes to the field of higher education by utilizing MultiCrit as a theoretical framework. As the newest iteration of CRT, MultiCrit has yet to be consistently used in empirical studies. By applying a MultiCrit lens to this study, it can be further developed, understood and employed for future studies. The findings will speak directly to fraternity and sorority literature which historically has explored the experiences of People of Color in historically white Greek-letter organizations (Park, 2008; 2012) and members who do not identify as Black in historically Black Greek-letter organizations (Hughey, 2007; 2010; Laybourn, Goss, & Hughey, 2017; Newsome, 2009). This study addresses a specific type of interracial friendship and cross-racial interactions which can inform campus racial climate (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1996; Park, 2014). This study is significant because unlike other studies that focus on just one type of Greek council, this study explores all monoracial Greek-letter organizations, thus allowing for the inclusion of the interlocking histories that bind and separate them and, in turn, creating a richer opportunity for a more complex and dynamic understanding of how Multiracial women experience various racialized spaces on campus. Finally, by

employing CRT/MultiCrit, the findings of this study also present a strong structural critique for Greek letter organizations, departments or offices of fraternity and sorority life and most notably, higher education institutions in general to upend racist and monoracist structures. To date, this is the only study that has specifically addressed how Multiracial students navigate these contexts on a college campus.

A recurring implication cited by scholars around issues of race and Greek letter organizations is the impact of homogenous organizations on interracial interactions and cross-racial understanding (Park, 2012). Park (2012) acknowledged the class and racial stratification in our higher education system and how these barriers to access are only amplified by "university-supported co-curricular activities [which] are additionally stratified by race and class, perpetuating a certain amount of inequality and privilege" (Park, 2012, p. 15). This dissertation study investigates how a less researched segment of the higher education population experiences race and racialization on campus and most importantly, what sorts of interactions are taking place specifically aimed at disrupting monoracial paradigms.

Key Terms

Below I define several terms and concepts connected to race and the Greek letter organization system.

1. **Big and Little (aka Family lineage)** [1] Refers to the informal intra-sorority family lineage, typically in Panhellenic councils only. A little is a new member and is based on when they entered their Greek-letter organization. A big refers to an older member who is to be a role model for their little within the sorority. A g-big, or grand big, refers to a members' "big big." In Greek family, you will have a

little, a big, a g-big and sometimes even a g-g-big (Biddix et al., 2014; Callias, 2002; Page 2015).

2. Between 1906 thru 1963, nine **Black Greek-Letter Organizations (BGLOs)** were created for and by African American students, known as the Divine Nine. BGLOs are made up of 5 fraternities and 4 sororities and are governed by the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). Finally, at State University (SU) all "Other" organizations outside of the three governing bodies (NPHC, PHA and IFC) stated above are governed (at the university level only) by the Multicultural Greek Council (MGC). Organizations under the MGC include **Latina/o Greek-letter Organizations (LGLOs), Asian Greek-letter Organizations (AGLOs) and Multicultural Greek-letter Organizations (MGLO).**
3. **Initiation activities** include all formal events required to secure official membership in a Greek-letter organization. The purpose of initiation activities is to teach new members about the significance behind the organization's creation, symbols, motto, colors, Greek letters, history, and about current and past members among other significant characteristics. Activities may include formal lessons or lectures, rituals, ceremonies, or illegal practices known as hazing.
4. **Monoracial** is a person who identifies with "one" racial heritage.
5. **Monoracism** is a "social system of psychological inequality where individuals who do not fit monoracial categories may be oppressed on systemic and interpersonal levels because of underlying assumptions and beliefs in singular, discrete racial categories" (Johnston & Nadal 2010, p. 125).

6. A **Multiracial** person is an individual who identifies with two or more racial heritages from one or both parents (Nishimura, 1998). Root (1996) further clarified the meaning of Multiracial by stating, "It is the most inclusive term to refer to people across all racial mixes, including biracial people," (p. xi). **Mixed race** is also used as a synonym for Multiracial and will be used sporadically throughout this dissertation. **Biracial** is used when referring to person with two racial heritages. Although I use **Multiracial and Mixed race** interchangeably, I prefer to use Multiracial as the most inclusive term. Mixed race harkens to a time in which Multiracial people were referenced like dogs (mixed breeds or mutts). If races can be "mixed" then this implies that race is biological and/or that there is such a thing as a "pure races." Note: Hispanic is not used in this study unless participants identify themselves in this way. Latina/o is included when referencing race rather than how the U.S. Census denotes Hispanic/Latina/o as an ethnicity although I acknowledge that Latinx people can be classified among different US designated racial categories (Frey, 2014).
7. **Race** is a social construct used to maintain boundaries and exert power over others through a racial hierarchy (Spickard, 1992). Although scholars agree that race is socially constructed, race and racial identity is a driving force within the political, economic and social spheres of U.S. American culture (Nishimura, 1998; Renn, 2000; Rockquemore, 1998; Shih et al., 2007).
8. **Racialized Experiences** are the interactions individuals have with their race and with others' races. "A racialized experience categorizes, defines, and/or racializes individuals' due to their race" (Harris, 2015, p. 12).

9. **Racism** is “the set of institutional, cultural and interpersonal patterns and practices that create advantages for people legally defined and socially constructed as ‘white,’ and the corollary disadvantages for people defined as ‘non-white’ in the United States” (Bell, Castañeda, & Zúñiga, 2010, p. 60).
10. **Rush (aka recruitment)** is the formal or informal recruitment process in which prospective members of Greek organizations attend events hosted by Greek organizations. This mutual selection process results in prospective members earning 'bids' or offers to affiliate with a particular Greek-letter organization (Donato & Thomas, 2017).
11. **White Greek-Letter Organizations (WGLOs)** is the term used for organizations created for and by white students and that maintain a majority white membership today. These organizations are typically governed by the Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC) or Inter-Sorority Council (ISC). Additional names for WGLO governing councils include, Panhellenic Association (PHA) or National Panhellenic Conference (NPC).

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two provides an overview of four central areas of scholarship to further contextualize the study of Multiracial college women in social sororities. In the first section, I provide an overview of the theoretical framework undergirding this study, followed by an explanation of how the theory informs this work. The second section provides an overview of the extant literature on Multiracial students and racialization in higher education. Section three highlights scholarship on the experiences of Multiracial women followed by a brief overview of literature on monoracial Women of Color in higher education. Finally, I discuss Greek-letter organizations as a unique form of student engagement, including an overview of the formation of Greek organizations in U.S. higher education, the history of racial exclusion leading to the creation of Black, Latina/o and Asian American Greek-letter organizations and cross-racial involvement across Greek-letter organizations.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Multiracial Theory (Harris, 2016), a theoretical framework, guides this study. Critical Multiracial Theory is a framework derived from Critical Race Theory. The purpose of this critical framework is to interrogate higher education institutions that uphold white supremacy and monoracism such as monoracial Greek institutions which my participants navigate daily. This study seeks to understand why and how Multiracial women navigate racialized organizations, such as their sorority context.

Critical Multiracial Theory (Derived from Critical Race Theory)

This study is grounded in a critical framework, Critical Multiracial Theory or MultiCrit. MultiCrit speaks directly to the ways in which Multiracial people experience

racism in society in different ways than monoracial People of Color. Specifically, MultiCrit allowed me to interrogate the larger systems and structures of oppression and white supremacy in higher education and within the Greek-letter organization (GLO) system. MultiCrit draws from Critical Race Theory (CRT), which directly addresses systems of oppression, injustice, and racism in the United States (Tate, 1997). CRT highlights racial inequity in U.S. systems and illuminates the fact that racism permeates every aspect of society from law to education and beyond. Demanding a platform for People of Color, CRT adds to the social construction of reality[9] by including their voices, their stories, and their truths.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory was introduced in the 1970s as an outgrowth of Critical Legal Studies (CLS). CLS challenged legal discourse by revealing how the legal system perpetuates structures and systems of power in society. Legal scholars recognized the lack of progress and inequity embedded in the legal system. Many credit the work of CLS to the legal victories won during the Civil Rights Movement. However, CLS has its limitations. "CLS scholars critique mainstream legal ideology for its portrayal of U.S. society as a meritocracy, [it] failed to include racism in its critique" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). CRT is an outgrowth of these criticisms and is used to address non-legal environments in society plagued by racism.

A major goal of CRT is "the elimination of racial oppression as part of the larger goal of eradicating all forms of oppression (Tate, 1997, p. 234). While this is a lofty and

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[9] Social construction of reality is a theory that assumes reality is understood and created based on the interactions of individuals within a society that gives meaning to otherwise worthless things and creates the reality of the society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

some would argue impossible task, it is the foundation of CRT scholarship. Ladson-Billings (1998) described CRT as an intellectual and social tool for the "deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (p. 9). While investigating the origins and evolution of CRT, I discovered nearly a dozen "tenets." Scholars included some and omitted others demonstrating the fluidity of theory and its ability to be modified when used in research. Based on the scope of this study, I include what I deem the most salient concepts or tenets which undergird CRT, acknowledging that others may exist. The salient tenets of CRT include: 1) Racism as permanent, 2) Interest convergence, 3) Differential racialization, 4) Intersectionality, 5) Counterstorytelling or experiential knowledge, 6) A call to social action, 7) Challenge to ahistoricism and 8) Whiteness as property.

Race as Permanent

Critical Race theorists concur that race is permanent in U.S. American society (Bell, 1991; Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Racism is normal in a U.S. context. It is omnipresent and permeates every aspect of society. Racism impacts the economic, social and educational opportunities of people who fit outside the white norm. "CRT recognizes that racism is endemic in U.S. society, deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically" (Tate, 1997, p. 234). CRT names racism in its many forms and challenges societal notions of colorblindness, objectivity and meritocracy.

Interest Convergence

Derrick Bell (1980) coined the phrase interest convergence. He explained, interest convergence is a principle that suggests "significant progress for African Americans is

achieved only when the goals of Blacks are consistent with the needs of whites" (Tate, 1997, p. 214). He goes on to explained that white people support greater equality for Black people as long as it does not threaten their superior social status, white supremacy[10] (Bell, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT scholars argued that the slow gains of the Civil Rights Movement were merely a byproduct of white self-interest rather than a desire to do what is right (Bell, 1991). Consequently, CRT scholars asserted that advancement for People of Color is achieved in a solely "incremental and palatable fashion" (Harris, 2016a, p. 7). Tate (1997) added, "CRT portrays dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful entities of society" (p. 235). This principle, similar to other tenets of CRT, provides the tools and language to explain why certain decisions are made in society.

Differential Racialization

Race is a social construction (Spickard, 1992). Races are merely categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient. Differential racialization asserts that dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market. This is evidenced in the changing social status of Irish, Italian, Spanish, and Asian American people. Ladson-Billings (1998) pointed out "although racial categories in the U.S. census have fluctuated over time, two categories have remained stable—white and Black" which demonstrates the power and strategic

[10] White supremacy is "a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control the power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance, and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings" (Ansley, 1997, p. 592).

nature of the white/Black racial binary and the permanence of these two groups to remain at the top and bottom respectively (p. 50).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality stresses the importance of acknowledging people's multiple group memberships and social identities. Specifically, Crenshaw (1993) emphasized the intersection between race and gender by focusing on the lived experiences of Black women. Given that no person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity, intersectionality is a major contribution to the field. Crenshaw (1993) sought to address multiple systems of subordination. She wrote:

> An intersectional framework uncovers how the dual positioning of Women of Color as women and as members of a subordinated racial group bears upon violence committed against us. This dual positioning, or as some scholars have labeled it, double jeopardy, renders Women of Color vulnerable to the structural, political and representational dynamics of both race and gender subordination. (Crenshaw, 1993, p. 112)

Today, Critical Race scholars investigate multiple intersectional identities which contribute to our understanding of how oppression and white supremacy work to undermine socially constructed groups in society.

Storytelling and Experiential Knowledge

Another strength of CRT is its emphasis on storytelling or the recognition of experiential knowledge. Storytelling or counterstorytelling allows previously silenced or invisible groups to share their voice and their story with others. Given the deficit centered narrative that permeates society about People of Color, CRT allows People of Color to

share their lived experience and provides a counter narrative to mainstream scholarship (Bell, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT offers People of Color an opportunity to name their reality and provides context, feeling, understanding and experiential knowledge to bring voice to silenced groups (Delgado, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Delgado (1988) argued "white people rarely see acts of blatant or subtle racism, while [minoritized] people experience them all the time" (p. 407). Here, he illustrated the impetus for minoritized and marginalized people to help change the narrative in legal and educational discourse around issues of race and racism. Specifically, he offered four reasons why storytelling is a powerful medium by which CRT can make a contribution. These justifications include: "(a) reality is socially constructed, (b) stories are a powerful means for destroying and changing mind-sets, (c) stories have a community-building function, and (d) stories provide members of out-groups' mental self-preservation" (Tate, 1997, p. 219). As previously discussed, beyond shifting discourse, counterstorytelling and experiential knowledge has a healing effect for those in the margins of U.S. American society.

Social Action

One of the unique aspects of CRT which expand its reach and breath beyond simple frameworks, perspectives or epistemologies is CRT's call to social action. Critical Race theorists work toward eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression through social transformation. CRT is committed to a racial justice agenda to eliminate all forms of subordination of People of Color.

Challenges Ahistoricism

Critical Race Theory challenges ahistoricism and insists on addressing issues of racism through a contemporary *as well as* historical context (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT contends that U.S. political, legal and educational systems are based on white people having certain unalienable rights to property and capital. Current inequalities and social practices are inextricably linked to earlier periods in history. Consequently, racism advantages some groups and disadvantages others.

Whiteness as Property

Harris' (1993) seminal article, *Whiteness as Property*, explained how whiteness is a right protected by law in the United States. Harris argued that whiteness has four functional property rights: the right to disposition, the right to use and enjoyment, the right to reputation and status property, and the absolute right to exclude. These functional areas allow white people to move about freely in society and accrue unearned benefits. Subsequently white people can pass along the benefits and privileges to future generations, enjoy such benefits under protection of the law, exclude non-white people from these privileges and maintain a privileged status of a good reputation in society simply for being white.

MultiCrit

Over the years, CRT has been adapted to apply to specific marginalized communities (e.g. LatCrit, AsianCrit, and TribalCrit). Each of these modifications "is not intended to replace the tenets of CRT but rather offer a refined set of uniquely tailored tenets that can further advance critical analyses of race for differing communities and individuals of color" (Museus, 2013, p. 23). While it makes foundational contributions to the study of race, CRT may perpetuate a monoracial paradigm, meaning Multiracial

students are not fully accounted for or validated within CRT (Harris, 2016a). Harris (2016a) developed MultiCrit to account for the unique experiences of Multiracial people missing in the tenets of CRT.

Just as CRT challenges liberalism and notions of equality and liberty for all, MultiCrit exposes the racialized experiences unique to Multiracial people (Harris, 2016a). Furthermore, "MultiCrit allows for a critique of the role that white supremacist structures play in the (re)construction of Multiraciality" (Harris, 2016a, p. 3). Harris (2016a) adapted eight selected tenets of CRT and offered a new, more inclusive conceptualization of the experiences of Multiracial people. The first four tenets listed below are direct adaptations of popular CRT tenets while the remaining four are newly developed: 1) challenge to ahistoricism; 2) interest convergence; 3) experiential knowledge; 4) challenge to dominant ideology; 5) racism, monoracism, and colorism; 6) a monoracial paradigm of race; 7) differential micro-racialization; 8) intersections of multiple racial identities (Harris, 2016a).

Challenge to Ahistoricism

A challenge to ahistoricism challenges the recent hysteria and trendiness surrounding Multiracial people in scholarship, discourse and policy. MultiCrit reveals the harm imposed by the "Rule of Hypodescent," a strategy used to uphold white supremacy and purity by naming anyone with "one drop of Black blood" as Black, essentially nullifying Multiracial people since colonization. By placing Multiracial students' experiences within a proper historical context (i.e. "creation and abolition of anti-miscegenation laws, slavery, immigration, affirmative action, the rule of hypodescent, and the addition of the 'check all that apply' option on the U.S. Census and college

admissions applications" (Harris, 2016a, p. 5-6)) scholars can unearth the source of current tensions and how much of the U.S. manipulation and treatment of Multiracial people historically has influenced current politics, policies and identity choices (Harris, 2016a).

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence, a popular CRT tenet, is reimagined in MultiCrit. Higher education scholars identified two clear examples of interest convergence as it relates to Multiracial people. First, interest convergence is evident in strategic changes to the U.S. Census. Based on current politics, developments in science and shifting public attitudes, people were allowed to mark more than one racial category on the U.S. Census. Through 1950, census-takers commonly determined the race of the people they counted. From 1960 on, Americans could choose their own race. Starting in 2000, Americans could include themselves in more than one racial category. Before that, many Multiracial people were counted in only one racial category (Parker et al., 2015). White mothers of Biracial children were some of the most vocal advocates fighting for the changes to the U.S. Census (Guillermo-Wann & Johnston, 2012). Mothers wanted their children to avoid being classified as a Person of Color, and consequently wanted their children to be able to claim their full racial heritage on government documents (Renn, 2004). Secondly, interest convergence is illustrated in how PWIs use Multiracial bodies in their diversity recruitment efforts. Multiracial students may feel invisible to the campus when assessing policies and on-campus resources that serve monoracial Communities of Color but are hypervisible when the institution needs "diverse faces" for official university marketing

materials (Harris, 2016). While propagating Multiracial students in this manner, white institutions benefit by appearing more diverse.

Experiential Knowledge

Experiential knowledge, under MultiCrit, is similar to that of CRT. CRT magnifies the voices of People of Color and names their experiences as both valid and important sources of untapped knowledge. Similarly, MultiCrit names Multiracial people as important agents of knowledge. Multiracial voices are often invisible or subsumed in monoracial narratives. MultiCrit calls for the amplification of Multiracial people to provide counter narratives to monoracial paradigms and racial essentialism.

Challenge Dominant Ideologies

MultiCrit challenges dominant ideologies often used to characterize and misrepresent the Multiracial experience. For example, dominant ideology says Multiracial people must fit into monoracial boxes rather than claim their full racial heritages. Additionally, a common misconception is that Multiracial people cannot experience racism, however, research showed that they actually experience racism at higher rates than monoracial People of Color (Bracket et. al, 2006; Harris, 2016; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et. al, 2011). Finally, MultiCrit directly confronts the commonly espoused myth that Multiracial people represent a post-racial society. Scholars have proven that each of these fallacies harm our understanding of the Multiracial experience (Harris, 2016) by negating the inherent trauma Multiracial people experience as both invisible and hypervisible raced individuals on a daily basis.

Racism, Monoracism, and Colorism

CRT recognizes the salience of racism imposed on People of Color by white people and systems. MultiCrit, however, argues that monoracism and colorism are also oppressive social systems in society that deeply impact Multiracial people (Guillermo-Wann & Johnston, 2012). Specifically, monoracism ultimately maintains white supremacy by assuming People of Color are monoracial. *Monoracism* is "a social system of psychological inequality where individuals who do not fit monoracial categories may be oppressed on systemic and interpersonal levels because of underlying assumptions and beliefs in singular, discrete racial categories" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 125). Communities of Color intentionally and unintentionally marginalize Multiracial people due to monoracism. Monoracism exists at the institutional, interpersonal and internalized level. "Examples of monoracism include forcing Multiracial people to choose one monoracial identity over others, policing the authenticity of Multiracial people, objectification, exclusion and isolation from monoracial groups, organizations, and resources" (Harris, 2016a, p. 806).

In addition to monoracism, colorism is also endemic in U.S. society (Hunter, 2005; 2007; Norwood, 2013; Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Colorism is the privileging of lighter skin and creates skin color stratification. "Colorism, like racism and monoracism, perpetuates a system of white over color dominance and maintains a racial/skin color hierarchy that stifles coalition building between racial communities" (Harris, 2016a, p. 806). Multiracial people not only experience marginalization from white communities but they also experience prejudice from other monoracial Communities of Color.

A Monoracial-only Paradigm of Race

Shifting away from the traditional CRT tenets, Harris (2016a) offered four new tenets specifically designed for Multiracial people. MultiCrit challenges the monoracial paradigm of race upheld by systems and structures that simply do not acknowledge Multiracial people, their experiences with racism, monoracism, and their existence outside of a traditional Black/white binary. Instead, this tenet focuses on the ways race is socially constructed into fixed categories which is problematic for Multiracial people. Harris (2016a) found that Multiracial people are often assumed to be and assigned a monoracial identity. Subsequently, maintaining a monoracial paradigm in society dilutes the complex realities of race and upholds the notion that races are "pure" and fixed. Ultimately, this tenet exposes how monoraciality upholds white supremacy.

Differential Micro-racialization

Differential racialization is an original tenet of CRT, which states that over time, marginalized or minoritized groups are racialized in strategic ways to benefit white people. Ultimately these changes seek to uphold the structures of white supremacy. MultiCrit argues that Multiracial people experience differential *micro*-racialization given the extreme frequency with which their racial identity or heritage is leveraged to benefit white institutions and systems. Micro-racialization implies the leveraging of racial identity on a more constant, ever-changing basis. In the case of Harris' (2016a) study, her participants described the daily, commonplace, and often subtle manner in which differential racialization occurred similar to how scholars describe racial microaggressions. "The MultiCrit tenet of differential micro-racialization accounts for the positioning of Multiracial students' bodies to serve the needs of the institution on a daily basis, as well as over a period of time" (Harris, 2016a, p. 808). For example, Harris found

that one of her participants was “treated as white [ideal minority meaning she does not look like a minority even though she is] by the administration until they needed to racialize her as ‘Latina’ for diversity-related events, publications, and otherwise” (p. 808). Thus, Multiracial people are treated differently based on their physical appearance, institutional needs and goals.

Intersections of Multiple Racial Identities

While intersectionality emerged out of CRT to speak to the multiple forms of oppression experienced primarily by Black women (Crenshaw, 1993; hooks, 1990), intersectionality in MultiCrit examines the intersections of multiple racial heritages and the different forms of oppression Multiracial people may face as a result. Harris (2016a) illuminated the need for intersectional research to expand beyond the intersections of singular social identities to encompass the different racial heritages a person may carry. This tenet allows Multiracial people to articulate how the “multiple races Multiracial students embody impact their experiences on campus,” such as how a Multiracial person who is Black/Korean or Mexican/white might navigate campus environments or society at large, differently (Harris, 2016a, p. 809). Put plainly, “the mix matters” for Multiracial students meaning different racial heritages impact the ways in which people are perceived and narrative society and the subsequent racial stereotypes they may encounter (Garrod, Kilkenny, & Gomez, 2014, p. 3). Scholars documented the impact physical appearance, skin color, and phenotype (which is influenced by racial heritage) plays on the experiences of Multiracial students in college and intersectionality under MultiCrit speaks to those lived realities (Omi & Winant, 2014; Renn, 2004; Root, 2001).

MultiCrit in Practice

MultiCrit addresses the role of race and racism on the lived experience of Multiracial students. MultiCrit takes a macro approach to looking at the experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities. With MultiCrit, I unpack how larger systems and structures of white supremacy impact how participants navigate sororities on campus. For example, from the perspective of CRT, white Greek-letter organizations (WGLOs) are systems of exclusion that perpetuate privilege and contribute to social and racial stratification on college campuses and society, at large (Hughey, 2010). MultiCrit also centers the voices of Multiracial woman with the intention of offering insight into their experiences in an intrinsically racialized GLO system. This theory guided my research questions, decisions regarding methodological approach, interview questions and the data analysis process.

The research questions focus on the motivations and racialized experiences of Multiracial women. Greek-letter organizations are raced organizations on college campuses and hold power in higher education institutions with unique principles, governing structures and their own culture, practices and traditions. The traditions, activities and types of individuals "invited" into the sorority environment are often informed by history and culture. MultiCrit, being a critical race lens, allowed me to engage with GLOs in critical and complex ways.

The interview questions have two major components, part one asked questions around family and educational background and part two will focused on sorority experiences. Observations allowed me to view interactions in real time; allowed me to present myself as a raced being in a sorority space; and triangulated the data. Finally, I

used the tenets of MultiCrit as *a priori* codes for the deductive coding process to determine if any tenets were present in the interactions of the participants with their sorority sisters. Thus, theory is interwoven throughout the study in multiple ways and will remained at the forefront of the research process.

Multiracial Students and Racialization in U.S. Higher Education

To understand the context of Multiracial women in Greek-letter organizations, the following literature review explored multiple areas of literature. The first section provides an overview on the experiences of Multiracial students in higher education by first reviewing the general approaches of Multiracial identity development and its evolution—body of literature that consumes most of the scholarship on Multiracial college students. Next, I provide a review of the racialized experiences of Multiracial students specifically through a discussion on Multiracial microaggressions and monoracism. The second section focuses on Multiracial women generally followed by a detailed review of the scant literature of Multiracial college women. Section two ends with a brief overview of monoracial Women of Color in higher education. The final section reviews literature on the history and current themes surrounding Greek-letter organizations and issues of race and racialization in the fraternity and sorority system.

Approaches to Multiracial Identity Development

Multiracial identity development models were created to acknowledge the multiple ways Multiracial people identify as compared to their monoracial peers. There are four dominant approaches to identity development in the Multiracial identity development space: (a) deficit approach, (b) stage theories, (c) typological, and (d) ecological.

Deficit Approaches

Deficit approaches characterizes Multiraciality as a conflicted existence (Park 1928; Stonequist, 1937). Multiracial people were described as "tragic mulattos[11]" or "marginal men" (Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1937). Stonequist claimed that Multiracial people preferred a monoracial identity otherwise they risk rejection, isolation, and stigmatization from monoracial groups. The earliest theorists also claimed Multiracial people experienced an inferiority complex, hypersensitivity, and moodiness based on their multiple racial heritages (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Over the years, research has proven that Multiracial people, like any other group, can hold both positive and/or negative self-concepts depending on a myriad of factors. Root (1994) stated in a book chapter "any distress related to being Multiracial is likely to be a response to an environment that has internalized racist beliefs" (p. 456) rather than the inherent nature of having multiple racial heritages.

Stage Theories

Stage theories of Multiracial identity development suggest Multiracial people progress through a set of sequential stages, leading to an integrated identity similar to ethnic identity development models (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990; Root, 1990). These models were criticized for being too linear and assuming some final utopic identity which everyone will achieve, which did not adequately represent the experiences of Multiracial identity construction.

Typological Approaches

[11] The "tragic mulatto" is a historical trope often focusing on the personal pathologies of a Mixed race (typically Black/white and female). She is depicted as depressed, self-loathing, and sexually promiscuous due to her dual racial heritages (Bettez, 2010).

Typological approaches offered a set of racial identity patterns Multiracial people may adopt (Cortés, 2000; Daniel, 2002). For example, it is widely cited that Multiracial people will identify in any or all of the following identity categories: monoracial, multiple monoracial, Multiracial, border identity or as no race at all (Rockequemore, 1998; Root, 1990; Wallace, 2001). While typological approaches are still used today, they fail to address the environmental influences that affect identity development (Renn, 2004).

Ecological Approaches

Ecological approaches stress the influence of contextual factors across one's life span on the development of identity (Renn, 2004; Root, 1998). Kristen Renn (2004) specifically examined the college environment as a unique backdrop for identity development shifts for Multiracial students. Specifically, she found that college is a stressful time for students as they face major life transitions. Multiracial students are likely building new friendships and having countless interactions which impact how they identify in new environments. Renn (2004) proposed five widely held patterns of identity among Multiracial college students. The five patterns include: (a) monoracial identity (i.e. Black, Asian American, white, Native American); (b) multiple monoracial identities, shifting depending on the situation or context (Black and white, Chinese and Puerto Rican); (c) Multiracial identity (i.e. Biracial, Multiracial, Mixed); (d) extraracial identity, meaning they will opt out of U.S. racial categorization; (e) situational identity, meaning students will shift between identities in different contexts.

The evolution of Multiracial identity development approaches illustrates the fluid, constantly changing, identity decisions Multiracial people make and the impact that

society has on this identity decision making process. “Mixed race college students report that self-identification is important to them… rather than being categorized based on the assumptions of others (Cabinte, 2013, p. 24). Since the “mix matters” not all students are given the same fluidity of identity that others may be given (Garrod, Kilkenny, & Gomez, 2014, p. 3). For example, the historical legacy of the one drop rule means that people with Black heritage may not have a “choice” whether to claim one’s Black heritage as that assumption may be imposed by others. Multiracial identity development models provide the foundation for our understanding of the racialized experiences of Multiracial people, how they navigate various spaces in society and how such experiences with race and racism impact their identity development decisions. “Although Multiracial identity development literature is foundational, particularly because it details how Multiracial students have unique experiences with race on campus when compared to their monoracial peers, scholars often miss opportunities to connect students’ micro-level interactions to macro-level systems of domination” (Harris, 2019a, p. 1029; Osei-Kofi, 2012). From identity development models, scholars continued to interrogate the racialized experiences of Multiracial people eventually characterizing such experiences as Multiracial microaggressions and monoracism.

Multiracial Microaggressions and Monoracism

Much of the work on racial microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007) in higher education focuses on monoracial students (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Yosso, et al., 2009) leaving out the clear and present racial tensions Multiracial students experience daily. The omission of Multiracial people in racial microaggression scholarship, among other things, is an example of monoracism. Johnston and Nadal (2010) first introduced

Multiracial microaggressions through a review of the exigent literature on the experiences of Multiracial people generally. Multiracial people can experience both racial microaggressions as a Person of Color as well as microaggressions specifically connected to their Multiracial heritage. Multiracial microaggressions are “daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, enacted by monoracial persons that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights toward Multiracial individuals or groups” (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 126). Offering a first look into the experiences of Multiracial people with racism, Johnston and Nadal (2010) developed a Multiracial microaggression taxonomy grouping various types of microaggressions Multiracial people are likely to encounter. The taxonomy includes: (a) Exclusion or isolation; (b) Exoticization and objectification; (c) Assumption of monoracial or mistaken identity; (d) Denial of Multiracial reality; (e) Pathologizing of identity and experiences.

Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Sriken, Vargas, Wideman, and Kolawole (2011) extended Johnston and Nadal’s work in a content analysis focus group to validate the taxonomy. All five domains were found, and one additional category emerged, Microaggressions based on stereotypes. Although a statistically weaker finding, the additional category accounts for racial microaggressions that both monoracial People of Color and Multiracial people experience based on the prejudices attached to a specific racial group. For example, a person with Black and Indigenous heritages might experience stereotypes connected to both backgrounds such as being treated as a possible criminal or alcoholic respectively. The following sections offer examples of Johnston and Nadal’s (2010) five Multiracial microaggressions found in scholarship on Multiracial student experiences.

Exclusion or Isolation

The first category occurs when Multiracial people are excluded based on their Multiracial heritage. An example is when a Multiracial student is challenged to prove their cultural authenticity or being treated as inferior due to their multiple racial heritages. Participants in Basu's (2010) qualitative study reported difficulty negotiating social groupings on campus due to "informal segregation and racism that was present at the school" (p. 103).

Exoticization and Objectification

Exoticization and objectification occur when Multiracial people are deemed a "racialized ideal" to be used as an example of a post-racial society. Multiracial women are referred to as exotic, special and sometimes painted as promiscuous due to their physical appearance (Root, 1994; 2004). Others may hypersexualize or objectify Multiracial people resulting in possible psychological or emotional trauma (Bettez, 2010).

Assumption of Monoracial or Mistaken Identity

The third category problematizes the monoracial only paradigm of race. This microaggression is based on the assumption that people hold one fixed racial category, that their families are not interracial and the constant need for Multiracial people to decide how to react to these frequent assumptions. Multiracial people may choose to correct the individual, explain their family heritages or remain silent when faced with these assumptions or comments. In Basu's (2010) study, participants described countless interactions between faculty and peers in which they were assumed to be monoracial Students of Color and the racial stereotypes associated with one of their racial heritages were projected onto them.

Denial of Multiracial Reality

Denial of a Multiracial reality occurs when another person is fully aware of that individual's multiple racial heritages yet still denies their ability to claim that heritage. Examples of a denial of a Multiracial reality arises when colleagues and peers deliberately tell Multiracial people they do not "look" like one of their racial heritages or infer that Multiracial people have to "prove" their racial heritage through cultural authenticity tests (Harris, 2017a).

Pathologizing of Identity and Experiences

The final category, pathologizing of identity and experiences, is the assumption that Multiracial people struggle with their racial identity or are viewed as psychologically abnormal. A clear illustration of this microaggression occurs when people assume or perpetuate the tragic mulatto myth by questioning how a Multiracial person "handles" or "deals with" their multiple racial heritages. This deficit minded thinking can be experienced in extended family units (Jackson, 2009).

Multiracial microaggressions occur in interracial families. Building off of Johnston and Nadal's (2010) taxonomy, Nadal et al. (2011) found five types of Multiracial microaggressions experienced by Multiracial people from family members. They include (a) Isolation within the family, (b) Favoritism within the family, (c) Questioning of authenticity, (d) Denial of Multiracial identity and experiences by monoracial family members, and (e) Feelings about not learning about family heritage or culture. Although the final theme is not a microaggression, participants expressed regret for not learning about their family culture and traditions sometimes leading to insecurity around claiming one's full racial heritage.

Racialized Experiences of Multiracial People in Higher Education

The Multiracial microaggression taxonomy provides a name for the subtle ways in which Multiracial people experience racism and how those experiences are normalized and embedded in daily life. Some scholars have investigated the racialized experiences or coping strategies of Multiracial people and students. Below I outline a few noteworthy studies that inform this dissertation by illustrating racialized experiences of Multiracial people in higher education.

Museus, Sariñana, Yee, and Robinson (2016) conducted a qualitative study of 34 Multiracial college students in which they found seven ways Multiracial students experience prejudice and discrimination on campus. These include: (a) Racial essentialization; (b) Invalidation of racial identities; (c) External imposition of racial identities, (d) Racial exclusion and marginalization, (e) Challenges to racial authenticity, (f) Exoticization, and (g) Pathologizing of Multiracial individuals. Racial essentialization is similar to Johnston and Nadal's (2010) recognition of monoracial only paradigms of race in which enactors will impose a singular racial category on a Multiracial student. Similar to denial of a Multiracial reality, an invalidation of racial identities occurred when Multiracial students' racial identities were rejected by others. External imposition of racial identities refers to peers' or strangers forced racial identities onto Multiracial students in ways that conflicted with how students self-identified. The final four experiences mirror those of Johnston and Nadal's (2010) taxonomy and further demonstrate a common set of microaggressions experienced generally by Multiracial people and specifically by students on college campuses.

Harris' (2015) dissertation was the first empirical study on a college campus to explore specifically the racialized experiences of Multiracial college women. Harris' findings confirm that Multiracial students experience racism on college campus. She developed four categorizes of experiences including (a) Multiracial women and racial stereotypes, (b) Multiracial microaggressions, (c) Manifestations of whiteness, and (d) Coping with racialized experiences. Scholars also found that some Multiracial students may "feel pulled between various students-of-color organizations, feel invisible, be bombarded with questions about racial identity, and feel as if they do not have the cultural tools to appropriately navigate students-of-color spaces" (King, 2008, p. 38). Research indicated that many of these students are constantly forced to "prove" their ethnic membership (Jones & Jones, 2010; Nishimura, 1998).

Museus, Sariñana, and Ryan (2015) also investigated the coping strategies of Multiracial students, however, they referred to their experiences as prejudice and discrimination while Harris (2015) named similar experiences racism or monoracism. Museus et al. (2015) found that Multiracial college students cope with prejudice and discrimination by educating others about Multiracial issues, utilizing support networks, embracing fluidity of their Multiracial identity, and avoiding confrontation with sources of prejudice and discrimination.

Multiracial college students and administrators share similar racialized experiences on college campuses (Harris, 2016b; 2017a; 2017b). Multiracial students experience everyday forms of monoracism, Multiracial microaggressions, at PWIs. Participants in Harris' (2016b) study validated three Multiracial microaggressions, all variations founded within Johnston and Nadal's (2010) taxonomy: (a) denial of a

Multiracial reality; (b) assumption of a monoracial identity; and (c) not (monoracial) enough to 'fit in.' As reported by previous studies, Multiracial students are often unable to claim their full racial heritage on college campuses, are assumed to be a monoracial People of Color and have trouble fitting into monoracial communities. Similarly, Multiracial student affairs administrators reported experiencing the same three Multiracial microaggressions from colleagues *and* the students' they serve (Harris, 2017b). Experiences of monoracism were also perpetuated by the larger field of higher education and student affairs. An example is the creation of monoracial-only organizations in national higher education organizations such as ACPA and ASHE. If a Latinx community event and a Black community event are scheduled at the same time during national conferences Multiracial members must decide which event to prioritize or decline to attend either. This is just one example of how Multiracial students and Multiracial professionals may withstand daily challenges and how these challenges are upheld by systems and institutions.

Peer Interactions

Challenges with Monoracial Organizations

Multiracial students may encounter feelings of marginality, questioning, challenge of racial identity and oppression on college campuses from peers (Brackett et al., 2006; Chaudhari & Pizzolato, 2008; Ford & Malaney, 2012; Jourdan, 2006; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012). Multiracial students may be questioned about their racial identity due to their racial ambiguity. A common question, and microaggression, posed to people with Multiracial heritage is, "What are you?" (Sands & Schuh, 2004; Williams, 2009). Root

(1998) found given the frequency of questions related to their racial identity, Multiracial students may experience a cumulative effect or trauma.

Multiracial students are often challenged to prove their racial authenticity in monoracial spaces (Chaudhari & Pizzolato, 2008; Harris, 2016a; 2016b; 2017a; Museus et al., 2016; Rockquemore, 2002). Students may be challenged to demonstrate their cultural knowledge (King, 2008; Mohan & Chambers, 2010; Renn, 2003) and may be accused of "not being [Black, white, Latinx, or Asian American, etc.] enough," referring to their ability to prove membership in a monoracial community (Chaudhari & Pizzolato, 2008; Harris, 2016b; Hyman, 2010; Jones & Jones, 2010; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Nishimura, 1998; Rockquemore, 2002; Sands & Schuh, 2004; Talbot, 2008). Nishamura (1998) found that students are often challenged by members of student organizations as to their motives for wanting to join monoracial student organizations because they may not look like other members of the group. According to Kellogg and Liddell (2012) some participants noted "the frequency and intensity of these challenges to their sense of legitimacy increased when they entered college [causing them] to retreat: to drop the class, quit the organization or avoid peers" (p. 535). Students may feel isolated by race-oriented student services that perpetuate monoracial categories and leave Multiracial students without a sense of refuge that these services were created to provide (Literte, 2010). This can eventually have severe implications for students' academic and social integration on campus (Tinto, 1993).

Multiracial students experience racism from peers (Jackson, 2009; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Root, 1992; 1998) and studies suggest they experience more negative interactions than monoracial Students of Color (Brackett et al., 2006; King, 2008). Given

Multiracial students unique positionality in a traditionally fixed monoracial society, they may have heightened levels of sensitivity towards racial issues (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Some Multiracial students felt rejected, excluded and insecure based on the actions of their monoracial peers (Jourdan, 2006; Rockquemore, 1998; Root, 1998). In Kellogg and Liddell's (2012) study, participants expressed feeling empowered to speak out against racism. However, in Chaudhari and Pizzolato's (2008) study, negative interactions with peers caused participants to feel "out of place" in their collegiate environments. All of these negative interactions may result in an unhealthy self-esteem due to lack of social acceptance from peers, social stressors, and an absence of sense of belonging (Ford & Malaney, 2012).

Impetus to Form and Challenges with Multiracial Organizations

The reality of societal pre-judgments based on race cause Multiracial students to seek out more heterogeneous and/or racially tolerant environments for support and understanding (Jackson, 2009). Renn (1998) explained how one student's experience of "not fitting in" with monoracial student groups made him explore his Multiracial identity more intensely. He felt empowered to create a public space for Multiracial students to explore their identity together in the form of a new student organization. Creating a public community of Multiracial people allows individuals to share their experiences of navigating campus life and culture (Renn, 2000). Talbot's (2008) study found that interacting with other Multiracial students led to a positive self-identity. Renn's (2000) participants felt solace and support in their interactions with open-minded students as they wrestled with issues related to identity. Nishimura (1998) found that Multiracial

students established a "feeling of comfort and acceptance as a 'whole' person" (p. 50) when interacting with like others.

Studies also found that Multiracial student organizations endure their own set of unique challenges (Ozaki & Johnston, 2008). Student clubs meant to serve Multiracial students may face difficulty creating a club name that fully captures, validates and/or empowers possible members. For example, the term Biracial might exclude people with more than two racial heritages or those outside of the Black/white binary which is often associated with the term. A club with the term Multiracial might exclude multiethnic students. Additionally, the immense variety of identities held by Multiracial people, as depicted in Multiracial identity development models, may result in difficulty connecting across difference. If the leadership of Multiracial student organizations do not match the general club membership, issues can arise. Finally, Multiracial focused clubs may face conflicts with monoracial student organizations in terms of competition for resources. "While the presence of Mixed race persons complicates racial categorization, the elimination of racial categories without addressing the underlying causes of racial inequity is not a response in the interests of racial justice" (Anderson, 2015, p. 11). Eliminating monoracial organizations does not advance social justice or reduce inequality or racism. Acknowledging that Multiracial students are in these organizations, make decisions to join them for specific reasons and have unique experiences will advance our understanding of how and why Multiracial students make decisions and how they are racialized in monoracial organizations. Next, I briefly explore the interactions between Multiracial college students and faculty and staff.

Faculty and Staff Interactions

While understudied, there is some indication that Multiracial students do not feel affirmed or comfortable in classroom environments (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Talbot, 2008). Multiracial students perceive the campus environment to be unwelcoming at greater rates than their monoracial peers (Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010). These perceptions might be explained by the negative responses they sometimes receive from monoracial students on campus (Renn, 2004) or the way in which institutional policies, programs, and procedures often reflect only a monoracial paradigm (Kellogg & Niskodé, 2008). Scholars suggest that student affairs administrators and faculty need to do more to "understand and support students who fall outside the limited set of categories generally used to talk about race and ethnicity on campus" (Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010, p. 347). In addition to comments from peers, students encounter challenges to their cultural legitimacy from faculty (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012). Brackett, Marcus, McKenzie, Mullins, Tang and Allen's (2006) study illustrated the importance of perceptions. Multiracial respondents indicated feeling ignored and mistreated by their instructors of a different race at significantly higher levels than their monoracial peers. Multiracial students describe feeling invisible to faculty members at their institution (Ingram et al., 2004; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Kellogg & Niskode, 2008; Miville et al., 2005; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004). Faculty may make assumptions about Multiracial student identity creating uncomfortable interactions between these groups (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Kellogg & Niskode, 2008). In Talbot's (2008) study, a participant was told that although she identifies as Asian-African American, she should stand with the Black

students because she “looked mostly Black,” (p. 27). The student felt hopeless and frustrated by this categorization from a multicultural education professional.

Similarly, for college administrators, multicultural student support offices are meant to be a place for encouragement and healing within the university setting but participants in Talbot’s (2008) study “felt more frustrated and disheartened when they [were] met [with] ignorance” (p. 30). Talbot (2008) found that student affairs professionals, although equipped with the tools to help students with a variety of challenges, are not as prepared to work with students who struggle with racialized experiences as it pertains to their Multiracial heritage.

The literature briefly addresses examples of supportive encounters with faculty and staff. Inter/intragroup dialogues are cited as opportunities to leverage positive peer interactions but also to establish supportive relationships between Multiracial students and group facilitators (Ford & Malaney, 2012). Cultural dialogue courses are open forums and allow students to create trusting relationships with higher education professionals (Ford & Malaney, 2012). Some institutions have begun including Multiraciality in the curriculum and creating courses dedicated to examining the history and complexity of Multiracial identity (i.e., anthropology and sociology departments) (Ford & Malaney, 2012). Ford and Malaney (2012) found that some faculty, mainly Faculty of Color or white faculty who are culturally sensitive to issues around race and racism, reinforce supportive spaces for Multiracial students. The next sections highlight scholarly studies on Multiracial women in the United States and in higher education specifically.

Multiracial Women in the United States

Multiracial Women

Scholarly literature specifically depicting the experiences of Multiracial women revealed that Multiracial women experience gender and race related discrimination at higher rates than their male counterparts (Basu, 2010; Hall, 2004; Root, 1994). Specifically, Multiracial women may experience “triple jeopardy” (Gillem, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004) due to discrimination based on gender and their multiple racial heritages (Gillem, 2004). Simply put, the “additional challenge of being Mixed race exacerbates the status of being an ethnic female in this race and gender conscious society” (Hall, 2004, p. 238). Additionally, according to Davenport (2016), gender is the single best predictor of Biracial identification with Biracial women much more likely to identify as Multiracial than their male counterparts. The most frequently cited challenges facing Multiracial women are related to their perceived uniqueness (Root, 1994), physical appearance (Basu, 2007; Hall, 2004; Roberts-Clarke et al., 2004; Rockquemore, 2002; Root 1994), acceptance and sense of belonging (Basu, 2010; Rockquemore, 2002; Root, 1994), self-esteem (Root, 1994); sexuality (Basu, 2007; Roberts-Clarke et al., 2004; Root, 1994) and dating experiences (King, 2011; Roberts-Clarke et al., 2004).

Physical Appearance

Physical appearance is the most widely cited challenge for Multiracial women, particularly women with Black heritage. According to Rockquemore (2002), “beauty standards are more rigorously applied to women than to men and cause a gender-specific emphasis on body image,” (p. 489) while men are valued for a number of things other than appearance such as athleticism, intelligence, and social status. Hall (2004) found that

peers of Multiracial women judge them as belonging or not belonging to a specific ethnic group based on their physical appearance. Root (1994) uncovered unique examples related to the physical appearance of Biracial women that manifest such as the incongruence of a Multiracial woman's first or last name not "matching their look," resulting in questions of marital status (maiden v. married name) or adoption status. Multiracial women are viewed as having a flexible look, which can subsequently change with age, hairstyle, clothes, make-up and dependent on the perception and experience of the person making the judgement (Root, 1994). Multiracial women are more scrutinized and stigmatized for their physical appearance such as skin color, physical features, and hair texture than Multiracial men (Root, 2004).

Acceptance and Sense of Belonging

Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson and Harris (1993) found gender differences amongst their Biracial sample of children and adolescents. Specifically, they found that Biracial women faced greater social pressures as it pertains to racial group affiliation, sense of belonging and acceptance than Biracial men. Sense of belonging was discussed in the literature and was described as being directly related to physical appearance. Multiracial women sustain more ridicule and rejection around phenotype based on hairstyles, body size, eye color, eye shape, and hair color (Basu, 2010; Rockquemore, 2002). Issues associated with hair color, hair type and hair texture were particularly salient in African American communities (Basu, 2007). Hair is a cultural identifier. Often tormented by hair that is not considered "kinky enough" and forced to grapple with issues of loyalty and belonging if they desire a straight or wavy hairstyle, Multiracial women with Black

heritage may be forced to reconcile tensions with monoracial communities consistently (Basu, 2007).

Societal "privileging of lighter skin, longer, straight hair, small nose, thin lips and light eyes" are examples of ongoing tensions between Multiracial women with European ancestry and monoracial Women of Color (Rockquemore, 2002, p. 488). Rockquemore (2002) found that participants with one white parent were antagonized by some and treated exceptionally well by others due to a greater value placed on Anglo features and lighter skin, which perpetuates racist standards of beauty (Roberts-Clarke, Roberts & Morokoff, 2004). Positive attention towards Multiracial women with lighter skin or physical features typically associated with "white" or European people is steeped in white supremacy and as a result, the perception of positive treatment based on one's physical appearance may cite feelings of guilt, shame and resentment (Hall, 2004).

Self-esteem

Some Multiracial women struggle with low self-esteem. Basu's (2010) study built on Hall's (2004) assertion that the self-worth of Biracial women is directly linked to their social group membership. Basu found more Biracial women in her study seek out student led affinity-based organizations than Biracial men due in large part to the need for group affiliation. Root's (1994) participants combated stereotypes and felt pressure to be viewed as an exemplar, exceptional, a "special person" or perfectionism. For the Multiracial women in Root's study, external labels such as special or unique was met with ambivalence (Root, 1994). According to Root (1994), Multiracial women constantly felt like the outsider of a group resulting in feelings of hurt, anger, and lower self-esteem. Uniqueness can result in feelings of isolation and lead to depression and self-doubt. On

the contrary, being labeled “unique”, for some Biracial women, resulted in feelings of desirability and welcomed attention from others (Root, 1994; 2004).

Sexuality and Exotification

The referencing of Multiracial women as exotic and promiscuous stems from historical "oppressive stereotypes of American racial minorities as immoral, degenerate, and uncontrollable particularly in their sexual impulses” (Root, 1994, p. 469). These labels are more often directed towards Multiracial women rather than men due to the overemphasis on women’s appearance in a patriarchal society (Basu, 2007). The exotification and hypersexualization of Biracial women is tied to racist conceptualizations of beauty and is perpetuated by pop culture (Gillem & Thompson, 2004). Basu (2007) found that Biracial women reacted in a variety of ways to labels of sexual promiscuity and appearing exotic. Some viewed the term exotic as degrading while others viewed it positively (Roberts-Clarke, Roberts & Morokoff, 2004). In Basu’s (2010) study, Multiracial men and women held differing perspectives on the term “exotic.” While Multiracial men in her study believed the term was flattering, one woman (Black/white) stated:

> I think [Biracial] women are exoticized… I think they are expected to be very sexual… and I think the media plays into this… oh look, I have this exotic creature with me. It’s… kind of like a cultural trophy. (Basu, 2007, p. 112)

The experiences of Multiracial women outlined above are mirrored in the few studies specifically investigating the experiences of Multiracial women on college campuses.

The next section reviews studies either specifically focusing on Multiracial women in higher education or studies that include Multiracial women participants.

Multiracial Women in Higher Education

Few empirical studies focus on Multiracial women in higher education (Basu, 2010; Bettez, 2010; Harris, 2015; Harris, 2017a). Current scholarship alerts that Multiracial college women are likely to participate in student affinity-based organizations in order to feel a sense of group identity, membership and belonging (Basu, 2010). In her 2010 study, Basu interviewed 14 Biracial students (5 men, 9 women) from different racial backgrounds to determine gender differences in racial identity decisions, social group participation and experiences with discrimination at a PWI. Although she found no gender differences as it pertains to their racial identity decisions or experiences with discrimination, Basu did find gender differences in social group participation and gender related discrimination. Specifically, men were more likely to participate in sports teams and build their networks and cross-cultural interaction through athletic team networks. Women were more likely to participate in the various “student race-based groups” on campus to find support, sense of belonging and acceptance. Gender based discrimination specific to women participants took the form of exotification and sexualization. While the women viewed this term as negative, the Multiracial men perceived “exotic” to be a positive term.

Bettez (2010) conducted an interview and two focus groups with six Multiracial college women at a large, public, southeastern institution to examine how Multiracial women navigate complex identity constructions and epistemologies of belonging[12]. One

[12] Epistemologies of belong refer to how Multiracial women know or have knowledge of belonging (Bettez, 2010)

participant (Native American/Black) discussed the impact of her gender and race as it pertains to belonging on campus. She referenced feeling uncomfortable around white fraternities stating, "I always feel like the little mulatto house slave" (p. 148). Her response specifically details her discomfort in predominately white spaces as a Woman of Color, specifically harkening to historical depictions of Multiracial women who worked in the slave masters house as a form of racial hierarchy. She also invoked race and racism by the implication they would view her an enslaved person. Participants discussed feelings of connection or estrangement from extended members of their family. They discussed challenges with interracial dating and the politics of racial categorization especially among those with Black heritage.

King's (2011) phenomenological study explored the identity development choices of six college women who identify as Multiracial and bisexual or pansexual. Utilizing Brofrenbrenner's (1979) ecology model, King focused on the surrounding environments that influence the identity development process for these students. King found that Multiracial-bisexual/pansexual college women used college as a time and space to explore their identities and ultimately develop a stronger sense of self. Participants negotiated their intersecting identities within a psychological, emotional or physical context to find fit in their surroundings. King's study offers insight into the role college environments play in the identity development decisions of college women with multiple, "in-between" identities.

Harris (2017a) explored the type of racial stereotypes experienced by ten Multiracial women at a PWI. Three themes emerged from Harris' study: (a) Multiracial women reported being perceived as "better than" their monoracial counterparts, (b)

Assumption of a monoracial identity, and (c) Threat of monoracial stereotypes. Specifically, participants with lighter skin (white heritage) felt monoracial Women of Color believed they were "better than" others. Multiracial women felt exoticized and that racial stereotypes centered on the belief that they thought they might be "more attractive" than their monoracial peers. Ultimately this line of thinking is directly connected to a "white supremacist beauty hierarchy [which] situates lighter skin women as more beautiful and, therefore, 'preferred' over women with darker skin" creating discontent and a false sense of competition between Communities of Color for a perceived set of scare resources (Harris, 2017a, p. 483).

Participants were assumed to be monoracial and thus participants experienced racial stereotypes associated with specific monoracial groups. This finding also unveils the ways in which people continue to reify race as fixed, hierarchical and limited to strict monoracial categories. Harris (2017a) also found that based on the type of racial stereotype, Multiracial women changed their behaviors in social settings. Specifically, participants "hinted at the behaviors they used to disconfirm their monoraciality and the stereotypes attributed to an assumed identity" (p. 485). The process of disproving took several forms such as overtly mentioning cultural or racial signifiers with the purpose of proving "they should not be attributed stereotypes concerning monoracial groups" (p. 485).

Couched in CRT, Harris analyzed the experiences of Multiracial college women to critique systems of oppression in higher education. She found that beauty standards and stereotypes of Multiracial women feeling "better than" other Women of Color challenged ahistoricism given the construction of whiteness and those closer to the "white

end of the color spectrum" were more deserving of resources than women with darker skin. Multiracial women engaged in internalized racism by actively distancing themselves from monoracial Communities of Color and their stereotypes conferred to each group.

Harris (2019) explored how Multiracial women understand and interact with whiteness on their PWI. Harris' thematic analysis revealed participants associate fraternities and sororities and the social norms they perpetuate with white people and whiteness. Additionally, participants understood white womanhood through the context of parameters set by white Greek letter organizations and how they might get teased by monoracial WOC if they engaged in any activities or utilized products associated with white woman. Directly connected to this dissertation, one participant in Harris' study went through the rush process with WGLO yet felt unwelcomed and later joined a multicultural sorority.

Greek Letter Organizations in a U.S. Higher Education

Historical Overview of White Greek Letter Organizations

Greek letter organizations (GLOs) hold deep roots, traditions and significance at many of the oldest PWIs in the United States. The first Greek letter organization, Phi Beta Kappa fraternity, was founded on December 5, 1776 at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Phi Beta Kappa became the "precursor to a variety of fraternal and sororal organizations" (Torbenson & Parks, 2009, p. 15). Greek-letter organizations emerged after the advent of a student life culture in the colonial period. Colonial colleges modeled the structure of their institutions off of the English model (i.e. construction and organization of physical buildings, creation of roles and responsibilities

for administrators and development of curriculum). The creation of dormitories and faculty roles sought to create a familial environment for students yet fell short due to financial constraints and implementation gaps. Students sought community beyond the faculty-student (i.e. parent-child) model implemented at the onset of colleges in the United States. From the first-known student organization founded on religious collectives to the creation of secular student organizations (such as literary and debate clubs) in 1719, the formation and coalescing of students to explore ideas, and fill voids in the educational systems they were a part of were critical to the creation to what we know today as student life on college campuses. Although the notion of a fraternity or brotherhood was not unique to English colleges and universities, "the social fraternity is unique to the United States" (Torbenson & Parks, 2009, p. 19). Fraternities, and later sororities, were created in hopes of bringing together people with similar values and to maintain close ties while in college. The purpose of early fraternities was to "correct perceived wrongs of the college administration, provide social activities for students, obtain more rights for students [and] create a compatible brotherhood or sisterhood for friendships" (Torbenson & Parks, 2009, p. 20).

Phi Beta Kappa, the prototype of college fraternities, started off as a literary society and incorporated social activities and secret elements such as a special handshake, motto, sign and password as a means of establishing exclusivity. These elements were common among other student organizations at the time. However, Phi Beta Kappa took the secrecy of the organizational practices to a more intense level. Masonic characteristics were embedded in the foundation of Phi Beta Kappa, given that several founding members were Masons. One aspect of the fraternity that set them apart from

Masons was the expansion of the organization across different states. Chapters were created at colleges throughout the South by 1780 and moved up North between 1787 and 1830. In 1812, four members of Phi Beta Kappa at the University of North Carolina created Kappa Alpha fraternity, marking the second fraternity in the United States. The late 1820s to 1830s marked the start of a fraternal movement in which new organizations were created and rapidly expanded to other colleges.

Sororities, also known as women's fraternities, emerged at coeducational colleges in the Midwest and South as a means to unite the few women on campus. The structure and make up of sororities mirrored that of men's fraternities. Sororities were created when women at coeducational colleges were denied membership or full membership in fraternities. The earliest known women's organizations, Alpha Delta Pi and Phi Mu were established in 1851 and 1852 respectively at Wesleyan College, a women's college. Pi Beta Phi was the first national women's fraternity established in 1867 at Monmouth College in Illinois. Kappa Alpha Theta is the first Greek-letter fraternity for women, started in 1870 at DePauw University in Indiana. The first official Greek-letter organization to use the term sorority, to distinguish between "female and male fraternities" was Gamma Phi Beta in 1874 at Syracuse University (Torbenson & Parks, 2009, p. 23).

The history of college fraternities and sororities can be divided into three waves. The first wave marked the creation and initial expansion of Greek-letter organizations in which the membership reflected the dominant groups in college at the time 1824-1874: white, male, and Protestant. The second wave of social Greek-letter organizations, 1885 to 1929, marked the creation of additional exclusionary white fraternities, a large increase

in white sororities and as institutions diversified, organizations based on ethnicity and religion. Primarily Jewish and African American centric organizations were created due to racial and religious exclusion by other fraternities and sororities. The first interracial fraternity was created in 1901, Omega Pi Alpha. The organization dismantled due to lack of membership. The final wave took place between 1975 to 1999 with more organizations created to meet the growing diversity of the college student body, as Latina/o, Asian American, Native American, and LGBT Greek-letter organizations proliferated on college campuses.

Greek-letter organizations, regardless of racial or ethnic origins, have rich histories and play significant roles in building community both on and off college campuses. In the remaining sections of this literature review I outline the origins of GLOs, history of racial exclusion, formation of Black, Latinx, and Asian American Greek-letter organizations, experiences of cross race Greek membership and the mixed results on outcomes of Greek-letter affiliation.

White Greek Letter Organizations (WGLOs) and History of Racial Exclusion

As universities became more diverse, many WGLOs incorporated racially exclusionary policies into their constitutions to ensure "others" would not be granted membership (Hughey, 2010). Most fraternities privileged some form of Aryanism and instituted discriminatory policies and practices against "Negroes" and "Orientials" (Chen, 2009). Conversely, sorority exclusionary policies were often unwritten but enforced (Lee, 1955). By 1963, a federal law prohibited all Greek organizations from implementing discriminatory practices based on race (Chen, 2009; Maisel, 1990). Although official raced and religious exclusionary policies were removed from organizational bylaws,

national organizations and universities have not gone far enough to address the institutional and systemic forms of discrimination practiced by these longstanding organizations. “While some fraternities and sororities opened their doors to this influx of different ethnicities, many organizations remained primarily for white college students” (Torbenson & Parks, 2009, p. 41). This is evident by the fact that these organizations are *still* predominately white (Lee, 1955; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Park, 2012).

Recent reports and scholarly articles addressed the racist behaviors of historically white fraternities and sororities in the form of racially themed parties and racist chants (Park, 2012; Whaley, 2009; Whipple et al., 1991). According to Hughey (2010),

> Some continue to level the charge that WGLOs are overtly racist organizations that informally discriminate. These charges rest on evidence of *de facto* segregation, parties with white supremacist overtones, mock ‘slave auctions,’ and numerous accounts of white fraternity members dressing in Black face. (p. 656)

Furthermore, while *de jure* segregation was ruled unlawful in the 1950s, *de facto* racial separation continued as a result of “custom, tradition, and preference in a Greek system comprised of historically racially homogenous organizations along a white/non-white dichotomy” (Hughey, 2006, p. 10).

The racial and class exploitation in the white Greek system perpetuates homogeneity in the “look and feel” of those who are offered membership and those who are denied (Hughey, 2006; 2010). Evan Right (1999), a reporter for Rolling Stone magazine wrote an exposé on white GLOs and noted “The Greek system is a sort of apartheid, enabling children from predominately white, upper middle-class enclaves to

safely attend a messily diverse university… without having to mix with those who are different" (para. 25). Prior to the eradication of racial and religious discrimination laws, the racial and political climate on college campuses created a sense of urgency for Students of Color to create their own fraternal organizations (Ray, 2013). Below I discuss the creation and expansion of social fraternities and sororities for Communities of Color.

Students of Color in Greek Letter Organizations

One implication of Greek letter organizations' racial exclusionary practices and policies (i.e. refusal to provide adequate facilities and resources) and a general response to racism experienced on campuses (i.e. racial microaggressions, racial discrimination, and isolation) was the creation of fraternities, sororities and other organizations for and by Students of Color (Laybourn & Goss, 2018; Ray, 2013). Founders of various GLOs worked within the white racist structures to bring their voices and collective power to demand changes on campus. Scholars sited the inability for Students of Color to access on-campus housing. Greek letter organizations filled the gap for students in need of financial resources and housing for Students of Color regardless of Greek letter affiliation (Whaley, 2009). GLOs were not only political organizations, they also served as safe havens (i.e. counter spaces) for Students of Color to find community and respite in overtly hostile climates on campus. These GLOs also perpetuate monoracial paradigms of race by creating unity and connection among particular racial groups. Below, I briefly discuss the history and contemporary issues of Black Greek letter organizations (BGLOs), Latino/a Greek-letter organizations (LGLOs), and Asian American Greek letter organizations (AGLOs).

Black Greek Letter Organizations

Black Greek letter organizations (BGLOs) "arose [in response to] a history of colonization, segregation, and subjugation, and as a minority collective their organizations necessitated civil rights activism, as well as racial and collective consciousness" (Hughey, 2006, p. 14). BGLOs are rooted in the transformation of social and academic spaces and utilized these spaces to advance a social justice mission for Black people in the U.S. (Whaley, 2009). Despite the establishment of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) between 1860 and 1900 in the United States, the first intercollegiate Black fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha, was established at a PWI, Cornell University, in 1906. One additional fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi (1911) and sorority, Sigma Gamma Rho (1922) were established at PWIs, Indiana and Butler University respectively. The remaining five BGLOs were established at Howard University in Washington, D.C., an HBCU. Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Inc. was the first African American sorority founded in 1908 at Howard University (HBCU) followed by two fraternities, Omega Psi Phi (1911) and Phi Beta Sigma (1914) and two additional sororities Delta Sigma Theta (1913) and Zeta Phi Beta (1920). The final BGLO to date, Iota Phi Theta, was established in 1963 at Morgan State University (HBCU) in Baltimore, MD. The nine organizations, known as the "Divine Nine," under the governing body, National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) formed in 1929, are amongst the oldest Black campus organizations at most PWIs (Hughey, 2006).

BGLOs founded at PWIs emerged for different reasons than their HBCU counterparts. Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, Inc. was established at Cornell University to "address the toxic social relations of segregation and isolation produced by the academy. In 1905, racism threatened the retention of Black American students at Cornell" (Whaley,

2009, p. 58). Black students at Cornell were denied access to university facilities, housing, athletics and membership in social organizations. In 1905 the entire incoming class of Black students dropped out of Cornell. Seven remaining Black men formed a study group, also known as a literary society, to prompt the retention and graduation of its members as a form of survival. In 1906 the literary society became an official fraternity and changed its name to Alpha Phi Alpha in hopes of creating a purposeful, permanent organization and later incorporated to encourage perpetuity. The founding members felt fraternal status would result in acknowledgement from the university. Kappa Alpha Psi formed at Indiana University for similar reasons in 1911. They served the dual role of a social club bringing together Black students and local residents as a safe haven as well as a means of helping Black students navigate their racist campus climate.

Whereas Black men faced racial discrimination at their PWIs, Black women faced discrimination given their inferior location in society as Black American women (Whaley, 2009). "For Black American women, the weight of sexual, racial, and gender discrimination manifested itself differently... Black American women's gender *and* race made them susceptible to ideologies of gender and racial inferiority" (Whaley, 2009, p. 60). Black college women faced sexism from men of all races. The creation of sororities for and by Black women "addressed the problem of ideas of their intellectual inferiority" through a focus on the core principles of sisterhood, service and scholarship (Whaley, 2009, p. 60).

A number of scholars examined the influence and unique qualities of BGLOs (e.g., Brown, Parks & Phillips, 2005; Hughey, 2008; Kimbrough & Hutcheson, 1998; McClure, 2006; Ray, 2013). Ray (2013) wrote that "white and Black fraternities differ in

educational and community objectives, membership intake processes and commitment after college" (p. 321). For example, historically BGLOs were founded on principles of service and uplifting the Black community, while WGLOs are viewed as more social in nature (Whipple, Baier, & Grady, 1991). WGLOs maintain a more open access initiation process in which prospective students "try out" for all organizations while students interested in BGLOs must already have prior knowledge and interest in the organization they wish to join (Whipple, Baier, & Grady, 1991). The BGLOs membership intake processes are more secretive (Whaley, 2009). Finally, members of BGLOs are expected to remain financially and socially active after graduation while members of WGLOs typically only remain active while enrolled in their undergraduate institution (Whipple, Baier, & Grady, 1991). On PWIs, BGLOs "provide Black students with a space to develop Black friendships, access deep networks of chapter and organizational alumni, and engage in meaningful service to the Black community" (Laybourn & Goss, 2018, p. 6).

BGLOs are not free of harmful practices like those found within historically WGLOs, as their "hazing, classism, colorism, and homophobia has led to a recent pattern of self-destructive behavior and alienation amidst the Black community" (Hughey, 2006, p. 11). While accusations of colorism were more prevalent in the early 20th century when some organizations practiced the infamous "brown paper bag test[13]," some Black social organizations still hold stereotypes that certain organizations preference lighter skin or darker skin members (Whaley, 2009).

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[13] A practice in which members of an organization would deny entrance or membership to a person if they were darker than a brown paper bag.

The extent to which BGLOs used to base membership on a color spectrum, meaning lighter skin members were more likely to earn membership in fraternities and sororities, is difficult to confirm aside from photographs. One of the founders of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Norma Boyd, asserted her status as an educated, wealthy, fair skinned woman and claimed her positionality"

> …allowed for a foot in both worlds, Black and white. Boyd considered herself a spy in the world of whites, [since Boyd] often passed [for white just] to 'come back and report just how the other half does' so that the 'darker people of the race' could strategize with them against the perceived enemy within the dominant culture. Historian Deborah Gray White reported that the position of Boyd, which other fairer-skinned activists shared, suggests they used their position not over, but in solidarity with their Black brothers and sisters. (Whaley, 2009, pp. 71-72)

Put simply, most college educated Black Americans in the early 1900s had lighter skin and thus the founders of BGLOs were mainly lighter skin people and likely Multiracial[14].

Today, some of the most prominent and influential African American leaders are members of these prestigious organizations. "In this regard, BGLOs represent a substantial percentage of the Black middle class and are viewed, in many ways, as staples of the Black community" (Ray, 2013, p. 324). BGLOs "represent who has cultural capital, social, political, and economic power in their communities" (Whaley, 2009, p. 72). While scholarship focuses on the homogeneity of white organizations, historically Black Greek-letter organizations, as well as other racial/ethnic specific Greek

[14] An estimated one in four African Americans have an ancestor not of African descent due to colonialism and slavery (Smedley, 2007).

organizations that focus on shared heritage and culture, also maintain a level of racial homogeneity (Hughey, 2006; McKee, 1987, Parks & Brown, 2005).

Latina/o Greek Letter Organizations

While BGLOs are the most popular and most widely cited cultural Greek letter organizations, additional fraternal organizations formed to uplift and serve other racial/ethnic communities. Specifically, students with Latino/a or Asian heritage established fraternities and sororities that reflected their backgrounds and experiences (Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

Latino/a Greek letter organizations (LGLOs) expanded in the 1970s but in the 1990s became a more prominent institution on college campuses around the country (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009). Today there are over thirty-five LGLOs on college campuses. They were established to promote Latina/o student success and cultural values in predominately white spaces. LGLOs emerged from the Chicano/a and Puerto Rican student activist movement of the 1960s.

> It is when Latinos/as face micro- and macroaggressions on college campuses that they turn to each other for solutions. The principles of unity and organization emphasized during the civil rights movement is applied on college campuses in order to gain voice and basic acknowledgement of the needs of Latino/a students. (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009, p. 107)

"Due to the nature of the campus culture, Latinas gravitated toward one another for solitude and support" (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009, p. 112).

Muñoz and Guardia (2009) characterized the history of LGLOs into four phases: (a) principio (the beginning), (b) fuerza (force), (c) fragmentación (fragmentation) and

(d) adelante (moving forward). Phase I, principio (1898-1980), consisted of the creation of secret societies in the late 1800s and the first Latin American fraternity, Phi Iota Alpha fraternity officially in 1931 at Louisiana State University. Phi Iota Alpha emphasized the "unification of all Latin American nations and all Latin American people" through a call to social, economic and political uplift (Phi Iota Alpha, 2018). Two LGLOs were established at Kean University. Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. founded 1975 is the first Latina sorority created in the United States. Lambda Theta Phi Fraternidad Latina, Inc. was the first fraternity established at Kean University to exemplify the "inherent excellence of Latino manhood" rather than adapting the traditions and customs of WGLOs.

Latina sororities were created to promote community, Latina culture and sisterhood by empowering women to create supportive networks dedicated to personal and professional advancement. A founding member of Lambda Pi Chi Sorority (1988), Dr. Irma Almirall-Padamsee explained why she and others created their sisterhood:

> What many women really wanted and needed was a means by which to foster lifelong, deep friendships. Having a formal means by which women, who were especially interested in the richness of the Latino heritage, perceived themselves as leaders for their communities and were committed to making positive change for the Latino community at the university and after graduation seemed to make sense. (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009, p. 119)

Phase II, fuerza (force), occurred between 1980 and 1990. This phase marks the expansion of LGLOs to other regions around the U.S. and the building blocks of their national infrastructure. Chi Upsilon Sigma Sorority, Incorporated (1980) was founded at

Rutgers University to create a strong sense of family and promote Latino/a culture and values on their PWI. “Since family support was how many Latinas/os accomplished many of their goals, students attempted to emulate a support system similar to a ‘family unit’ to enhance their chances of success in college” (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009, p. 112). LGLOs began expanding to Ivy league institutions and in the west coast. Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Inc. was created at Cornell University and Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc. (1986) at California State University-Chico.

The third phase, fragmentacion (fragmentation), marked the creation of seventeen new Latina sororities from 1990 to 2000. Muñoz and Guardia (2009) noted that the mass expansion of Latina sororities was a result of poor communication across LGLOs and institutions. Students also sought to create sororities that fit the unique needs of their institution. During this period, a national umbrella organization, National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, Inc. (NALFO) was created in 1998 to unite all LGLOs across the nation. Additionally, college campuses began to develop Multicultural Greek councils to create a united infrastructure for fraternities and sororities apart from the white and Black councils on college campus. Finally, phase IV, Adelante, marks a surge in communication and collaboration across LGLOs through greater internet presence and greater synergy under NALFO.

Asian American Greek Letter Organizations

Asian American sororities and fraternities arose as a consequence of racial exclusion in WGLOs. Overt racism towards Asian American students particularly in social settings, created a need to form ethnic specific clubs and organizations as a source of support or safe space (Chen, 2009). AGLOs are important sites for Asian American

college students to explore womanhood and manhood in conjunction to what it means to be Asian in America (Chen, 2009).

Exclusion and segregation, similar to African Americans and Latinos were commonplace for Asian American students at PWIs. The proliferation of AGLOs in the face of WGLO elimination of racial exclusionary policies suggests that most Asian American students may believe WGLOs are still unwelcoming (Chen, 2009). Rho Psi was the first Asian American fraternity founded at Cornell University in 1916. Subsequent AGLOs were founded in California reflecting the significance of immigration and the geographic area in which a large Asian American population resided in the early to mid-1900s in the United States. Pi Alpha Pi was created in 1926 at the University of California, Berkeley by Chinese American students. The first Asian American sorority was founded by Japanese women in 1928, Chi Alpha Delta, at UCLA followed by Sigma Omicron Phi (1930) at San Francisco State Teachers' College (Chen, 2009). Although most early fraternities and sororities were established specifically for Chinese and Japanese Americans, they are now panethnic[15]. Post 1990 marked a notable increase in panethnic fraternities and sororities from the creation of just eight Asian American fraternities and eleven sororities pre-1990s to thirty-two fraternities and thirty-two sororities today. This period also marked a specific increase in South Asian and Filipino fraternities and sororities. Today, AGLOs reflect regional subgroups East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans), South Asians (Asian Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi Americans), and Filipino Americans. These groupings formed out of a

[15] Panethnic refers to the inclusion and representation of different Asian American ethnic groups in current day Asian American sororities and fraternities (Chen, 2009).

desire to build community around cultural similarities, phenotype, religion and political history.

Cross-Racial Greek Letter Membership

While no research exists regarding the specific role of race in the experiences of Multiracial students in Greek-letter organizations, some scholars examined cross-racial Greek membership. Specifically, empirical studies examined the experiences of Black, Latinx and Asian members of WGLOs (Chang, 1995; Cockrell & Gibson, 2019; Hughey, 2010; Newsome, 2009; Park, 2008; Sargent, 2012; Thompson, 2000), specifically white students in BGLOs (Bankhead, 2003; Chen, 1998; Hughey, 2007), and non-Black members of BGLOs (Laybourn, et al., 2017; Laybourn & Goss, 2018).

Park (2008) found that WGLOs remain unwelcoming to many Students of Color based on explicit and implicit racial bias. The racialized reproduction of these organizations is embedded in recruitment and initiation processes, which in Park's (2008) analysis of sororities "create a self-perpetuating cycle in which women pick their friends or others from a similar background" (Park, 2008, p. 119). Park (2008) asserted that "the cycle of homogeneity persists because groups generally do not intentionally act to counter the natural flow of self-segregation or homophily[16]" (p. 120). The fact that WGLOs are still racially homogenous highlights the difference between intention and impact. Although WGLOs may not engage in explicitly racist practices (intention), by failing to address disparities in their organizational histories and practices, they sustain racial homogeneity (Hughey, 2010). The practices of WGLOs may also reflect implicit bias informed by race. Research showed that Students of Color are rarely selected or

[16] The tendency of people to form friendships with people similar to themselves based on various characteristics (i.e. race, age, class, etc.) (Park, 2008).

actively recruited by WGLOs (Hughey, 2010). Additionally, Students of Color who joined WGLOs in Hughey's (2010) study reported being subjected to racially charged jokes or stereotypes, felt isolated, disconnected or tokenized within their GLO. Regarding sororities, Park (2012) noted that the "legacy[17] system works to the benefit of white women, perpetuating an ostensibly race-neutral mechanism that reproduces whiteness, intentionally or not" (p. 10).

Some Students of Color who join WGLOs face ostracism and criticism from members of their monoracial group. WGLOs can in turn face subtle forms of stigmatization from other WGLOs for including Students of Color members (Chen, 1998; Hughey, 2010; Thompson, 1999). Research found that WGLOs are viewed as less prestigious if their membership is racially and ethnically diverse (Park, 2008). Specifically, Chen (1998) and Park (2008) studies both found that WOC tend to be in less popular white sororities. Those same WGLOs had more difficulty recruiting new members and meeting university or nationally sanctioned quotas. They also found that the more popular sororities were "whiter." Park (2008) pointed out that sororities deemed less prestigious tended to be groups with the most racially and ethnically diverse members. She found that Women of Color were grouped with white women described as "less desirable." Park's participants reported that the "less desirable" or "weird girls" were accepted into the "less elite" sororities to maintain membership benchmarks at their respective university, which only solidified these organizations as "less prestigious", "thus indicating that Women of Color themselves possibly may carry even less prestige" (Park, 2008, p. 124).

[17] Legacy status occurs when the family member of a student in a GLO are in the same organization.

In terms of the reasons why Students of Color may desire membership in WGLOs, Chang (1995) found that SOC might join historically WGLOs due to shared beliefs, values, goals, behaviors or attitudes. Gordon (1964) found that when people find common ground, shared interests or views of society, there is a greater probability that people can de-emphasize race or maintain a colorblind philosophy. Examples of shared values or interests include music, recreational sports and/or social gatherings preferences. Park (2008) conducted a qualitative study of eighteen Asian American women's motivations to join or not join a historically white sorority. Asian American members of the sorority asserted that their organization, while racially homogenous, promoted open access, and they blamed the larger university context, a lack of diversity among students on campus, and Students of Color for not participating in initiation activities as the reason why organizations maintain racial homogeneity. Park (2008) also found that the participants "embraced a colorblind rhetoric towards race" (p.108) which ultimately contributed to a lack of dialogue around issues of race within the organization membership. White members of WGLOs also demonstrated a colorblind rhetoric. By perpetuating this fallacy, members of WGLOs are unable to acknowledge and dismantle the inherent discriminatory recruitment and retention practices resulting in a racially homogenous Greek letter system which can ultimately impact the greater campus community and students' interracial relationships after college (Park, 2008; Park, 2014).

Cockrell and Gibson's (2019) work on the motivations and experiences of Black and Brown students in historically white fraternities and sororities most closely aligns with this dissertation study. Participants included African American/Black, Latinx and Biracial men and women in WGLOs at two large Midwest PWIs. Participants shared

their motivations to join based on their desire to feel a sense of belonging, positive peer to peer perceptions and interest in upward mobility (i.e. career aspirations and leadership potential). One Biracial participant shared a lack of awareness of LGLOs and a fear of not being accepted as a rationale for joining a WGLO. Other participants shared some negative racialized experiences within their university and/or sorority and fraternity. In general, participants in Cockrell and Gibson's study expressed clear justification for membership and positive experiences while couching any negative encounters as "not malicious" and overall "positive and rewarding" (p. 162).

One of Park's (2012) participants stated that historically white sororities did not appeal to Women of Color. Another "suggested that race played a distinct role in steering some Asian American women away from sororities" (Park, 2012, p. 10). Overall, Park (2012) found that historically white sororities remain generally unappealing for Women of Color regardless of whether members experience explicit forms of racism because they are viewed as unwelcoming environments for students who do not reflect the racial or socioeconomic status of a majority of members. For Asian American women who did decide to join a WGLO, Chen (1998) reported that Asian American women were careful to "construct a non-Asian identity in front of their white sisters as a strategy of accommodation" and as a means of submitting to an "elite white cultural model of womanhood" (p. 92).

In terms of BGLOs, Laybourn, Goss, and Hughey (2017) investigated and Laybourn and Goss (2018) later expanded on the motivations and experiences of non-Black students who join BGLOs. The sample included five Multiracial, non-Black participants yet researchers deliberately excluded Black Multiracial BGLO members due

to the assumption that they are "often racialized as Black" which belies and excludes the unique experiences of Multiracial students with Black heritage (Laybourn & Goss, 2018, p. 8). Scholars found that campus racial climate acts as a catalyst for SOC to ultimately join a BGLO over another organization. According to participants, "BGLOs continue to serve their purpose as a necessary counter-space but that also, non-Black members come to identify with these organizations in order to develop meaningful interracial solidarity and oppose their hostile campus climates" (Laybourn et al., 2017, p. 552). Similar to Park (2012), Laybourn and colleagues found that interracial interactions are heightened when cross racial membership in Greek organizations takes place. In the case of Multiracial students, they may contribute nuanced perspectives to monoracial Greek-letter organizations given their inherent existence as a cross-racial member.

Race and Homophily in Greek-Letter Organizations

One explanation for the racial homogeneity in Greek organizations can be attributed to homophily. Homophily describes how people seek to affiliate with those who share similar backgrounds (Kim, 2006). The very essence of homophily explains, in part, the cycle of homogeneity within Greek-letter organizations. People desire to be connected to a community of like-others and foster an in-group bond based on similar traits and values. Park (2008) stated "race can be a quick proxy for similarity and familiarity, but in a politically correct world, it is not socially acceptable to suggest that sororities consider race to recruit or exclude" (p. 116).

Homophily is evident in Latino/a Greek-letter organizations. Guardia and Evans (2008) found that Latino fraternities helped students build their ethnic identity as Latinos. One participant stated, "they helped me see a lot more of who I am… the brothers have helped

me see myself as a Latino" (p. 173). Guardia and Evans (2008) confirmed the strong role Latino fraternities and other multicultural Greek organizations play in the creation of ethnic identity development. Participants noted that these organizations provided cultural education which helped them define their ethnic identity, create a greater Latinx community and assist in the exploration of the Latinx side of one's ethnic identity. Guardia and Evans (2008) found that participants became "more Latino" after joining their Greek-letter organization (p. 173). Some fraternity members in the study were Multiethnic and/or Multiracial yet cited their fraternity as a place in which they can create their own ethnic identity even though they possessed a dual ethnicity (Guardia & Evans, 2008).

Although politically problematic, as Park (2014) mentioned, it is still evident in scholarship that race continues to be a common thread within the Greek system. Park (2014) affirmed this by stating "homophily occurs most frequently among racial/ethnic lines because race and ethnicity are known as a consolidated characteristic" (Park, 2014, p. 643). Race and gender, unlike class and sexuality, are visible identities and provide an element of ease and familiarity by which groups are formed and sustained. Among "ethnic student organizations, homophily is intentional and explicit. Because of the role that these groups play in supporting Students of Color, they specifically seek to attract other Students of Color, although generally students of all race/ethnicities are welcome to participate" (Park, 2014, p. 647). While exclusion from organizations based on certain social identities may be problematic, as we see from Park (2014), homophily demonstrated by other groups can create critical support systems that ensure the retention

of marginalized groups on college campuses. One Korean American participant in Chen's (1998) study put is plainly:

> …another reason why I want[ed] to go into an Asian American sorority was the fact that because everyone was Asian American, that the issue of being Asian American wasn't an issue. So therefore, you could just be yourself and talk one on one without looking at each other's eyes or color and be like conscious of the fact that they're Asian. You could be yourself. It was just… maybe actually feeling like you were normal. (pp. 88-89)

Familismo

Familismo refers to a cultural value emphasizing family closeness and loyalty (Sy & Romero, 2008). A study examining the experiences of African American women who join historically Black sororities found that they joined these organizations due to familial connections, role models and mentors who were members of the organization prior to them (Greyerbiehl & Mitchell, 2014). Membership, for some, was in part fulfilling a familial legacy and also at the same time creating a new family amidst racially hostile campus climates (Greyerbiehl & Mitchell, 2014).

Similarly, Miranda and Martin de Figueroa (2000) found in a study of Latino fraternities that these organizations provide a sense of family for members as they matriculate through college. Fraternities serve as a second home and support network for students while on-campus. An extension of Latino fraternal membership is the speaking of Spanish language. One native Spanish-speaking student mentioned he "enjoys speaking his native tongue with his fraternity brothers" (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 174). Participants also increased their knowledge of the Spanish language, which was

especially beneficial for those who did not speak Spanish with their family. “When we’re together [as a fraternity] we speak Spanish and Spanish is kind of like our family language” (Guardia & Evans, 2008, p. 174). While some may view sororities and fraternities skeptically because members typically refer to each other as “brother” and “sister” in some ways this remodeling is sincere, and care is taken to mimic family just as scholars have found in their research.

Greek Letter Affiliation Outcomes

Research on the impact and outcomes of fraternity and sorority affiliation yield mixed and often ambiguous results (Donato & Thomas, 2017; Walker et al., 2015). “Currently there are approximately 750,000 current members and 9 million living alumni of 14,000 chapters of national Greek-letter organizations (NAIC, NPC, NPHC, 2013)" (Walker et al., 2015, p. 204). Today, while the benefits of Greek-letter organizations are controversial, GLOs have maintained their longevity and popularity due to the increase in social and cultural capital membership affords (Asel et al., 2009; Walker et al., 2015). Additionally, scholars found GLO affiliation results in greater career opportunities and networks (Asel et al., 2009; Kimbrough, 2003), possibility for positive social interactions with peers (Asel et al., 2009; Astin, 1999), and an increase in community service, charity and alumni giving (Donato &Thomas, 2017). On the other hand, Greek-letter organizations are a major liability for institutions given increased visibility and concern around Title XI issues of sexual assault, hazing, alcohol and drug abuse (Donato & Thomas, 2017). "Social fraternities and sororities are a highly visible but controversial part of college life and a key part of the undergraduate experience for many students”

(Walker et al., 2015, p. 204). The following section briefly reveals some negative and positive outcomes for Greek-letter membership for college students.

Negative Impact and Outcomes

Donato and Thomas (2017) found that new members of fraternities (WGLOs) report poor academic performance during initial recruitment for men and a drop in academic performance for women post recruitment. Popular culture depicts members of Greek letter organizations, specifically WGLOs, as part of a hedonistic subculture consumed with sexual assault, drug and alcohol abuse (Goodwin, 1989; Kodman & Sturmak, 1984) and racial insensitivity (Walker et al., 2015). As previously stated, Greek-letter organizations require sizeable time commitments which means less time to study and as reflected in Donato and Thomas' (2017) study can result in a weaker academic profile. Finally, due to the racial homogeneity of GLOs, members social groups often reflect a monoracial group resulting in limited and specifically for WGLO negative, cross-cultural interaction (Maisel, 1990; Park, 2010).

Positive Impact and Outcomes

Scholars documented the social capital that comes with Greek letter membership. Specifically, Walker and colleagues (2015) found that Greek letter affiliation provides social capital in the form of supportive social networks and access to information and resources via alumni networks (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019; Kimbrough, 2003). Additionally, students can develop leadership skills (Astin, 1977; Cockrell & Gibson, 2019) and participate in philanthropic activities. In general, students in Greek-letter organizations are likely to have higher levels of on-campus involvement (Williams & Winston, 1985) which is linked to higher grade performance (Pike & Askew, 1990;

Willingham, 1962), time management (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019) and greater satisfaction with their overall college experience (Astin, 1999). Studies measuring the impact of Greek letter affiliation also uncovered greater student satisfaction (Pennington, Zvonkvic, & Wilson, 1989). Additionally, scholars found that Greek letter membership can have a positive impact on the gender development of participants. In Greyerbiehl and Mitchell's (2014) study, participants reflected on how "gender matters in sororities, a participant highlighted the sense of empowerment and pride she felt because she was part of an organization founded by women" (p. 286).

Studies on the impact of LGLO participation found that LGLOs provide a means of social support, personal empowerment, a familial environment, lasting friendships, higher self-esteem, academic and emotional support, and a shared understanding of cultural language (Hernandez, 2000; Reyes, 1997). Studies on Latina sorority participation found that Latinas gain a heightened sense of ethnic identity development through membership in a Latina sorority. In Latina sororities, women can further enhance and maintain their ethnic and cultural identity and build academic and social support although they attend a predominately white university (Nuñez, 2004). Garcia (2005) found that members of a Latina sororities reported more positive perceptions of the campus than Latinos not in an LGLO. Sorority members also reported greater satisfaction with their academic, social and personal lives than non-affiliated Latinas.

Conclusion - Gap in the Literature

"In our contemporary moment, we have a post-civil rights doctrine that posits racism and segregation are either in serious decline or vanquished altogether, and that as a result, we are steadily moving toward a 'color-blind' and equitable society. However, such discourse does not reflect the material realities of our present conditions. The U.S. is becoming increasingly racially segregated every year in such diverse registers as education, employment and housing…" (Hughey, 2009, p. 238).

The above quote by Matthew W. Hughey, top scholar in racial inequality and collective understanding of race through racialized organizations such as GLOs, illustrates the challenges higher education institutions are facing with increasing numbers of racially and ethnically diverse student populations. While U.S. institutions may be enrolling more Students of Color, the U.D. still lacks understanding on the experiences of every demographic group. Multiracial students are one of those groups. This literature review reveals the existing bodies of scholarship on Multiracial students and people in the U.S., Multiracial women, Women of Color and Greek-letter organizations in the U.S. By examining these areas of literature, I argue that we still know little about the racialized experiences of Multiracial women on college campuses. Given that Greek-letter organizations still play a significant role in student life on college campuses around the nation, this study seeks to uncover how Multiracial women navigate these environments as students who fit outside the monoracial paradigm of race.

To date, no empirical study has revealed how and why Multiracial women determine if and which monoracial Greek letter organization to join and how their multiple racial heritages impact the interactions they have with their sorority sisters. Previous research on cross racial membership in Greek letter organizations focused on and reports on Students of Colors from a set of monoracial categories, i.e., African American/Black, Asian American, Latina/o, and Native students. Although Multiracial students may be represented amongst the participants in these studies, they are typically re-categorized into the aforementioned monoracial categories or taken out of the dataset altogether leaving a critical segment of the population out of research findings and implications. Unlike previous studies, this dissertation analyzed how race and racism

impact the ways in which Multiracial women navigate highly selective monoracial spaces. The site for this study is located on the east coast, departing from previous studies on sororities located on the west coast, Midwest or southwest (Chen, 2009; Cockrell & Gibson, 2019; Laybourn & Goss, 2018; Park, 2008; Park 2012). Greek letter organizations are unlike any other monoracial student run organization and although controversial, they play a major role in the U.S. higher education experiment. The stories of these women provide implications for how scholars and practitioners investigate and interact with Multiracial women and provide valuable implications for departments of fraternity and sorority life on campuses to not only encourage greater acknowledgement of changing college student demographics but the inclusion of Multiracial voices and experiences in the general Greek-letter organization narrative.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with a description of the pilot study that informed this dissertation. I then introduce the research questions that guided my dissertation followed by a detailed discussion of the research approach and rationale for a case study design. I describe in detail the research site, data collection and data analysis processes. Lastly, I describe the methods used to ensure the trustworthiness and overall quality of the research, offer my positionality and conclude with the scope and limitations of this dissertation.

Pilot Study

This study was conceived after a year-long, two-phase pilot study. Each phase informed the other and led to the current dissertation. The first study, phase one, was conducted in the spring of 2015 as a requirement for a graduate level qualitative methods course. The original purpose of the study was to understand to what extent faculty and staff impact the racial identity development, retention and/or persistence of Multiracial college students at a PWI. The initial sample criteria required participants be (a) full-time undergraduate students at the pre-selected PWI, (b) in their fourth year of college, (c) with parents who hold different racial[18] backgrounds from each other. The pre-selected research site for both phases of the pilot study is the same institution as this dissertation study. The site was selected for phase one due to convenience; however, I maintained the same location for phase two to ensure the viability of the institution (State University). State University is a racially diverse campus with a robust Greek community. The

[18]Although the US Census classifies Latinx (Hispanic) people as an ethnicity rather than race, for the purposes of this dissertation I classify Latinx people as a race which encompasses various ethnicities similar to all other raced groups (Haywood, 2017).

specific rationale for picking State University is covered extensively in a later section of this chapter.

I put out a call for participants based on the aforementioned criteria and two Multiracial women responded. Given that both my participants were women, I chose to alter my research questions to better reflect the narratives of my participants, i.e. Multiracial college women. The research questions changed to: (a) How do Mixed race college women make meaning of their racial/ethnic identities through their interactions with faculty and staff?, (b) How do interactive processes between Mixed race college women and faculty/staff on campus influence and shape their identity development?, (c) How do Mixed race college women experience their racialized identities in their everyday interactions with others, in relation to their own self-perceptions and in response to the way others perceive them to be? The theoretical framework guiding phase one was Symbolic Interactionism given the emphasis on interactions between Multiracial college women and faculty and staff, as well as, the focus on how mean making is developed and cultivated through these interactions.

I conducted one face-to-face, semi-structured interview with each participant. Although the study was focused on faculty/staff, I included interview questions about family and peers to build depth and a more holistic understanding of their lived experience. I was interested in the variety of interactions that help to shape and inform who these women were before and during college. In both cases my participants revealed the importance and significance of their participation in their Greek-letter organizations. Participants disclosed their desire to build a deeper understanding and connection to a part of their racial heritage they were otherwise not connected to through their sorority

membership. Each participant felt otherwise disconnected from their Black or Latina heritage and thus saw Black and Latina sorority affiliation as the appropriate outlet to develop a lasting and meaningful connection. One participant shared the impact of college administrators in the same sorority influenced her decision to join her respective sorority. Given that I too am Multiracial and a member of a historically Black sorority, I related deeply to their narratives and experience. The unexpected findings of the Multiracial student interactions with faculty and staff study led me to narrow my population to Multiracial women, to focus on their participation in Greek letter organizations and inevitability redesign my dissertation topic and research questions.

The second study, phase two, took place in fall 2016 as a requirement for a data analysis and research writing course. Phase two was approved by IRB and served as the most direct pilot for this dissertation study. The second phase of the pilot study allowed me to test the sample criteria, interview questions and practice the overall research process that I planned to pursue for my dissertation. The research questions were informed by phase one of the pilot. I sought only Multiracial college women and narrowed the context to sororities. I carried over the theoretical framework, Symbolic Interactionism and chose to add a critical lens, Critical Multiracial Theory, which allowed me to focus on race and racism directly rather than just broadly looking at interactions. MultiCrit also informed the development of interview questions and the coding process which I describe later in more depth. The research questions for phase two included: (a) What motivates Multiracial students to join sororities at a predominately white institution? (b) What are the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in sororities at a predominately white institution? I developed and analyzed the study using a case study

approach (Merriam, 1998) based on a demographic questionnaire and one in-depth interview to understand the motives and racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial social sororities.

Research participants were recruited based on the following criteria: 1) identified with more than one racial group, 2) identified as a cisgender woman, 3) financially and socially active member of a NPHC, PHA or MGC sorority at the time of the interview and 4) member of their respective organization for at least one semester. Six Multiracial college women responded to my call for participants and completed a demographic questionnaire. Five women met the full criteria and agreed to be interviewed in-person. Figure 2 provides demographic information for each participant.

Table 1
List of participants in phase two of pilot study

Name (Pseudonym)	Racial Identification	Racial/Ethnic Heritage	Type of Sorority	School Classification	Major	Semester/ Year Initiated	Age
Yasmine	Biracial	Polish, Black and white	Predominately Black	Senior	Public Health	Spring 2015	21
Amanda	Latina and white	Columbian and white	Predominately Latina	Junior	Sociology	Spring 2015	20
Sam	Multiracial	Indian, Irish-English and Chilean	Predominately white	Sophomore	Animal Science	Spring 2016	19
Alicia	Half African American and Half Swiss	African American and white/Swiss	Predominately white	Junior	Animal Science	Spring 2016	20
Mariah	Racially white, Ethnically Latin@	white, Panamanian, Puerto Rican	Predominately white	Junior	Behavioral and Community Health	Spring 2016	20

The research site for phase two was purposeful (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). State University (SU) was used in phase one and two of the pilot which is the same as the site for this dissertation study. The site for both phases of the pilot was

chosen based on my access to participants and relationship with critical offices and administrators at SU. Additionally, I selected SU based on the size of the institution in hopes of reaching my desired population. State University has a strong Greek affiliation which again ensures an ample number of participants for this study. Finally, the institutional Greek context, campus racial climate and institutional factors would be the same as those of the pilot group creating continuity and justification for the research site.

The primary data collection sources for phase two of my pilot consisted of one semi-structured, in depth interview lasting between 25-45 minutes. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed. I organized the interview protocol into two parts: 1) family/pre-college context and 2) collegiate/sorority context. Interview questions about pre-college and college environments allowed for greater understanding of each participants' motives to join their specific sorority. The interview protocol also allowed for initial exploration of underlying experiences with race and racism on campus generally and in their sororities specifically. As a novice researcher it was very important for me to conduct memos throughout the data collection process. I used the memos to critique the interview questions, comment on how I engaged with the participants, brainstorm additional questions I wish were asked and answered. The memos also allowed me to unpack my feelings, assumptions and emerging themes. Member checking was conducted for both pilot studies.

For data analysis, each interview was transcribed verbatim onto a word document. I engaged in a constant comparative coding method. First, deductive codes were generated from the MultiCrit framework tenets such as colorism, monoracism, challenge to monoracial paradigms of race, intersections of multiple racial identities and interest

convergence. Next, I coded data with inductive codes such as: colorblindness, exoticizism, tokenism, white guilt, and sense of belonging. At times in-vivo codes were generated from comments made by participants (e.g. Othered, not enough, what are you?). Once saturation in coding all transcripts were achieved, meaning no new codes were created through the coding process and a full coding scheme was established, I began axial coding (Saldaña, 2009). Axial coding allowed me to compare participant codes and create a more refined coding system. I refined the coding system by collapsing codes and developing larger categories that captured the essence of the codes. Through this process, I found several emergent themes to answer the two research questions: Participants cited role modeling, the importance of racial diversity and a personal connection to the history and mission of the organization as motivational factors for joining their sorority. Regarding racialized experiences, all women mentioned excusing various racist behaviors or comments and confronting Multiracial microaggressions from sorority sisters and peers. Others expressed a need to educate their sorority sisters on issues of race or defend racialized groups they identified with against their sorority sisters.

While the pilot took place over a short period of time and only included five participants, the findings for phase two of the pilot study served as a solid foundation for my dissertation project. The data collection and data analysis process served as a useful exercise in clarifying the direction of my dissertation. The pilot was my first attempt at designing and executing an original qualitative study. The results informed the sampling criteria, research and interview questions for my dissertation study. For example, the original sampling criteria called for participants active in their sorority for at least one

year, however, the lack of viable participants required that I drop down the membership timeline to one semester with a preference for participants who spent longer in their sorority chapters. The assumption was that participants actively involved in their chapter for at least one year would have more experiences to share in the interview process. The current study similarly only requires one semester of membership in the organization to ensure I recruit an adequate number of participants, but I preferenced longer membership if possible. Additionally, I opted for more inclusive language for each research question from Mixed race women to Multiracial women based on the responses of participants.

The pilot study also informed the order and type of questions asked in the demographic questionnaire. For example, in the dissertation study, I asked for participant's desired pseudonym before racial/ethnic heritage questions. Questions related specifically to sorority membership moved to the end of the questionnaire to create greater organization and flow. In the current study, I asked participants if they hold or held any positions in their sorority which can inform the types of interactions and leadership opportunities the participants engaged in with their sorority sisters. Additionally, I asked participants to report additional campus involvements which may resurface in the interview and/or inform their salient identities (e.g. member of the Black Student Union or Asian Student Association).

Interview questions were also strengthened by the pilot study. The current study includes more targeted questions about family dynamics and more clearly worded questions. The pilot study helped me build confidence around the semi-structured interview process. Specifically, in a memo, I wrote "I wish I asked her why she thought that was shocking? I should have asked what she thinks accounted for the fact that 'race

was not a thing' and why she felt her parents did not talk about race and how she specifically felt about her parent's decision not to talk about race at home." The pilot study undoubtedly impacted the quality of the current study. I turn now to the research design for my dissertation.

Research Approach

Two research questions guide my dissertation study:

1. What motivates Multiracial women to join and stay in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?
2. What are the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?

Next, I outline my social constructivist epistemology. Then, I discuss my case study design including rationale for the research site followed by an explanation of this comparative multi-case study and how I effectively implemented this approach.

Social Constructivist (Epistemology)

This study reflects my social constructivist epistemology. My personal experiences have shaped my current perspective on Multiracial college students. "Reality is socially defined" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 11). Social constructivists believe in the existence of multiple realities as determined by individuals and groups of individuals who serve as the definers of their reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Based on my philosophy about the creation of knowledge between my participants, and myself, I bring a social constructivist epistemology to my research. I am curious about the shared knowledge and experiences between participant and researcher. I believe reality and knowledge are social constructions informed by interactions (Creswell, 2013; Glesne,

2011). In this study, I engaged with my participants to explore their racialized experiences in their Greek-letter organizations.

While reality is co-constructed between the participants and myself, I believe my shared perspective, as a Multiracial woman helped to facilitate deeper discussions. Creswell (2013) revealed that social constructivists believe that "reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences" (p. 36). Throughout this study, I created that knowledge and reality with my participants which helped to share and inform the findings.

Case Study Design

Qualitative research uncovers a better understanding of people's lived experience. The purpose of qualitative research is to "illuminate and understand, in-depth, the richness in the lives of human beings and the world in which we live" (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014, p. 11). Within qualitative methodology, I examined the racialized experiences of my participants within their respective organizations through a comparative multi-case study approach. In keeping with Critical Race Theory (CRT), the narratives of these women provide counter stories to further develop and unpack how Multiracial women experience race and racism at a PWI.

Case study is a specific kind of qualitative methodology, which "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). Case studies are most appropriate when researchers are interested in examining "how" and "why" questions and help to explain, describe, illustrate, and enlighten the researcher and reader

to the phenomenon of interest through the development of thick description (context) (Yin, 2009). According to Merriam (1998), case studies focus on how events are shaped and highlight context and meaning making which is a hope of this study. Additionally, a case study approach is appropriate given its use of multiple sources of information in data collection to provide in-depth description and explanation for each case (Merriam, 2009). I seek to collect and share the stories of Multiracial women as a means of revealing their lost narratives.

This study is a multi-case study, each participant represents a unique case embedded within their respective Greek councils at one institution. Given the complex racialized structure of social sororities, a multi-case study approach allowed me to search for themes and patterns between and among individuals involved in different Greek councils. A comparative case study approach offered a more informed understanding of the phenomena being studied, in this case, how Multiracial women navigate monoracial spaces in a sorority context. "Comparative case studies provide the opportunity for deeper and more complex interpretation than what can be gleaned from a single case example" (Rocco, 2017, p. 60). This approach is especially compelling for this demographic group and context. The patterns, themes and contradictions uncovered from each participant's narrative and the observation, strengthened the interpretations and meaning making generated (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Comparative case study methods are appropriate for studying Multiracial college students for two reasons. First, Multiracial people hold different racial heritages. The combination of racial heritages impacts their lived experiences in conjunction with their familial dynamics, geographic location, and daily interactions, among other factors

(Harris, 2016). Although all women did not share identical racial heritages, they each attend the same university, and each decided to affiliate with a monoracial sorority thus examining their experiences and identifying patterns and contradictions within these raced contexts on campus assisted in understanding how they navigate in elite environments in college. Comparative multi-case study allowed me to employ a cross case analysis by Greek council affiliation to gleam if the Greek context impacts participant's experience and/or find patterns or inconsistencies. Multiple levels of cross case analysis offer a richer set of findings that could not be uncovered by simply investigating Multiracial women in one council comprised predominately of just one racialized group (ex. the National Panhellenic Conference is the umbrella organization overseeing 26 historically white sororities while the National Pan-Hellenic Council is the umbrella organization for 9 historically African American/Black fraternities and sororities). Figure 3 depicts the three Greek councils central to this study. Data gleamed from a cross case analysis provides a fuller, more nuanced picture of Multiracial student experiences in Greek letter organizations and allowed for a more robust conversation about race and racism in higher education.

Table 2

Greek Councils at State University

Council	Race	Year Established (Nationally)	Major differences
Panhellenic Association (PHA)	white	1902	- Consists of sororities *only* - Umbrella organization for 26 international women's sororities
National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)	Black/African American	1930	- Umbrella organization for 9 historically African American, international Greek-letter fraternities *and* sororities

Multicultural Greek Council (MGC)	Latinx, Asian American/Pacific American, South East Asian or Multicultural	1998 (established at State University in 2003)	- Governing council at State University - *Note*: Asian American and Latinx fraternities and sororities have umbrella councils but these councils are not represented at State University. These Greek-letter organizations fall under the MGC.

Research Site

As previously stated, the pilot study was conducted at the same location as this dissertation study. State University (pseudonym) is a PWI, research I, located on the East Coast and was selected because it offered a large racially and ethnically diverse student body, substantial number of social sororities and strong percentage of student participation in Greek organizations ensuring fertile ground for possible research participants. Institutional data for academic year 2019 indicated that State University's total undergraduate enrollment was nearly 30,500 with an additional 10,000 graduate students. The University is comprised of 45.5% white students, 10.6% Black/African American, 15.3% Asian, 8.1% Latinx, and 3.9% marked "Two or More" racial/ethnic categories. 3.9% represents a steady increase in students who choose to check "Two or More" racial heritages from earlier years. As previously stated, the percent of those who self-report as Biracial/Multiracial is likely an underrepresentation given the fluidity of Multiracial identity. There are likely more than 3.9% of all students at SU who identify as Biracial or Multiracial.

In 2013, SU celebrated 100 years of Greek letter organizations on campus and the school reported that fraternities and sororities remain an integral part of the State University (SU) experience. The first fraternity was established on the campus in 1913. Sororities were first established on campus in 1917 and were officially admitted into the

university in 1920. SU has a vibrant Greek community, comprised of four Greek councils (National Panhellenic Conference, Interfraternity Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council and Multicultural Greek Council) and over 45 Greek-letter organizations (see Figure 4). As of fall 2016, nearly 4,800 students participated in a Greek-letter organization which equates to 17% of the campus community. According to State University's Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life (DFSL), 20% of the undergraduate population who identify as women, joined a sorority, and 15% of students who identify as men joined a fraternity. Between spring 2012 through spring 2018, there has been a 5-9 percentage increase in "Members of Color" (Members of Color denote any student that designates a racial/ethnic category other than white/non-Hispanic) in WGLOs at State University (DFSL, 2019). Among all councils, WGLOs (i.e. PHA and IFC) maintain the lowest percentage of Students of Color across all 7 years represented (Appendix A). According the DFSL, the membership of the BGLOs, LGLOs, and AGLOs are nearly composed of all Students of Color (i.e. 99% in NPHC and 98% in MGC) thus all councils are highly segregated racially.

Lastly, this research site is appropriate for this study due to my access to key informants. As a mid-level administrator at State University, I have access to potential participants through various listservs, connections with DFSL staff and involvement in various Greek related retreats. Existing relationships and a critical mass of potential participants make this research site prime for investigating the research questions.

Table 3

List of Sororities at State University

Sorority	Type	Council	Sorority	Type	Council	Sorority	Type	Council
Alpha Delta Pi	WGLO	PHA	(Hermandad de) Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.	LGLO	MGC	Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc	BGLO	NPHC
Alpha Xi Delta	WGLO	PHA	Lambda Theta Alpha Sorority, Inc.	LGLO	MGC	Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.	BGLO	NPHC
Delta Phi Epsilon	WGLO	PHA	Sigma Psi Zeta Sorority, Inc.	AGLO	MGC	Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.	BGLO	NPHC
Sigma Delta Tau	WGLO	PHA	Kappa Phi Lambda, Sorority, Inc.	AGLO	MGC	Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.	BGLO	NPHC
Alpha Epsilon Phi	WGLO	PHA	Alpha Kappa Delta Phi Sorority, Inc.	AGLO	MGC			
Gamma Phi Beta	WGLO	PHA						
Kappa Alpha Theta	WGLO	PHA						
Sigma Kappa	WGLO	PHA						
Alpha Omicron Pi	WGLO	PHA						
Delta Delta Delta	WGLO	PHA						
Kappa Delta	WGLO	PHA						
Zeta Tau Alpha	WGLO	PHA						
Alpha Chi Omega	WGLO	PHA						
Alpha Phi	WGLO	PHA						
Delta Gamma	WGLO	PHA						
Phi Sigma Sigma	WGLO	PHA						

Methods

Sample Criteria

Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Purposeful sampling is a method of sampling in qualitative research which seeks to select participants who provided the richest descriptions related to the research question (Merriam, 2009). Participants were selected only if they met the following criteria: (a) at least 18 years of age and currently enrolled at the State University (SU); (b) identify as cisgender woman; (c) must identify with “Two or More” racial groups and/or as a Biracial/Tri-racial/Multiracial/Mixed race woman, and (d) is a

financially and socially active member of a monoracial sorority under the DFSL at the SU for at least one academic semester. I selected the most "information rich cases" meaning participants active in their sorority for longer than a semester (Patton, 1990). Participants were selected through purposeful and later snowball sampling. I asked the Director of FSL to send a recruitment email (Appendix B), which explained the purpose of the study, eligibility requirements and request for an interview with participants. The email was sent to all sorority chapter presidents. In the letter, chapter presidents were asked to disseminate the email to their chapter members. Interested participants were asked to complete the eligibility google form if they wished to participate in the study. After eligibility was determined, potential participants were sent the demographic questionnaire followed by a request to meet for a face-to-face interview with participants based on availability and their preferred location around or near campus. I engaged in snowball sampling, I asked participants to recommend others who may fit the criteria, to ensure a viable number of participants. After experiencing trouble recruiting eligible participants from NPHC organizations due in large part to lack of recruitment in subsequent semesters and with the support of my committee members, I expanded my criteria to include: Multiracial women who graduated within 1-3 years of interview and were past financially and socially active members of their sorority while on campus through current chapter members. As an incentive to participate and form of my gratitude, students who successfully completed all parts of the study were given a $20 Amazon gift card after the interview phase. Ultimately, the sample was comprised of 12 Multiracial women, representing all three councils and 7 unique sororities (Table 4).

Table 4

List of Participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Racial Identification	Racial/Ethnic Heritage	Type of Sorority	Sorority Name)	School Classification	Major	Semester/Year Initiated	Age
Kaden	Afro Latina	African American and Panamanian	Predominately white	Gamma	Sophomore	Dietetics	Spring 2018	19
Molly	Multiracial	Hispanic, Indian, Caucasian	Predominately white	Epsilon	Senior	Animal Science	Spring 2016	21
Ashley	Mixed (Black and Latina)	Black and Puerto Rican	Predominately Latina	Lambda	Senior	Information Science	Spring 2018	22
Jenny	Asian	Korean and Mexican	Predominately white	Chi	Senior	Marketing and International Business	Spring 2016	21
Shannon	Biracial	Cape Verdean and Chinese	Predominately white	Gamma	Junior	Government and Politics	Spring 2017	20
Maria	Latina	Caucasian and Latina	Predominately white	Epsilon	Senior	English Literature and Language	Spring 2016	21
Indie	Asian/Caucasian	Taiwanese, Chinese, white	Predominately Asian	Alpha	Junior	Bioengineering	Fall 2017	20
Joe	Mixed	Puerto Rican and Black	Predominately Latina	Lambda	Junior	Hearing and Speech Sciences	Spring 2017	19
Lana	Mixed	Black and white	Predominately white	Gamma	Junior	Elementary Education	Spring 2018	20
Clare	Mixed white and Black	English, German, African American and Caribbean	Predominately white	Eta	Junior	Economics and Government	Spring 2016	20
Beau	Biracial	Finish American (Finland) and Zambian	Predominately Black	Beta	Alumna, Class of 2015	Supply Chain Management	Spring 2015	25

Nina	Black	Polish and Black	Predominately Black	Beta	Alumna, Class of 2016	Public Health	Spring 2015	23

Data Collection

Case study is a powerful method for research design because case studies use multiple sources of data. According to Yin (2009), case study should have some combination of six major data sources: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. The use of multiple sources of data allows for triangulation and gives the reader confidence that the findings are substantiated and demonstrate convergence of the data.

The sources of data for this study consisted of demographic questionnaire, in-depth interview, an observation and document analysis to provide additional context. All participants signed confidentiality agreements prior to participation. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Interview questions ranged from familial and childhood experiences to racial identity development and questions centered on their motivations and experiences within their sorority. The research questions and theoretical framework informed the interview questions.

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire (Appendix C), delivered via a google form emailed to participants after confirmation of eligibility, elicited preliminary information about each participant prior to the interview. I used this information to ensure each participant met the criteria and to further personalize the interview by referring to their answers throughout the in-person interview. The questionnaire asked questions about racial/ethnic heritage, how they would identify themselves, organizational affiliations on

campus, academic major, name of the sorority and Greek council they are affiliated with on campus among others.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were my primary source of data collection (Appendix D). I went over the consent form with each participant in person before they each signed confirming their willingness to participant in this study. I then conducted a 60-90-minute, face-to-face, semi-structured interview with each participant. The interview protocol questions ranged from familial and childhood experiences to racial identity development and questions centered on the motivations for membership in their respective sorority, interactions with their chapter sorority sisters and amongst others in the Greek community. The research questions and theoretical framework informed the interview questions. Based on the critical race framework guiding this study, MultiCrit, I already contend that racism and monoracism is endemic in society and pervasive in post-secondary institutions and fraternal organizations thus my questions drew upon this truth, began very broad and progressively tapped into the racialized experiences more directly with participants.

Observation

I observed the Greek letter community at State University to provide context on the bounded system. Specifically, I observed an annual overnight Greek retreat centered on social justice, inclusion and equity. This retreat was open to any member of a fraternity or sorority on campus. Three of the twelve participants in this study were present at the retreat. One attendee at the retreat revealed her Multiracial status yet was not a participant in this study. While in attendance, I wrote field notes based on specific

guiding questions (Appendix E) to provide further insight into the state of GLOs at the institution as it relates to race, equity and inclusion. For example, I documented the number of people in attendance, the purpose of the event and the perceived role of the participant juxtaposed to her sorority sisters. I documented the salient issues, concerns, challenges and proposed resolutions that participants brought up to provide richness and clarity to the dissertation findings. The purpose of the observation was also to triangulate the demographic questionnaire, interviews and document analysis based on my first-hand account.

Document Analysis

To add richness and depth to the dissertation findings and my understanding of the bounded system, I analyzed various institutional documents and news articles that specifically spoke to race, race relations, campus racial climate and Greek letter organizations at SU. Documents included a preliminary report on the Comprehensive Campus Climate Assessment for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; campus demographic statistics, GLO racial statistics, and various campus, local and national articles. I specifically looked for additional contextual data that could be used to expand on the site visit description such as demographic information, campus climate issues and to triangulate participant profiles. These sources served as secondary data points for this dissertation.

Table 5

Data Collection Methods

Method	Quantity	Order of Collection	Notes
	One per participant	Pre-interview	Google form

Demographic Questionnaire			Appendix C
In-depth interview (Primary data source)	One, 60-90 minute/ participant	After Demographic Questionnaire	Face-to-face Appendix D
Observation	One	After interviews	Attend annual overnight social justice retreat for members of social fraternities and sororities from all councils Appendix E
Document Analysis (Secondary Data)	Bound by recent and historical issues connected to racism, racial incidents, and/or Greek letter organizations	Pre and post interview	Campus reports, newspaper articles (campus, local and national articles), demographic information, statistics, websites, university archives.

Data Analysis

Constant Comparative Analysis

This study followed a constant comparative analysis. The data points were examined case-by-case through thematic analysis (Merriam, 2009; Riessman, 2007; Stake, 1995). I continuously engaged in analytic memos, open coding, and axial coding.

Analytic Memos

I conducted analytic memos at several points throughout the data analysis process. Specifically, I wrote memos before each interview, immediately following each interview, and immediately after reading through each transcript. The memos explored my personal bias, body language that audio recordings could not capture, any surprising findings, any initial links to the framework, research questions or information that may inform the interview protocol. I also drafted memos throughout the coding stages.

Open Coding

I read each transcript five separate times and identified concepts "interesting, potentially relevant, or important to the study for answering the research question" also known as initial or open codes (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). I engaged in multiple rounds of the initial or open coding process through a deductive and inductive approach. Deductive codes generated from the MultiCrit framework tenets such as differential micro-racialization, interest convergence, and challenging monoracial paradigms of race. The inductive codes emerged from the data. I kept a codebook for each participant.

Axial Coding

Axial coding was the next step in the constant comparative method process. This process required that I compare, connect and group codes first into categories and later into themes (Merriam, 2009). Categories are "conceptual elements that cover or span many individual examples or codes previously identified" (Merriam, 2009, p. 181). I engaged in multiple rounds of axial coding to tease out the most salient codes from the weaker codes, collapse redundant codes or synonyms (Saldaña, 2016). I put the salient codes into categories followed by themes emerging from the categories (Saldaña, 2016).

Participant Profile

To ensure a clear understanding of each participant case, I developed participant profiles. Using Merriam's approach, I provided "as much about the contextual variables as possible that might have a bearing on the case" (Merriam, 2009, p. 204). The participant profiles included a summary of their family background, racial identity development, educational background, their interpretation of SU's campus racial climate, and a brief overview of their experience in Greek life.

Cross Case Analysis

After creating each participant profile, I began to engage in a cross-case analysis. I searched for emergent themes that cut across cases. I also explored if common themes emerged within or across Greek councils and type of Greek organizations, for example WGLOs v. BGLOs/LGLOs/AGLOs or PHA v. MGC v. NPHC, among other comparisons. Next, based on the emergent themes across each case, I developed a new, refined codebook also known as a cross case codebook.

Data Quality

Establishing Trustworthiness

The following techniques were employed to increase trustworthiness: 1) triangulation, 2) thick, rich description, 3) member checking, 4) peer debriefing, and 5) reflexivity (Krefting, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, triangulation was employed in this study through the use of multiple forms of data collection (demographic questionnaire, interview, observation and document analysis). Each data source was crosschecked to increase trustworthiness of the findings (Denzin, 1989; Krefting, 1999).

Thick, rich description is critical to case study research (Krefting, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). For this comparative multi- case study approach, I provided thick, rich descriptions of the participants through participant profiles. Each profile detailed the racial/ethnic heritages of the participants, their familial and educational environments and experiences. Given the research questions and organizational context of this study, I provided details about the specific sorority in which the participant is a member such as details related to membership demographics and contextualized the sorority/chapter through inclusion of useful historical and

contemporary details. The aforementioned details allowed me to understand the nuance within the sorority context and more importantly the participants whose stories are being explored. Each participant profile detailed the familial upbringing, social influences prior to and during college as well as their educational profile to gain an in-depth account of their lives prior to entering college.

Member checking gave each participant the opportunity to examine her transcript (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As the deliverer of participant stories, I asked all participants to review and/or modify (make corrections or clarifying statements) to their transcripts to ensure their words were not distorted or misrepresented. Participants chose not to make any changes or add clarification to any transcript.

Throughout the study, I engaged in peer debriefing with trusted colleagues who are unfamiliar with my research topic and whom I trust to offer honest, valuable feedback (Krefting, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Peer debriefers included higher education scholars and practitioners with varying expertise outside of Greek letter organizations and Multiracial studies. While some read written profiles and summaries of my findings, others served as valuable sounding boards to talk through possible findings to help me process and think through the final themes. They offered additional insights, reframed my thoughts to ensure clarity, and helped me to verbally and in writing synthesize my thoughts throughout the dissertation process. A consistent group to debriefers was particularly important and valuable in this study because of my close ties to the population both as a Multiracial woman and member of a Greek letter organization.

Finally, I wrote reflexive memos throughout the data collection and analysis process as a final form of trustworthiness (Krefting, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The

primary goal of memoing was to engage in self-examination regarding my own personal experiences and positionality within the study and to capture my thoughts and observations before and after each interview (Merriam, 1998).

Positionality

I approached this study fully connected to the identities of these women and with my own assumptions about Greek letter organizations, both positive and negative. As a Black Biracial college educated person with white heritage, I consider myself an insider in this study. I acknowledge that I hold biases and assumptions based on my experiences and specific racial heritages. Although I share a similar Multiracial identity with my participants, I believe it is impossible for Multiracial people to be true insiders. For example, my brother and I identify very differently although we share the same biological parents, grew up in the same home and attended the same primary and secondary schools. In addition, students with different racial/ethnic heritages or students who were raised by one of their parents may experience life much differently than I have as a Black/white college student with married parents (Garrod, Kilkenny, & Gomez, 2014). Furthermore, I hold many privileged identities. My sexuality (heterosexual), religious affiliation (Christian), white heritage (*arguably* access to my father's white privilege) and education level (doctoral student) may have an impact on the types of stories or experiences my participants felt comfortable sharing. As a result of this distance, I was committed to work toward building a rapport with each participant and find what connects us (Chavez, 2008).

I was born in northern Virginia to a white, German American father and an African American mother. Growing up in a loving, middle class family in a picturesque

suburban neighborhood with my older brother could not have appeared more normal, but as I grew up, I quickly realized that my family was unique simply based on how others perceived and ultimately treated us. I distinctly remember in kindergarten, being asked if I was adopted after my father came into our class for career day or getting strange stares from my father's coworkers on Take Your Daughter to Work Day. I only recall these distinct interactions when I was alone with my father or when we were all together as a family but never alone with my mother. These were just some of my first racialized experiences I vividly remember with my interracial family.

Although I am proud of my family history, legacy and uniqueness, I was constantly socialized and treated as a Black woman growing up. College propelled me into a state of exploration and afforded me the space to choose a racial identity that was thrusted upon me but also "fit" me at times. In hopes of feeling a greater sense of belonging and community, I made the decision to engage with other Students of Color primarily through my involvement in predominately Black student organizations. I served as Education Chair of my university's chapter of the NAACP, vice president of the Black Student Union and interned in the Office of Multicultural Affairs. My most notable involvement came in the fall of 2006 when I joined my university's chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, a historical Black sorority, in my sophomore year. I served as Vice President and later President of my chapter. These affiliations further immersed me into predominately Black spaces and afforded me the opportunity to interact with people who played a significant role in my collegiate journey. My experiences particularly in my sorority deeply impacted my identity and mark some of my most significant racialized experiences on campus and beyond. My lifetime

association with strong, Black women often dictated my past and now current social circles, research interests, career aspirations and spiritual surroundings.

Unlike most people who join historically Black fraternities or sororities, my entry into the sisterhood was unconventional. I am not a legacy (no one in my family is a member of a Greek organization) and I did not have any strong role models affiliated with sororities growing up. My introduction to my sorority was a direct result of the Black women at my predominately white campus. To me, they embodied the characteristics and values that I aspired to hold in my own life. They garnered the respect of the campus community and I saw a direct impact of their service projects on the betterment of the Black community.

My chapter gave me an outlet to help the Black community in important ways. I have fond memories of working with 8th grade girls at a local middle school, hosting seminars on financial literary and facilitating women-led entrepreneurial workshops with young Black girls. We promoted stress relief and mental health initiatives within the Black community and funneled the proceeds of our fundraising events to promote breast cancer research; issues that disproportionately impact Black women. Embedded in each of these programs was the unity, friendship, respect, bond and sisterhood that is at the epicenter of my organization. My chapter taught me that Black women are multifaceted, courageous, innovative, and passionate but it was not without challenges.

Upon sharing my interest in joining a sorority and specifically ahistorically Black sorority with my parents, I was met with trepidation and confusion. My parents understanding of fraternities and sororities was solely white Greek-letter organizations. My mother was approached by a WGLO organization while she was in college yet

declined because she felt like she was asked for the purpose of being the “token Black member.” She described the organization as very “southern” and she strongly believed they asked so they could “say they asked.” My mother was an anomaly at her institution as one of only a dozen Black students enrolled in the late 1970s. My father, on the other hand, never felt the need to join a fraternity in college because he was a football player and often equated his experience on the football team to fraternal life in terms of already feeling as though he was part of a brotherhood that held specific traditions.

I kept a lot of my sorority specific experiences from my parents in regard to the initiation process and my everyday life as a leader in my chapter (i.e. meetings, fundraisers, social events, service projects). I assumed they would not understand. I also was afraid they would perceive my membership as a blanketed allegiance to “my Black side” and that this might cause tension within my family. I kept my sorority life, which was essentially my entire collegiate experience, private.

In my sorority, I certainly encountered uncomfortable moments connected to my racial heritage. I received comments about my “good” hair or jokes that I was white when I made certain statements or was unfamiliar with closely held African American traditions or cultural markers. At times, my sorority sisters would make negative comments about white people generally or white people on our campus specifically. Sometimes their disparaging remarks would put me in a difficult situation. Mentally I juggled whether to agree, disagree, if I should speak out against their remarks, how might they treat me for pushing back against their remarks or what it meant if I agreed with their statements. This was my internal racial battle fatigue, deciding if and how to react. The impact of these experiences and affiliations in my undergraduate and graduate career

inform this study. As a researcher, I pushed aside my assumptions that Multiracial women will have similar encounters with their sorority sisters and simply told the authentic stories of women who are often invisible in higher education research, policy and practice.

Scope and Limitations

Despite attempts to maintain trustworthiness throughout the study, there were several limitations to this study. First, this is a case study, housed at one PWI. While qualitative research is not intended to be generalizable this study can certainly be duplicated at other institutions. Multiracial identity is fluid and ever changing (Renn, 2000). Students who may fit the eligibility requirements for this study may not identify as Multiracial, Biracial, Tri-racial at the time the study is conducted. Some women may possibly identify just a semester later or a year later leaving out parts of the population who could offer complexity to the case. Additionally, since I am a member of the Greek community, some participants may not have felt comfortable sharing their full experience with me. Finally, as a full-time staff member at the research site, my positionality and power as an administrator may have influenced what participants shared.

This study seeks to examine Multiracial participants, or people with more than one racial heritage and may exclude people who identify as monoracial but hold multiple ethnic identities. This distinction eliminates, for example, women who are Jamaican and Nigerian, or Vietnamese and Chinese American. Although these students may endure cultural clashes and hold unique identities, this study focuses on the historical legacy of race and the saliency of race in a United States context thus race is the focus rather than ethnicity.

Greek-letter organizations are exclusive organizations and those that join are a special set of college students with financial resources to pay dues or hold access through the legacy status if family members previously joined GLOs (i.e. family members previously attended college). While this study undoubtedly offers important insight and conclusions about monoracism, the scope of this project is looking at a specific subset of students who self-select into these elite organizations. They do not represent all Multiracial women in college, at this PWI or in all Greek organizations.

I do not include Multicultural Greek organizations purposively. Multicultural Greek organizations are the newest additions to the office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Additionally, only one multicultural sorority exists at SU and was first founded at SU in 2003. They have the lowest numbers of participation and hold the fewest number of chapters in the United States. They have yet to reach international status. I specifically choose monoracial sororities given the historical significance and longevity of monoracial Greek organizations.

Given the fluctuation in membership intake for minoritized Greek letter councils and the challenges to maintaining strong membership numbers, the population sample is heavily represented by WGLOs. The differences among council as it relates to membership intake are stark. WGLOs are more resourced from a financial and human capital perspective as well as, have university sponsored houses, and engage in a large-scale recruitment process each year in which if their desired, large, recruitment numbers are unmet, they are required to hold a second wave of initiation activities to meet their quotas. Conversely, BGLOs, AGLOs, and LGLOs are not required to meet the same lofty recruitment standards. In many cases, these organizations may skip initiation from one

year to the next due to chapter or university mandates (ex. probation or suspension). Additionally, the two women in BGLOs were alumnae of State University which likely impacted the findings. Given that each woman was not a current student, their recall of the campus racial climate while they were students, as well as, their perception of the current campus racial climate is likely not as reflective of their personal experiences. Given that both participants are the only representation of BGLOs it may weaken findings for that particular council, however, as recent alumna they still have a critical perspective to offer. Each BGLO participant was also represented in either phase one or two of the pilot which captured their identity and experiences while at SU. The women in BGLOs come from the same chapter as well as the Latina Greek letter organizations, both come from the same chapter. WGLOs represent 4 different organizations. Lastly, although this study includes three participants from the Multicultural Greek Council, only one participant represents the AGLOs and thus weakens findings about the AGLO experience.

CHAPTER 4 – CASE PROFILES

Kaden

I grew up aware of who I was.

Family Background

Kaden, a sophomore and member of a predominately white sorority was born to her Panamanian father and African American mother. Kaden's father and siblings were born in Panama and hold a strong Afro-Latinx identity as descendants from Barbados. Kaden celebrates the culture and traditions of her Panamanian heritage including speaking fluent Spanish. Family represents an integral part of Kaden's story. Her strong connection to her culture was influenced by deliberate actions taken by her parents. "My parents [made] sure I got back to Panama and know where I came from and [made] sure that I met my family in Ohio and was familiar with that… part of me here." These experiences helped to shape Kaden and deepen her connection to her culture and family.

Racial Identity

Kaden identifies as Black and Afro Latina. These identities stem from her Panamanian and African American heritage. Kaden's experience illustrates the complexity of race, racial identity and ethnicity. Kaden considers herself Black, but not African American due to her father's first-generation status as a Panamanian and the importance and significance of their cultural traditions. Although Kaden does not explicitly identify as African American, she is still connected to her African American culture through her mother. Like many folks from the African Diaspora, Kaden chooses to distance herself from the African American experience:

> I chose to identify that way just because my father was born there, all my siblings were born there, all my family was born there, but a lot of generations passed that were from Barbados and then came to Panama. And so obviously in Panama the language is Spanish, the culture is Spanish and so that's where that part came from and obviously my mother's African American, so that's kinda like how I identify that.

Kaden primarily adopted the racial identity of her father's family, Afro-Latina. When completing the identity portion of various government and educational documents, Kaden asserts a collectivist and communal decision-making process by stating "We'll say when we fill things out, Black, because we think that Black is different than African American so that's a big part of it."

Kaden discussed the challenges that she experiences as an Afro-Latina who does not present as Latinx in her physical appearance. "If you look at me, you can't tell. So that's a big thing. Most people wouldn't suspect that I'm also Hispanic, so that's kind of something that I often deal with." Kaden (and her father) often get stares from friends and strangers when she answers her phone and speaks Spanish to family members. "… That's something that I've had to deal with socially for a while and so does my dad because my dad doesn't look it [Latino] either. It's just kind of a part our lives. People use our appearances to make judgements about it." When asked how she responds to stares and questions about her identity, she makes a distinction between strangers, who she ignores, and friends:

> Usually with my friends, they'll approach me kindly and be like, "Oh, I didn't know that you were Hispanic. I didn't know that you could speak

> Spanish." Then I'll inform them like, "Yeah, I'm also Panamanian" so that's why I can speak Spanish.

Additionally, Kaden recalls being “the only one” in her classroom. Whether she was in predominately white spaces or more racially diverse spaces with monoracial Black and Latinx folks, she often felt isolated by her multiple heritages which separated her from her African American or Latinx classmates.

Educational Background

Kaden struggled with her racial identity growing up in school. Beginning her educational journey in predominately white private schools, Kaden said it was “completely normal to be the only black person in the class.” Being in classrooms with all white students caused Kaden to reflect on the challenges she experienced trying to fit in and make sense of her unique qualities that were often not celebrated:

> …when you're young, it's hard to kinda like, you see everyone around you in private school and they're white and they have different body builds than you, they have different hair than you, they look different than you, so I feel like I had some sort of identity crisis for sure when I was younger.

Although Kaden struggled to fit into an all-white world early on, she noticed a cosmic shift in her confidence and identity formation when she shifted to a predominately Black middle and high school. Kaden recounts feeling “more comfortable,” “less conflicted with who I was,” and how being in more inclusive and racially diverse environments helped to shape her as a woman. Kaden’s public school also had more Latinx students which allowed her to connect with other parts of her identity:

> They [public and private school] were both still very great schools but it [her public school] was a lot more diverse than private school was. So, I think that being surrounded by more people that look like me, that I can relate to, a lot of Hispanics that I could talk to and a lot more Black people, I just think it made the experience a lot better for me.

Although she is from [State], Kaden did not initially want to enroll at the flagship institution. Kaden did not want to follow what she saw as the traditional pathway of other [State] residents, to apply to State University, however, after considering the value State University offered (i.e. in-state tuition and quality of education) she ultimately chose to enroll and pursue a degree in Dietetics.

Campus Racial Climate

The year prior to Kaden's arrival to college, State University was mired in racial controversaries from racist, sexist emails circulating among white fraternities, a noose found in an on-campus white fraternity house and the death of a Black visiting student. Needless-to-say Kaden's perception of the campus racial climate was "rough" and always in the back of her mind. "It's rough. And I think it was especially rough in light of everything that happened the year before last year and coming in as a freshman, it was intimidating of course…" Additional incidents following her enrollment such as the recent death of a Black student athlete led Kaden to describe the campus racial climate as "a lot more tense" with little progress in sight. Aside from larger campus wide incidents, Kaden recounted her experiences seeing "it's okay to be white" stickers littered on poles around campus. Kaden described seeing these stickers firsthand as having a "different feel to it." Kaden discussed the difference between hearing about racist incidents on

campus prior to her enrollment and witnessing certain incidents herself. The impact of seeing white nationalist stickers had a stronger, more negative, impact on her perception of the campus racial climate than simply hearing about previous incidents.

Sorority Experience

Although Kaden initially had no intentions of joining a GLO when she first came to college, she attended a "Meet the Greeks" event first semester which, "started forming [her] opinions about it and if it was something that [she] really wanted to do and just started reading up on it because [she] knew nothing about it." Kaden made the decision to rush a predominately white sorority understanding that she would likely be one of the only Person of Color in rush and ultimately one of the only Women of Color in her chapter. Kaden felt more comfortable in her chapter than perhaps she would have felt in another because "my sorority is probably one of the most diverse PanHellenic ones." She was hyper aware of her decision to rush PHA because "when you're also a minority in that community, it tackles on a whole new set of concerns." Kaden's mother also expressed concerns about her safety given the negative national press concerning sexual assault and racist acts in white Greek letter organizations and a fear Kaden would not be fully accepted into a predominately white sorority.

Prior to rushing her chapter, Kaden used her intuition to determine the best fit for her, stating "when I wanted to make the decision to go through recruitment with Pan Hellenic, I felt like being part of the change in that kind of community was actually like going into it and seeing what it's like and then making a change from there." She believed joining a PHA organization would not result in "huge incidents" that would endanger her or give her cause for concern. Instead she sought to change the culture from within.

Thankfully, Kaden describes her sorority as "understanding" and "inclusive" and the women as "authentic" and "genuine." She felt drawn to their philanthropic partnership with Girls on the Run, which seeks to support middle school girls:

> Inspiring them [middle school girls] to be strong and just be confident in themselves and just from being their age, I wanted someone like that, so it's cool to be that someone for them to, so that was probably the first big thing where I was like, 'I really wanna join this sorority.'

Kaden recalled her challenges fitting in and belonging in middle school and felt having college aged mentors and role models would have benefited her during those formative years. Kaden connected with the mission and vision of the philanthropic partnership which only solidified her desire to align with her sorority.

Kaden never considered joining a historically Black or Latinx sorority (both of which correspond to her racial identity). Contradicting previous statements, Kaden expressed her belief that PHA organizations were comprised of a more diverse population. She stated PHA women "not only looked different [diverse] but have just a bunch of different interests." The underlining assumption is that NPHC and MGC organizations are racially and perhaps socially homogenous. Kaden was seeking "a little bit of everything" and felt PHA was a "better fit" rather than organizations that, in her mind, were "just one demographic."

Racially, Kaden encountered isolationism by being the only Black women in her pledge class leaving her wishing she was "someone else," and exoticized by white men in fraternities for "looking different." Kaden recalls overhearing a man from a fraternity at a social gathering in partnership with her sorority say, "Oh my God it's so cool that there's

a Black girl here." Kaden also felt tokenized when she was asked to serve as the Diversity and Inclusion chair position in her chapter. According to Kaden, this position is required for all PHA chapters and is held exclusively by Women of Color.

Reflections

At several points throughout the interview, Kaden contradicts herself stating that she feels most comfortable in racially diverse (predominately Black and Brown spaces) yet voluntarily chose to rush only predominately white sororities thus inserting herself into predominately white spaces within her already predominately white campus.

Kaden makes assumptions about the diversity within NPHC and MGC organizations yet neglects to acknowledge, fully, the lack of diversity within her own organizations and the council as a whole.

Additionally, Kaden shares the deeper connections present between other Black and brown members of her sorority so much so that she stated:

> Of course I have a good relationship with the people that are normally in my sorority but like, we [Black women in her chapter], you know, you just, same experiences, same things that come with being in a PHA sorority that you just know they understand and so like when you talk with them, I was close with them before I was close with anyone else you know? So, and just knowing they're always gonna be there for you, we have a group chat of just the Black women in the sorority. And it's great, I love it.

Kaden noted the one Latina member, who she also shares a close connection with, is not part of the Black group chat. She implies adding her would be inappropriate (i.e. to have a group chat with all Women of Color from the sorority). Although Kaden has found

community and solace with a group of Black women in her chapter, she excludes her Latina sister from this opportunity even though, as an Afro-Latina, she admittedly has a unique ability to connect with both Black and Latina women.

When asked if Kaden ever considered joining a NPHC or MGC organization, Kaden implied that these organizations are homogenous unlike her chapter which consists of, "so many different types of people that not only looked different but have just a bunch of different interests as well," which better aligns with her Multiracial background. Kaden's assumption that NPHC and MGC organizations are "just one demographic" and perhaps holds less valued-add for her, neglects the obvious linkage between her group chat and the sheer presence and persistence of Greek letter organizations created for African American, Asian American and Latinx students alike. In her own words, the presence of Black and Latinx members in her chapter is also really helpful. She went on to say, "I think that, just having Black and Latino people in the sorority, having two people that understand your background is really helpful and just being able to talk to her about her home life and her parents and how it's just so similar to me."

Molly

I'm very, very, very, proud of my family and my background. I do not have many friends who are Biracial or Multiracial… so to me, it's something that really gives me a proudness of where I come from.

Family Background

Molly is the daughter of a Chilean and English mother and Indian father. Molly is proud of her Multiracial background and the cultures that make up her racial identity. Although Molly recounts how she had "no one to relate to" in grade school, Molly

connected with her two siblings who share her racial identity. Molly grew up in predominately white neighborhoods. The friendships she maintained throughout grade school later influenced her collegiate and GLO decisions.

Racial Identity

As a senior in college ready to embark on her career journey, Molly has come to take great pride in her Multiracial identity. Molly strongly identifies with her Latinx, white and Indian roots and proudly asserts her Multiracial identity. This was not always the case. Growing up in predominately white spaces (school and neighborhood) meant that communicating her family heritage to others was difficult. Molly explained that her friend groups from primary to post-secondary school were predominately white. Although Molly is white-passing, the lack of racial diversity throughout her educational journey has made her "stand out" as the sole Person of Color in her peer and friend groups.

Similar to many Multiracial and Biracial folks, marking one's racial identity on forms and tests can be a difficult act. Molly recalled how challenging it was to mark her full racial heritage on forms and her feelings about the negotiation process she developed when she was unable to select all of her racial heritages. This is particularly true for Molly because of the level of pride she developed in her racial identity over time. She now feels an overwhelming sense of confidence in being "different" from her monoracial peers. Molly recounted her strong connection and pride for her father's Indian culture. She marked the constant influence Indian customs and traditions played in her childhood and how what was once a source of bullying turned into a source of pride and admiration. Similar to most Multiracial students, educational institutions sparked the catalyst for

questioning race, racial classifications, and racial identity development generally. Molly is no exception.

Educational Background

Molly attended predominately white, private institutions throughout grade school. She maintained predominately white friend groups throughout her educational journey which carried into her time in college. While Molly asserted high levels of comfort in predominately white spaces, she did notice and celebrate friendships with People of Color. She referenced one Ethiopian (monoracial Black) friend in grade school who played a pivotal role in her life.

Several factors contributed to Molly's decision to attend State University. She felt a distinct level of comfort at SU given both of her parents and older sister previously attended the institution. Frequent visits as a child made the campus feel "like home." Additionally, given that SU is a public, in-state institution, the cost of attendance was a large factor in Molly's college choice process.

Campus Racial Climate

Molly's educational background impacted the way she views State University. Coming from nearly all white institutions to entering a large, flagship university, Molly believed that State University is a "very diverse place although others may not feel the same." Molly holds a positive view of SU's campus racial climate and refrained from mentioning any of the hate crimes that took place on campus over the years. Molly's perception of the university coincides with her overall disposition about the lack of impact race and racism have had on her life (i.e. colorblind rhetoric). Additionally, Molly

discussed a growing increase of “acceptance” of People of Color by white folks on campus although she provided no concrete examples.

Sorority Experience

Molly joined a white Greek letter organization. Molly’s sorority sisters describe her as charismatic, hard-working and goofy. Interestingly enough, Molly never intended to join a sorority while in college based on her more “outdoorsy” interests and less “girly” persona. Molly claimed that outdoor activities and horseback riding are her preferred activities which she believed to be antithesis to “typical” sorority culture. Molly was exposed to sorority life due to her older sister’s participation in a Greek letter organization while she attended SU. Although her sister later disaffiliated from her sorority, the initial exposure created a layer of comfort in the process for Molly given that her sister had gone through the process and had demystified the process for her which ultimately contributed to her awareness and decision to “try out” the process. Molly also cited peer pressure (i.e. did not want to be the only person in her friend group not to attend rush activities) as another catalyst to membership.

Molly mentioned instantly feeling connected to her sorority due to the racial diversity of its membership. Specifically, the first woman Molly was matched with in her sorority during recruitment was a Black woman. A connection developed between the two which contributed to her comfort levels with the organization. She felt welcomed and as though she could show up as her authentic self which is not a typical feeling for women who participate in rush activities.

Reflections

Molly lacked a critical awareness of the campus racial climate and the state of GLOs in general. Molly neglected to address any racist incidents on campus, suggesting a lack of awareness or obliviousness not shared by her peers. Her colorblind perspective upheld the notion that SU was a progressive institution while other participants expressed the exact opposite perspective even by other women in WGLOs. This may speak to the desensitized nature of racist acts in recent years. Her recollection of her K-12 experiences mirrored this inclusive and positivist rhetoric. Molly asserted that no one in her K-12 environment was prejudiced or rude to her even though she was always made aware she was "different" within the predominately white spaces she constantly found herself in throughout her upbringing. Molly felt both hyperawareness of her racial differences with peers, among her boyfriend's family and in school, she also expressed a constant sense of belonging and comradery with all she encountered. Constant contradictions evoke an incongruence in her experiences. Additionally, Molly phenotypically appears more white passing than not which may have contributed to her more benevolent experiences throughout her time at SU than her peers expressed as Women of Color at a PWI and as a member of a predominately white sorority.

Ashley

I embraced both sides of my identity. My African-American culture was just as present as my Puerto Rican culture.

Family Background

Ashley, Black and Puerto Rican, is a transfer student and member of a Latina sorority at SU. Ashley is a first-generation college student. She was raised by her Puerto Rican father and African American mother. Ashley also has an older half-brother from

her mother whom her father raised as his own. Her parents met while serving in the military. As a military family, Ashley grew accustomed to living in different parts of the world, from Missouri to Kansas and South Korea to Germany. Each new destination contributed to her worldview. Ashley's family was eventually stationed in State. To this day, Ashley feels the most grounded and connected to State, claiming it as her "home" when folks ask. Ashley's experience as a Biracial woman and in an interracial family differed depending on her geographic location and the context associated with that location. For example, she lived in rural, predominately white parts of the United States or racially homogenous cities in South Korea in which in both cases these communities rarely saw Black and Latinx people, let alone interracial families. Conversely, moving to State, which is a more urban, racially diverse state, she found her family racial dynamics were less of an anomaly.

Racial Identity

Ashley identifies as Afro-Latina, Puerto Rican and Black, or Mixed. Each term allows her to assert her racial heritages in various ways:

> To be Mixed, what that means to me, I think it means just coming from two different cultures, two different just as equally beautiful cultures and everything that encompasses that, like I was talking about, the food, the music, the mannerisms, even body language.

Her parents strongly emphasized her Puerto Rican and African American heritages and cultural traditions equally. The celebration of both racial/ethnic groups throughout her upbringing gave Ashley the confidence to claim both heritages "equally." Ashley's older brother is Black but, according to Ashley, he shares a similar Multiracial

experience and identity as Ashley. Her brother was similarly raised in a Puerto Rican and Black household which celebrated and embraced the cultural traditions, history and language of both their parents.

Ashley gets frustrated completing applications or forms that require her to indicate her racial heritage because oftentimes the forms utilize traditional census race and ethnicity categories. Specifically, she is confused by the US governments' distinction between race and ethnicity. She believes that her response never encapsulates her full racial identity and thus she will alternate her response between claiming Latina ethnicity or an African American/Black race if she cannot claim both. She opts for these forms of identification rather than indicating "Other." Ashley is confused by the US government designation of Hispanic as an ethnicity while Black is considered a race.

Ashley's racial identity was impacted by her educational trajectory. For Ashely, her Biracial heritage was not accepted throughout grade school (K-12). Ashley felt pressure to claim to be either Latina or Black (not both) at any given time which was difficult since both were celebrated at home and her family instilled in her that she was Black *and* Puerto Rican:

> I think the concept of being Mixed and being equally one part as you are the other, is a generally [a] new concept. So, growing up, it was constant pressure to pick one like, "You're one or the other. You can't be both." So, that was definitely a thing growing up. It was just always being kind of confusing to people. People could never really ... It was the most taboo thing ever. I myself, as a kid, couldn't understand like, "Why is it so hard for you

> to understand?" Because I've been understanding it since I was a kid, you know?

The challenges Ashley experienced in her racial identity development throughout grade school were exacerbated by geographic location given that her family was unconventional in those spaces. After moving to State and subsequently enrolling in college, Ashley discovered that interracial families and Biracial children were far more accepted and common. Although, finding Multiracial peers was more common in State, they were primarily of Black and white heritage, not Black and Latinx. Not sharing the same Multiracial “mix” created additional layers of isolationism for Ashley as she began to navigate her racial identity in what she perceived to be a more racially diverse space.

Educational Background

Ashley had a non-traditional educational trajectory. Ashley attended school on various military bases in her formative years. She is a first-generation college student. Both of her parents and brother enlisted in the military which gave Ashley the opportunity to attend school for free through the GI Bill. Although Ashley did not claim any state or region as “home,” she has lived in State the longest of any place and feels most connected to her state university. Her connection to her state university informed her desire to attend SU:

> That's why I wanted to go to the flagship university, [it] was because being in the military and never really having a home, once you finally get one, you're really proud of it. I was like, "Ah, I want to go to the [State University]. I want to be a [school mascot]. That's the school of [state

> name]. I'm a [resident of her state] now," or whatever. But this is a very hard school to get into, at the time. I don't know what it is like now.

Ashley's high school guidance counselor deterred her from applying to State University and other in-state schools because he thought she was not academically admissible. Ashley "was a much less confident person back then." So, Ashley applied to two out-of-state schools, although she wanted to attend State University. She was admitted to one university for the spring semester and directly admitted to the other for the fall semester. Given the significance of attending college right away, she chose to attend the institution she was directly admitted into, West State University (WSU) (pseudonym). Institutional fit was not a consideration for Ashley. Instead she enrolled because she could begin college immediately. Ashley instantly regretted her decision to attend WSU. She felt isolated on campus and lacked connection with other students on campus. The personal pressure she imposed on herself to earn a college degree meant that she "could not fail." She used that internal pressure to fuel her drive to earn high academic marks throughout her first year in hopes of transferring to the State University.

Ashley successfully transferred to the State University enrolling officially in her sophomore year. An Information Science major, Ashley wasted no time maximizing opportunities to become academically integrated into the institution. A highly motivated student, Ashley currently serves as a student ambassador for the Information Science program. Similar to her approach at West State University, Ashley continued to seek academic support and mentorship from faculty. Although transfer students typically struggle to get academically and socially integrated into their new university, Ashley

leveraged skills and techniques from West State University to make up for lost time. Ashley stated:

> I'm a late bloomer. My entire college experience has been a late bloomer. My everything has been late. I got here late. I declared my major late. I pledged late. Everything, I did late, but it's fine, because I think everything was the perfect timing.

Campus Racial Climate

Although eager to attend State University, she was not excited to enter an institution with what she described as having a "terrible" campus racial climate. Given that Ashley is a "super senior" on campus, she has the ability to reflect on the climate changes over time. Specifically, Ashley noticed a significant difference in the campus racial climate on campus after the 2016 presidential election. She claimed after Trump won the election; it was "socially acceptable to be openly racist" at the State University.

Ashley described various racist incidents that took place on campus from general acts impacting all students to specific incidents within the Greek community. Ashley provided many concrete examples of the tension and hostility she witnessed on campus (more so than Kaden and definitely an opposite perspective than Molly, perhaps due to the fact that Ashley is a member of a Latinx sorority and thus more involved with Communities of Color in which conversations about racism are likely more prevalent). Ashley described seeing flyers and chalking on sidewalks throughout campus with the words "Deport Dreamers." This is particularly triggering for Ashley because many of her sorority sisters are DACA recipients. Ashley shared her frustration with the existence of [SU] for Trump, a student organization, who brought speakers onto campus who

propagated a more racially hostile campus environment. Further compounding Ashley's fear and resentment towards the university, Ashley described the recent death (murder) of two African American students, who both died on campus.

Ashley went on to describe racist incidents that specifically took place within the (white) Greek community. She recalled the racist email sent out by men in a white fraternity openly describing Women of Color in derogatory, racist and sexist terms. Ashley also explained the "Black Cap." The "Black Cap" is a quota system implemented by white fraternities which only allow a certain number of Black students into white fraternity parties. Ashley insisted the racist incidents taking place on campus are particularly rampant within the predominately white Greek letter communities. She asserted racist acts are perpetuated and covered up by the institution.

Ashley discussed the challenges facing the larger Greek letter community at the University in terms of lack of cross council interaction. Given that Greek organizations and the councils that oversee them are racialized, Ashley believed there is a lack of cross racial interactions among students affiliated with GLOs. According to Ashley, the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life (DFSL) force interaction between councils but these interactions are "not meaningful." For example, MGC/NPHC do not feel comfortable around Fraternity Row (location on campus where majority white fraternities live) or among IFC (predominately white fraternities) organizations given various racist incidents that take place in these areas.

According to Ashley, Students of Color at the State University elect to self-segregate out of fear. Affinity based student groups hold their own events in hopes of limiting interaction across race. The reality of monoracial student organizations creates

challenges for Multiracial students like Ashley who desire spaces to celebrate all of her full racial heritages. Ashley does admit that cross racial interaction between the Latinx and Black communities are more prevalent, more collaborative, more friendly, and that these groups are more likely to create coalitions rather than the white community which specifically is works to her benefit over perhaps folks with white heritage.

Sorority Experience

Ashley did not consider joining a sorority until she transferred from WSU to SU. She first decided to join Greek life second semester sophomore year in hopes of building meaningful community after transferring. Ashley did not have her sights set on any particular sorority when she made the decision to join. Instead, she researched national organizations and specific chapter contexts at SU to determine the best fit. Ashley "automatically" eliminated all PHA organizations from her search. Ashley felt since she was already at a "PWI [there was] no need to join a PHA organization." She desired a connection to her culture, authentic relationships, a true sisterhood (given that she only has a brother) and a "lifelong commitment;" all factors which she believed did not align with PHA organizations. At the time of her search, Ashley was unaware of the existence of the Multicultural Greek Council and Latina sororities, thus Ashley began her search exclusively exploring the two largest and most active NPHC organizations at SU, Alpha Kappa Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Ashley was also heavily influenced by her partner, a member of a NPHC (historically Black) fraternity. He shared his perspective as a seasoned member of a GLO and encouraged Ashley not to rush into her decision to join a sorority given the importance and lifelong impact of her decision. He also discussed the differences in

organization from a reputation standpoint and in terms of the requirements to get into the organization. He thought Ashley would benefit most from chapters that required a more rigorous membership intake process. Additionally, he believed she would garner more respect from the Greek community as a whole if she joined an organization that fit his description rather than others that were "easier" to join. Based on this advice, Ashley determined she wanted to join a sorority with a challenging membership intake process that could help her grow and develop personally, professionally and ultimately help her build resilience.

Ashley first discovered Latina sororities at SU's annual Block Show held in the spring semester of her sophomore year. A Block Show is a one-day, annual celebration which showcases NPHC and MGC sororities and fraternities through stepping and strolling amongst the greater SU community. Ashley ultimately chose to join a Latina sorority instead of a Black sorority because she believed that she had many opportunities on campus to stay connected and celebrate her Blackness at SU rather than her Latinx heritage. Ashley used her sorority affiliation to maintain connections to her Latina culture/identity which she felt was overshadowed/lost in college due to the visibility and larger presence of the Black community:

> I started having this homesickness for my Latino family specifically, because there is Black [SU]. That's a thing. There's Juke Joint, [a Black cultural center]. The Black [SU] community is very, very close. I never felt like I was missing in that part of my culture.

Ashley eventually joined a Latina sorority (Lambda). Lambda had a strong presence and reputation at SU. They maintained strong relationships with NPHC

organizations which afforded Ashley with an opportunity to preserve relationships with folks in the Black and Latinx community without compromising or isolating any part of her identity. Lambda afforded Ashley the opportunity to embrace her Latinx heritage in various ways. Ashley practices speaking Spanish with her sorority sisters; shares in similar cultural references, traditions and cuisine; and watches telenovelas all of which connects her to her Puerto Rican heritage.

Ashley went on to explain her decision to joining a Latina sorority,

> I ultimately ended up choosing [Lambda], because that's ... It was so easy for me to stay connected to both of my cultures when I was at home and it was kind of being forced down my throat. My father was constantly there cooking, or playing salsa or bachata, whatever it may be. Then, I came to school, and it's like that whole part of me was gone, but I still had the Black side of my culture. No one spoke Spanish, no one that listened to that kind of music.

Reflections

Ashley's racial consciousness and ability to articulate her racial identity appeared to be more developed than previous participants. Ashley identified many areas of inequity within the Greek letter community and SU's administration. She believed MGC is the least supported council. Unlike other participants, particularly in WGLOs, Ashley's decision to join Lambda was unapologetically based on her racial heritage, desire to align with her culture and heritage and a conscious decision that joining Lambda would provide the outlet she needed to stay connected to her Puerto Rican culture while away from home. Ashley thought she had multiple outlets to unite, celebrate and connect with

her African American heritage at SU thus her decision to join Lambda was based on her desire to maintain similar connections to her Puerto Rican heritage.

Ashley's racialized experiences with Lambda began her decision-making process to join and continue as a member of the organization. Ashley's experience is an example of denial of a Multiracial identity perpetuated by the GLO system. The negotiation process Ashley endured to select her sorority was calculated given that Ashley believed she could only choose to join organizations that represented *part* of her racial heritages rather than all. When negotiating the process of which council and organization to join, Ashley strategically found that Lambda celebrated women with multiple ethnic and racial heritages, not just Latinx, which helped her feel represented and welcomed.

Jenny

Sometimes I forget that I'm Asian and I have to remind myself.

Family Background

Jenny, a senior International Business major joined a predominately white sorority in her first year. Her mom was born in South Korea and moved to the United States when she was 12 years old. Her father, Mexican American, grew up in foster care in California. Jenny's parents met in Germany while serving in the US Army and they both used the GI Bill to eventually put themselves through college. Jenny and her older sister were raised by their parents and maternal grandmother. Jenny's grandmother instilled pride in Korean culture by incorporating cultural traditions into their daily life, including Korean food, language, and Korean church. Jenny always felt disconnected from her Mexican heritage since her father did not grow up immersed in the Mexican culture nor did he speak Spanish.

> My mother is, I guess, you could say more Korean than my dad is Mexican because my mom speaks Korean, she's the one who cooks, she makes our food. I'm not really sure if that's the root but I'm always very reluctant to say that I am Hispanic just because I don't on the surface level look it.

Jenny's father is further removed from his Mexican heritage because he grew up on foster care.

In addition to growing up with her parents, older sister and grandmother, Jenny shared a common Multiracial experience with her cousins on her mother's side. Coming from a family with multiple interracial unions resulting in numerous Multiracial children, Jenny defined her family as "very Multiracial." Although Jenny defined her family as particularly multicultural, she mentioned they do not discuss race in her extended and immediate family.

Racial Identity

Jenny holds a monoracial Asian identity. Although she acknowledged and will share with close peers her full racial heritage, Jenny asserted a monoracial, Asian, racial identity due to her phenotype. Jenny stated

> I guess just from surface level I look significantly more Asian than I do Hispanic. I feel that's something that's always been kind of ... I'm almost reluctant when I, for example, with my new job when I graduate, they have a bunch of cohorts for different racial identities or just identities, in general. One of them is a Hispanic cohort. Even the same on campus we have one in the business school. I'm always reluctant to join those [organizations] which is weird because I am half and half.

Jenny found it "awkward" or "difficult" to be accepted as Mexican, so she preferred to identify as Asian. Interestingly, Jenny consistently referenced the need, throughout her life, to be reminded of her race by others. Jenny has always occupied predominately white spaces throughout K-12 and college and as a result of being surrounded by predominately white folks, she sometimes “forgets” she is Asian and even more so “I really forget I’m Mexican. I really do.”

Additionally, Jenny reflected on her experiences growing up with her grandmother and attending Korean church. While it reinforced her Korean identity, the experience also made her uncomfortable at times. While Jenny certainly felt uncomfortable in Latinx spaces, she also felt uncomfortable in some monoracial Korean spaces because she did not know the language. Jenny self-imposed various cultural authenticity tests which prevented her from feeling like a full member in either racialized space. Such interactions pushed her towards predominately white spaces which she inferred were race-less and culture-less, i.e. neutral spaces where she felt more comfortable navigating.

Educational Background

Jenny grew up in a racially diverse community prior to attending college. Although surrounded by primarily Asian, Indian and white peers, her friend groups always remained predominately white. According to Jenny, "nobody ever really made me feel like I wasn't white or a part of the group because of my background."

As previously mentioned, Jenny’s entire family attended State University. While it was not her only choice of schools, she eventually selected SU because she felt comfortable. Additional motivations to attend SU included admittance into the

competitive business school at SU and in-state tuition status. Since Jenny's parents used their GI Bill for their education, Jenny took it upon herself to pay her own college tuition thus cost was an important part of Jenny's college choice decision making process.

Additionally, Jenny was admitted into a living-learning community upon admittance into State University which, in retrospect, perfectly aligned with her interests in cross-cultural understanding and exploration. The living-learning community was comprised of students from various backgrounds who also embraced diverse perspectives and cultures. This community became the catalyst for Jenny's major, International Business, and her decision to study abroad for a semester in her junior year.

Campus Racial Climate

Jenny acknowledged the numerical diversity at State University but shared she thought there was a lack of sincerity in the university's approach to fostering inclusivity. Jenny cited the various racial incidents on campus over the past four years as an example of the university's lack of intentionality to make the climate better.

Jenny can feel this lackluster approach to diversity at all levels, from the president to the student body. Aside from campus-wide incidents, Jenny personally experienced racist remarks from a professor and even from students in GLOs. However, Jenny believed the professors in her academic department did a "better job" addressing diversity and inclusion in a more meaningful way than simply creating programs to "look good."

Sorority Experience

Jenny attended rush events in her first year at the very last minute due to the peer pressure of her roommate. Although she never intended to join a sorority upon entering SU, Jenny believed sorority life afforded her the opportunity to build community with

women which she historically had difficulty doing in secondary school. Jenny's friend groups were male dominated. Finally, Jenny was influenced by the fact that her mother was unable to participate in many of the "typical" college activities when she attended SU. As the primary caregiver of her younger siblings, a recent wife, mother, and part-time student at the time of her enrollment, Jenny's mother only had time for her academic pursuits. Jenny's mother fully supported her decision to rush a sorority on campus. She used this process as an opportunity to connect with her mother and share her experiences throughout the process of rush and initiation.

Reflections

Language played a big role in Jenny's narrative. This highlights an important aspect of the Multiracial experience. Jenny's racial identity is impacted by her lack of understanding Korean and Spanish, creating barriers to connection and self-imposed cultural authenticity tests. It does not appear any of these Multiracial microaggressions for example, cultural authenticity testing, were imposed on her, but she felt the disconnect and found safety and solitude in white spaces:

> I align with Asian culture or with Korean culture I guess but I don't know that much about it. I don't feel 100 ... Whenever I'm with a bunch of Koreans I don't feel like I'm a part of them. I just feel I'm there. That goes the same when I'm with Hispanic people. It's just a weird in between. It's almost like, oh, let me just go hang out with a bunch of white people.

While some would use college as a vehicle to explore these cultural unknowns, Jenny remained in what she perceived as safe environments in which her racial identity

would not be challenged. In fact, it appears her race was not only rarely challenged but rarely acknowledged at all.

Similar to Kaden, Jenny did create community within her sorority. Particularly noteworthy is her relationship with her roommate. Jenny's closest friend in her chapter is also Korean. Both women felt comfortable sharing their mutual concerns with each other. Specifically, Jenny and her roommate discussed the potential motivations of fraternity men for approaching or neglecting them during social events often linking either rationale to exoticism or racism. Additionally, Jenny mentioned receiving microaggressions from folks "mistaking" her for other Asian women in her organization or being on the receiving end of racial slurs.

Shannon

I don't necessarily feel like I identify with Cape Verdean or Chinese more than the other. I'm half, that's what I am.

Family Background

Shannon, a junior and member of a predominately white sorority was born in Massachusetts to her Cape Verdean mother, and first generation Chinese father. Shannon is the elder sibling to a 15-year-old sister and 11-year-old brother. Shannon grew up in a predominately white, Catholic, Irish suburb outside of Boston. Although Shannon's father's side is racially homogenous, Shannon's mother's side of the family is racially diverse. Shannon mentioned having several Multiracial cousins and found commonality among other racially diverse family members.

Racial Identity

Shannon identifies as Biracial although she "doesn't think about it" since, according to Shannon her racial background "rarely comes up." However, Shannon

mentioned that when folks do question her racial heritage, her response is Chinese and Cape Verdean. The response is often met with follow up questions given that Cape Verdean is an uncommon racial/ethnic category for most people she encounters. Shannon prefers to identify as Biracial because she does not necessarily feel like she identifies with Cape Verdean or Chinese more than the other. “I'm half, that's what I am. And I feel like if I left a part of that out, I wouldn't be me." Shannon states being Biracial is "part of me." While discussing her racial heritages, Shannon often referenced how "cool" it was to be Biracial comparing her ethnicity to that of her friends who are "just white." Shannon believes her Multiraciality better equips her to "get along and relate to more people" because she grew up in a racially diverse home and learned to connect with people from different backgrounds. Counter to most Multiracial scholarship (Basu, 2010; Rockquemore, 2002; Root, 1994), Shannon believes her Biracial status allows her to fit in *more* with others.

According to Shannon, her racial heritage is difficult to guess by others. People have assumed Hawaiian or Filipino. Shannon’s mother and sister are often miscategorized as Indian due to their darker skin complexion. Shannon’s younger sister also identifies as Biracial but has different experiences now that she is in middle school. Shannon shares that her sister experiences more challenges to her racial identity by peers given her darker skin complexion and her phenotype.

Educational Background

Shannon went to a private, predominately white Catholic school until middle school. She later transitioned to a more racially diverse public high school. While in school, Shannon’s friend group was predominately white. Shannon believes her diverse

racial background is a differentiating factor among her friend groups and made her "special" and better able to relate to all people regardless of background. Shannon does not recall any negative racial experiences in grade school and referenced her African American principal and the diversity of teachers in her high school as examples of how she was surrounded and interacted with non-white folks throughout her educational journey.

Shannon's decision to attend State University began when she first attended a lacrosse game at State University in middle school. Shannon always kept SU on her short list of colleges. In addition to early exposure, Shannon also desired an out of state school. She wanted "to go far away" in hopes of not attending college with the "same high school crowd." State University fit her desire for a "big school" that was still "close to family."

Campus Racial Climate

Although Shannon has not been the target of any racial incidents on campus, she did acknowledge the "current political climate" and how that has clearly impacted and in some cases mirrored the challenges on SU's campus. Although Shannon could not point to specific racial incidents, she did mention the importance of protesting and standing up for one's beliefs. Shannon shared a difficult moment in which the president of a fraternity on campus used racist language in a meeting with her chapter president causing, anger and confusion among her chapter sisters against that fraternity member.

Sorority Experience

During high school, Shannon played a number of sports and constantly spent time in teams. In Shannon's first semester of college, while she became very close with her floormates, she felt something was missing. Shannon thought she did not extend herself

enough socially in her first semester and later chose to participate in rush activities as a way to meet more people on campus. After being encouraged to rush by an upper-class student from her hometown and realizing that many of her floormates decided to rush, she joined.

For Shannon, rush was a very uncomfortable process and caused her to "question herself" at times. Shannon ultimately matched with a chapter that she believed was more racially diverse than the others. Additionally, Shannon was drawn by the mission of the chapters' philanthropy and women who maintained a more relaxed and personable disposition:

> I know my sorority has about 30 girls or so that are of color, of Mixed race, which is not that much but it's definitely more than all the other sororities on campus, which I think is why I feel more comfortable because it's like oh, I can identify with some other girls racially.

When asked what ultimately drew her to her predominately white sorority, Shannon stated:

> …definitely diversity because during recruitment, I definitely saw diversity and just like with the people I talked to, everyone was coming from different places and came from different backgrounds and was involved in different things on campus. That was important to me because I definitely wanted to get involved. I know some other sororities have images of all the girls looking the same or just like all of them being involved in the same thing. I was like, that's not what I want.

Although Shannon praised her chapter for being respectful, supportive, open to debate issues and stated her sorority has “no issues with race,” Shannon did admit that "everyone" messes up sometimes implying that one or more women in her chapter had engaged in inappropriate racially charged conversations. Still, Shannon was adamant that her chapter can openly discuss politics, maintains mutual respect across difference and has a strong Diversity and Inclusion chairperson who makes every effort to encourage dialogue within the chapter

Reflections

Shannon consistently stated that her racial background was “pretty cool.” She dictated how she is often asked “What are you?” and is the repository for curious looks and “racial guesses.” Both her response to her own racial background and how it fits amongst a sea of whiteness almost felt exoticizing and her attempt to diminish the multiple racial microaggressions she experienced was disheartening. Additionally, Shannon was on the brink of acknowledging the colorism her sister likely faces in school but was unable to clearly articulate her sister’s experiences in high school as a darker skinned Multiracial woman. Shannon did openly discuss her sister’s encounters with tokenism in school.

Finally, Shannon’s description of the rush process and the lack of diversity within the white Greek system was evident. She stated “some sororities have a "type" of woman they want which she was not interested in, feels like she is referencing the white, blonde, rich chapters that she did not feel comfortable or welcome in - others have mentioned this also - she does directly say the most uncomfortable chapters were the all-white ones.” Shannon clearly found a support system within her chapter. When asked why she stays

she stated "I think it's just a big part of my life right now and my college experience. I'm very involved. All my friends are part of it. I'm recording secretary. I lived in the house last year. I'm going abroad next semester, but I'm living in the house now, so it's like, that's definitely an environment that I enjoy. I just think that it's where all my friends are, and I have a good time."

Maria

I went into recruitment; I always was like hair straightened and perfectly Caucasian the way they wanted it to be.

Family Background

Maria (Latinx and white) is a senior English major in a predominately white sorority at State University. Maria originally attended Eastern State University (pseudonym) before transferring to State Community College (pseudonym) and later State University for the remainder of her studies. Maria was raised by a single mother, first generation Venezuelan. Her father, white, left her family when she was four. Maria was raised embracing the traditional norms, customs, and values of her mother's Venezuelan heritage.

Maria has a younger sister, 19, from both her mother and father and two half siblings, 8 and 6, from her dad and her Guatemalan stepmother. Maria's siblings are all Biracial (white/Latinx). Maria's family dynamics are further complicated by the varied immigration statuses within her family. Maria's mother's immigration status has fluctuated over the years. The current administration's immigration policies forced Maria's mother to be deported to Venezuela after Maria's little sister turned 18 years old. Maria is forced to navigate her racial heritage and the pain and complexity of immigration policies.

Racial Identity

Maria's racial identity has fluctuated over time. Maria is white-passing. Although as Maria describes, she has her mother's physical build, she has red hair, freckles and very light skin. Her physical appearance has informed her experiences. As a child Maria desired a sense of belonging in predominately white spaces and thus embraced her white passing physical appearance and distanced herself from her Latinx heritage. Growing up, Maria equated her Latinx heritage as inferior to whiteness[19]. As time progressed, she began to see value in her Latinx heritage and the community that raised her:

> Choosing to identify as Latina means a lot to me because my whole life I owe to my mother. The way that I've been raised, so it is all encompassing who I am. I eat arepas. I speak Spanish. I love dancing merengue and bachata. That's why I identify because that's the only lifestyle that I know, and I think that plays a huge role into it…

Claiming a white identity has "always been a very hard question" for Maria to answer because she doesn't "feel white." The tension Maria feels regarding her racial identity comes in part because she was raised by her Latina mother and has little to no contact with her "white parent."

> That's the life that I've lived through the Hispanic lens... So, when people ask me, I really confuse ethnicity and racial identification because I didn't live a State (pseudonym) county white life at home. I never did so… It's just very complicated ... which people don't realize ... you look at me, my name's Hannah McCarty, you're like ... I don't even know that part of my life.

Although a sense of belonging was most important to Maria prior to college, now she sees the value in her Latinx heritage and recognizing the cultural capital within her community. After recognizing and acknowledging the hard work and "grit" exercised by her mother and seeing how the Latinx community mobilized around her family during difficult times, Maria began to embrace and celebrate her Latinx heritage. The fact that Maria can speak Spanish fluently aids in her connection and likely feelings of racial authenticity towards her Venezuelan heritage. "A lot of people doubt my racial identity constantly. If I didn't speak to them in Spanish and even then, or show them pictures of my mom, people go, what? And they laugh. Or they're always doubtful. Just always doubtful." Folks question why Maria would *want* to identify as Latina when she *can* identify as white. Maria asserted that she has grown to appreciate and demonstrate pride in her racial/ethnic heritage and prefers not to identify as white. She finds strength and resilience in her identity although others deny her Multiracial identity or question her desire to identify as such.

Educational Background

Maria grew up in racially diverse educational environments. She grew up attending an Argentinian school surrounded by Asian and Indian folks. Maria attended Eastern State University (ESU) in part because of ESU's racial and ethnic diversity. Additionally, Maria was motivated to attend ESU because many of her friends from high school attended and she felt more comfortable in a diverse yet small institutional environment.

Maria left ESU after experiencing the physical and mental trauma of assault the night she officially joined her sorority, second semester of her first year. The trauma of

her experience and the university's handling of the incident forced her to take a semester off to work part-time and take courses at a local community college. Although Maria preferred to attend an out of state school with a superior writing program, financial challenges forced her to attend State University. Although a larger institution with a plethora of resources, Maria did not want to attend another in-state school in which folks knew her from high school. Maria enrolled at State University apprehensively. Her mother, on the other hand, was very happy with her decision to attend school closer to home.

Campus Racial Climate

Maria described State University as a large, diverse yet siloed college campus. Although technically there are more People of Color at SU, she interacted with more POC at ESU because the campus was smaller and had fewer white students. She did not describe any specific incidents on campus but referenced the extreme segregation that takes place on campus and within Greek life that was not present at her first institution.

Sorority Experience

Maria's interest in sororities and fraternities began in 2001 when the blockbuster Legally Blonde came to the big screen. Maria romanticized Elle Woods as the "typical" sorority girl and lawyer. Given that Maria wanted to be a lawyer as well, she immediately embraced the Hollywood personification of sororities. Maria wasted little time and rushed the first chance she could. Greek life was much smaller at ESU with just four possible predominately white sororities from which to choose. Unlike at State University, sororities did not have houses, so rush was far less time consuming, intimidating or awkward as described by participants in WGLOs.

Maria was aware of Latina and Black sororities prior to joining a WGLO although these organizations were also not big at ESU. She deliberately chose to rush white sororities given her connection to the Legally Blonde depiction of sorority culture, but she was exposed to and subsequently appreciated different types of Greek-letter organizations. Although Maria respects the ethnic pride in Latina sororities, she was focused on pop culture embellishments and desired the Legally Blonde type of experience. Maria's motivations to join Greek life were fueled by social outlets rather than community-based action, social justice or ethnic pride.

Given that Maria originally joined her sorority at ESU, she had the option to transfer membership to SU or go through the rush process again to select a different organization. She chose to stay in the same sorority and transfer membership to the SU chapter. Students can experience difficulty integrating socially after transferring from one institution to another. Maria was grateful for the immediate connections Greek life afforded her upon transfer to SU. Although Maria joined a new chapter of the same sorority, Maria expressed frustration with the differences in culture within the new chapter. Maria shared that had she originally rushed at SU, she likely would have sought membership in a few other PHA sororities rather than the one she is in currently citing other chapters may be better "fits" for her and her personality. Specifically, she referenced frustration in the "cookie cutter" type of women her sorority sisters sought out during rush rather than an attempt to truly diversify membership. For example, although the sorority was founded by 4 Jewish women it is not an exclusionary sorority for only Jewish women. At ESU, her chapter was predominately Catholic women but very racially

diverse. At State University, the chapter is predominately Jewish and has become less diverse.

Reflections

Maria's narrative is the clearest depiction of a denial of Multiracial identity. Although Maria was raised by her Venezuelan mother and was immersed in the cultural traditions, language and customs of her mother's home county, her experiences were not acknowledged by her sorority sisters. She would constantly remind her white and Latina sorority sisters of her racial heritage, but they would consistently "forget."

One example of this denial was Maria's desire to be paired with Women of Color prospective sorority members during recruitment. Maria was upset her racial heritage was not acknowledged or taken into account when pairing her with prospective new members as is done with other People of Color members in WGLOs. Maria later confronted her sorority sisters about her frustration and feelings of not being seen particularly as it relates to diversity and inclusion within the chapter.

Another important point of comparison among participants is Maria's decision to stay in her chapter although she has physically distanced herself from many of the daily activities. Maria specifically referenced the responsibility she feels to stay in the chapter until graduation as a means of solidarity with other Women of Color who may not be happy in the chapter:

> to help the people who are the newer members in the chapter who still are that outlier ... still somehow fit that outlier mold, but they came in checking off the boxes even though it's not all them. To let them know, you're not the only one.

Kaden referenced her desire to serve as a visible representative for Women of Color prospective new members to join her chapter. Both Maria and Kaden expressed a hope that their presence in their respective chapters will serve as a catalyst to encourage other Women of Color women to join their chapters. They both invoke language suggesting that their position as one of few People of Color in their organizations has a greater purpose: to increase the diversity, sense of belonging and level of comfort to join PHA organizations for other Women of Color in the future.

Maria's interview demonstrates the growth in her identity development. Maria's identity shifted from "reluctant" Latinx to pride in her racial heritage after learning to appreciate the struggle and grit of her mother, after watching family and friends come to her aid and her mother when her mother lost her job. Maria believed she had to prove her racial identity by speaking Spanish or showing pictures of her mom. For Maria, "It's very hard 'cause I feel like I have to prove that I'm something even though I know."

Maria's racial consciousness is more developed that of her counterparts in white sororities because of her lived experience in a multi-status family of immigrants. Maria is continuing to unpack and wrestle with her racial identity, feelings of abandonment, being "forgotten" as a Woman of Color, and her physical appearance as a white passing woman. Maria is a prime example of the tensions that can exist for Multiracial people.

Beau

Joining my organization was, and still is, very pivotal in helping me learn more and be who I am.

Family Background

Beau graduated in 2015 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Supply Chain Management. She is a member of a historically Black sorority. Beau identifies as

Biracial. Her mother is white, Finlandian ancestry, and her father is a naturalized citizen originally from Zambia. Beau and her younger brother were raised by both parents in predominately white communities. Beau had the least connection to her father's side of the family, as their geographic location in Zambia left little opportunity to visit. As a result, Beau was not exposed to her Black/Zambian cultural traditions growing up and thus always felt disconnected from what it means to be a Black immigrant or a Black person in the US. Beau's lack of exposure to her Zambian heritage, coupled with her lack of exposure to African American traditions and culture, made her feel disconnected from her "Black side" entirely.

Racial Identity

Beau's racial identity development is informed by the many places she lived. She identifies as Black within a US context. Before high school, Beau grew up in racially diverse communities such as Hawaii and Guam in which race was less viewed as "Black and white" and her sense of belonging as a Multiracial girl was accepted. Beau's formative years in a predominately white high school caused her to "conform to certain ways and cultures" in hopes of "fitting in." The geographic and demographic shifts in Beau's primary and secondary educational journey deeply informed her racial identity development.

Beau does claim a Biracial identity. Although folks may perceive her to be Black, she was raised in predominately white environments and thus feels connected to "white culture." Beau goes on to say, "I don't feel like I fit into the white classification. I don't feel like I fit into the Black classification and I have two different races that mixed, that like make me. So that's why I identify as Biracial." College was the first time Beau was

exposed to what she characterizes as “Black” culture and the differences between African American and African culture which added nuance to Beau’s experience. Beau explained:

> First, was just [learning about] Black culture and [what it means] being Black in the US. And then secondly, it was like the difference between African cultures and African American cultures. I'm still trying to figure out the line, or not even the line, but just the differences between the two and how they get mashed into the same, depending on who you're talking to. And recognizing that the way that I grew up was very, very different from both of those. Both of those cultures, and when someone looks at me, they're like, oh, I bet that you were raised this way, or you were raised that way. But it's totally not true. I was raised very differently.

Beau’s experience as a Biracial African/white woman in predominately white neighborhoods in the US provide a unique backdrop for her racial identity development and subsequent experiences in college. Learning how to navigate being Black in the US in addition to feeling the stark void of missing out on Zambian cultural traditions left unshared by her first generation Zambian father resulted in Beau seeking alternative outlets (i.e. Black student organizations) to develop her identity and make meaning of who she is as a Biracial person.

Educational Background

Beau’s father holds a strong immigrant identity which stressed the importance of getting a good education and resulted in her family sacrificing to ensure Beau and her younger brother attended the best schools. This included moving to neighborhoods they could not necessarily afford to ensure they lived in a good school district. As previously

mentioned, Beau lived in diverse communities' pre-high school, such as New Jersey, Hawaii, Guam, and Maryland. Diverse populations in these areas normalized racial diversity for Beau. Specifically, in Hawaii, although she was one of the only Biracial people in her classes, everyone "literally looks very similar to me" causing her not to question her racial identity as readily as others who may be or be perceived as "the only one."

Beau's transition to high school was a "struggle." Beau enrolled in the advanced (i.e. honors and Advanced Placement) program which was predominately white. Additionally, Beau also joined the theater program in high school which was predominately white. Thus, Beau's friend group was predominately white. She struggled to "fit in" in all white spaces and to create community except for when she was in theater. Theater was an outlet for Beau to develop authentic relationships with peers of all backgrounds.

Beau applied to State University as her safety school with no intentions of attending. After assessing the financial benefits of attending SU coupled with her admission into their selective Business school, she decided SU was the best fit for her and her family. Beau found her niche at SU by getting socially integrated in the Orientation Office and Business School. Beau's involvement on campus exposed her to different communities, lessons about being a Woman of Color in the workforce and how to navigate higher education and future career pathways. Beau also attributes her success and acclimation into the fabric of the university to a strong presence of faculty and staff mentors.

Campus Racial Climate

Beau described the campus racial climate while she was a student as “purring” and “bubbling underneath” the surface. Although she cannot recall explicit racial incidents during her tenure, she believed that racial tensions were emerging after being under the radar. Based on Beau’s description of the campus racial climate, she could have predicted the current hostile racial climate. Beau perceived the climate as “worse and more overt” than when she was in college:

> My experience was very different and it sucks to hear about friends or other students from a community that I identify with, suffering from a horrible experience that happened on campus where you're supposed to feel safe and welcomed and included and supported by your professors and the folks on campus, so it sucks.

Beau stays abreast of the campus racial climate through her sorority sisters who are still on campus, as well as alumna members who live near campus and national news reports. Beau believed the decisions made by the university president are widening the divisions on campus. Beau admitted her longitudinal perception of the campus racial climate must be informed by her colorblind mentality in college which predates joining her predominately Black sorority and subsequently becoming more culturally competent after college. Put simply, Beau believes while in college she was less aware of race and racism and may not have seen issues that existed at the time versus now, she is more informed and socially conscious and now able to recognize issues she was oblivious to before.

Sorority Experience

During her first year of college, Beau distinctly remembers not wanting to join Greek life. At the time, Beau was only familiar with predominately white sororities and fraternities and the stereotypes associated with these organizations such as substance abuse, alcoholism, and racism. "Honestly, I didn't really see a place for myself at the end of the day. They were all… or a majority of the sororities that I knew people joining were white. Most of the people were white."

Beau used her time in college to explore her Black racial heritage through involvement in monoracial Black student organizations such as the Black Student Union and African Student Association. Through her involvement, Beau was exposed to Black Greek organizations or what she characterizes as "meaningful Greek life." She began to learn about the history, mission and significance of BGLOs and discovered that many women she knew (i.e. role models) were members of BGLOs. After discovering the number of influential women in her life who were in a Black sorority and conducting her own research, Beau decided she wanted to join. She goes on to explain the importance of her decision to join a predominately Black sorority:

> Growing up, because I moved a lot, I haven't had very... like I said it's always like the struggle, like where do you fit in? I saw Greek life, like Black Greek life in particular, as something that would stick with me my whole life. A place that I would always be welcome.

Beau ultimately joined the chapter in the Spring semester of her senior year. She regrets not being able to join sooner and spend more time in the chapter as an undergraduate. Beau describes her line sisters and other members of her chapter as

extremely supportive of each other. She admires the chapter's commitment to improving the campus racial climate through activism and their emphasis on social justice. Beau is proud to be associated with an organization that is action-oriented and although she currently lives on the west coast, she tries to support their efforts in meaningful ways from afar.

Reflections

Beau's sorority experience reflects her encounter with various Multiracial microaggressions (i.e. monoracial only paradigm of race, cultural authenticity testing). Beau deliberately joined her sorority in hopes of building a connection with her Black heritage and to build community with other Black and Biracial women. Beau's lack of connection with Black culture prior to joining her chapter resulted in a perception of cultural authenticity testing on the part of her sorority sisters. Beau believed that she needed to "prove" herself more than her other sorors as a Biracial and less "connected" member in an Afro-centric organization. Beau felt constant pressure to be "enough," yet she wanted to maintain her authentic self in the process. One example of Beau wanting to "prove" her place in the organization was her decision NOT to introduce her now fiancé to her sorority sisters for fear they would not accept him because he is white.

Finally, Beau's desire to belong and find "comfort" in her choice of sorority is informed not just by history and role models but also the presence of Biracial women and lighter skinned women in the chapter. Beau saw herself represented in the sorority membership (based on skin color) before seeking membership in the chapter which made her feel as though she would ultimately "fit in."

Indie

I wanted to join a group of girls that empowered each other and especially because there's no voice ... there's not a large voice in the Asian demographic, so I wanted to help raise awareness about Asian American culture, Asian American stories.

Family Background

Indie, Chinese, Taiwanese and white, is a member of an Asian interest sorority at SU. She was raised by her white father and later by her Taiwanese/Chinese mother. Indie has one younger brother from both of her parents and four half siblings, all white, from her father. Indie grew up in predominately white neighborhoods with her father in State until second grade. In second grade, she moved to a more racially diverse community to be raised by her mother, grandmother and aunt. Although difficult to navigate, Indie's relationship with her father has improved as she has gotten older and developed her own independent relationship with him.

Racial Identity

Indie embraces her multiple racial heritages, although growing up, she recalls rejecting her Asian heritage. Indie still struggles with her racial identity. While she acknowledges her white and Asian heritage stating, "I think that I'm made up of both cultures, so that's why I say both," she has not always felt this way. Growing up in State with her white father in predominately white environments, Indie recalls rejecting her Chinese/Taiwanese side. Indie wanted "to be white." Additionally, Indie shared, "I think my [maternal] grandma told me that my dad didn't like Asians when I was younger, so I think that kind of affected why I didn't want to be Asian." These pivotal moments colored her experiences identifying as Biracial in primary and secondary school.

Indie's perception of her Asian heritage shifted when she traveled to Japan with her mother in the fourth grade. Indie was exposed to Japanese culture and began to

develop pride and an appreciation for Asian traditions and specifically her Chinese and Taiwanese culture. "Seeing Asian women as idols because I didn't really have that growing up. So, then I started accepting my Asian side, and now I'm fully accepted."

Indie does believe her European features afford her certain privileges her monoracial Asian peers and even her mother does not experience. Specifically, she believes monoracial Asian people experience a greater level of bias in society due to stereotypes that she rarely encounters. Indie hoped to use her privilege (which led to her decision to join her chapter) to amplify the voices of Asian and Asian American women given that "there's not a large voice in the Asian demographic."

Educational Background

Indie's educational experiences were shaped by the racial diversity or lack of diversity in her respective school systems. She recalled being in predominately white classrooms while living in State with her father and later shifted to predominately Latinx classrooms when she moved to New Jersey. Indie recalled her peers questioning her racial identity in grade school. "One of the things that people would say, sometimes they would say, "Oh, I didn't know you were Asian," like it was a bad thing that I was Asian." Indie stated similar questioning occurring in college. Similar to other participants, Indie applied to SU with no intention of attending the institution. She ultimately decided to attend because her father's residency qualified her for in-state tuition, thus SU became the "cheapest option."

Campus Racial Climate

Indie described SU as being less diverse than she expected. She shared that she was "scared" to attend SU because of the lack of diversity on campus. Indie recounted

being the "only one," meaning the only Asian American student, in her classes perhaps due to her major. Other than a scarcity of minoritized students, Indie believed the campus to be welcoming.

Sorority Experience

Indie's entrance into Greek life was unconventional. Indie never intended on joining a sorority, so instead of participating in rush with the intentions of joining a chapter after, Indie used formal rush as an opportunity to learn about different organizations before making a final decision. Indie first participated in rush for her sorority in the MGC. After not joining her chapter, she rushed the following semester with PHA as well as a professional fraternity. Rushing multiple organizations served as her way of exploring the options to consider before making a lifelong decision.

Indie ultimately joined an Asian American sorority in Fall 2017 because her chapter was ethnically diverse, leaving room for her to feel welcomed as a Multiracial person. Specifically, Indie's sorority intentionally celebrates each ethnic group represented by the sorority membership. One month, her chapter celebrated Indie's Anglo-American heritage with "American" food. Additionally, Indie attributes her decision to join her chapter to "the people." Specifically, Indie cited their warmth, openness, and consistency.

> The main thing are the people and then I also wanted to join a group of girls that empowered each other and especially because there's no voice ... there's not a large voice in the Asian demographic, so I wanted to help raise awareness about Asian American culture, Asian American stories. I also wanted something all encompassing, so I felt like [her sorority] had that

> where we could have service opportunities and leadership opportunities and spread cultural awareness.

Indie feels a strong sense of support amongst her chapter which she did not have before joining.

Additionally, Indie sought a place to belong and a community that would help her embrace her Asian culture specifically. Since Indie was less exposed to her Asian heritage as a child, she believed joining a sisterhood of Asian/Asian American women would allow her to fully embrace a part of her heritage she was previously ambivalent of. Indie explained that after joining her chapter she felt empowered to be surrounded by a group of supportive, like-minded, diverse Asian women. These interactions have positively impacted her identity development. This is illustrated in her ability to "fully accept both sides" of herself. Indie did share that she does not feel like she completely fits in amongst her chapter due to being half white but neglected to elaborate on what exactly causes her to feel like she does not fully fit.

Reflections

Like other participants, namely Maria, Indie outwardly rejected her Asian heritage and culture. She reflected on how children would tease her and make her feel ashamed of her culture at a young age. Entering college and joining an Asian interest sorority created space for Indie to explore and embrace her Asian heritage. Joining her sorority was important because it allowed her to align herself with Asian women who desired to use their platform and voice to create change in their community. This allowed her to experience a strength and collective power within the Asian American community to which Indie had never been exposed. Similar to Beau, Indie used membership in her

sorority as a catalyst to gain a deeper connection and understanding of her Asian heritage beyond membership in a student organization.

Unlike other participants, Indie investigated multiple types of Greek organizations before making a final decision. She was less impacted by tunnel vision, specific mentors or any other sort of pressures or influences and instead was fully informed by the rush process. The process of attending rush for multiple organizations, while acceptable in PHA organizations and AGLOs specifically is not acceptable in LGLOs and NPHC organizations. This process specifically worked for Indie because of the types of organizations she was interested in joining.

Joe

I have a really big emphasis on embracing both sides in everything. I don't know, it's just my thing, no matter what it is I have to be ... maybe coming to college made me more like that, but I have to be as equally involved…

Family Background

Joe, a Black and Puerto Rican member of a Latina sorority at SU, is the daughter to an African American mother and Puerto Rican father. Joe's parents began dating in middle school and have four children. Joe is the oldest, she has a brother, thirteen, and two sisters, ten and five respectively. Joe grew up embracing the cultural practices and traditions of each of her parents:

> At home, we eat both foods. We eat like ... I hate to stereotype, but like mac and cheese and fried chicken. I guess that's what the Black side is. And then Puerto Rican we'll eat like arroz con habichuelas, and pastelon, and pasteles and all that stuff. And we have both languages at home as well.

Joe and her siblings share a common pride of their Black and Puerto Rican roots. Their racialized experiences have been defined by their physical appearance and phenotype. Joe and her youngest sister have a darker skin complexion. According to Joe, folks often assume they have Black heritage, while her middle siblings are “white passing.” Joe assumes they will face more challenges in their identity development due to external labels and will have to overcome more hurdles than she has had to experience thus far. Joe’s exposure to her African American and Puerto Rican’s roots informed much of her lived experience, racial identity development and decision-making processes in college.

Racial Identity

Joe somewhat rejects the term Biracial or Mixed given its historical connection to Black/white Biracial folks. Instead, Joe prefers a multiple monoracial identity categorization such as, “Black and Puerto Rican or Black and Latina” because she is proud of both racial heritages. Although Joe “embrace(s) both cultures,” she disclosed numerous times her shame and frustration at her inability to speak Spanish fluently. Language, often used as a cultural authenticity test by other Spanish speaking Latinx folks, is a frequent barrier for belonging within the Latinx community. Joe’s inability to speak Spanish fluently, and in particular the distinct Puerto Rican dialect, has impacted her confidence and comfort in her racial identification. As a child, Joe recalled resisting her father’s attempt to speak Spanish in the home, a mistake Joe regrets. Joe is now the brunt of racist jokes, questioning her Latinx heritage and racial authenticity:

> Same thing with the whole social media jokes. I'm light skinned. I'm a light skinned female. I get that stereotype a lot. I even get like the crazy, I'm Black and

> I'm Latina, so I'm double crazy because of that. I think that's a reaction from maybe the community and socially but like ... Like I said, I don't think it's anything that I really take personally like that.

Although Joe asserted these are just playful jokes, the continued microaggression from her Latinx peers is a constant reminder of her inadequacies and deeply conflicts to her desire to join and surround herself with more Latinx people. Ultimately, her decisions hinge on her desire to find acceptance and community.

Educational Background

Growing up, Joe lived in predominately Black neighborhoods. Subsequently her friend groups were primarily Black/African American in elementary and middle school. Joe recalled being the brunt of jokes from peers during this era due to her lighter skin. Upon entering high school, Joe moved into a whiter and more affluent neighborhood. Her friend group became whiter. Joe remembered always having Black and white friends but few Latinx friends due to lack of representation in her surrounding neighborhood and school system.

Joe always felt immersed in Black/African American culture (i.e. Ebonics, Black cultural traditions and practices) growing up. Other than one of her best friends, now line sister, sharing a Latinx heritage, she never felt as connected to her Latinx background. Her inability to speak Spanish fluently also impacted her lack of connectivity to her culture. These feelings began in grade school and impacted her decisions in college.

Joe's college choice criteria were simple: proximity to family, cost and campus racial diversity. Joe wanted to be able to drive back to family whenever she wanted or needed. She desired a racially diverse campus community and most of all required an

affordable, in-state option to reduce the financial burden of college on her family. Joe applied only to in-state schools aside from one out-of-state option also in the mid-Atlantic region.

Campus Racial Climate

Joe described the campus racial climate at SU as growing progressively worse. She specifically named the death of two Black students and the insufficient responses by administration as the primary catalyst for current racial tensions on campus. Joe believed the university administration is "not here for the students… they don't care" and claimed the public relations team for the President is not handling these incidents well which also impacts the campus racial climate. Joe associated the campus environment with university leadership. As many participants expressed, Joe believed the university is profiting off of the perceived racial diversity without being intentional about protecting the safety and interests of Students of Color. Given the lack of perceived support from high level administration, Joe claimed students have to create spaces to retain themselves:

> They don't care. If it happened to another student, then what happens? There are more about covering themselves up and whatever it's going to cost them money. But there are students, people who are actually in danger and like who have died on this campus. They don't care about these diverse populations that they so proudly claim on their website, "We're 40 percent this and this much this," and I'm like ... But when it comes to representation, where do we get that? I think the most representation we see is in student orgs. That's students making it themselves and creating those spaces themselves.

Sorority Experience

Joe never intended on joining Greek life when she entered college. She made it clear she was drawn to Lambda *before* she was drawn to Greek life and that Lambda opened her eyes to what Greek life had to offer, "So, it was never a decision to join Greek life, it was a decision to join Lambda..." Just as Joe entered SU, she was approached by her best friend's older sister and mother's former student, both members of Lambda at SU, who encouraged her to "look into" it. Joe never felt pressure to join her sorority but was, instead, encouraged to meet the sisters and determine for herself whether the sisterhood would be a good fit for her. Joe was influenced by various women in her life who joined a Latina sorority including her best friend who sought membership at the same time. They attended Lambda sponsored events together. At these events, Joe recalled the Lambda sisters being incredibly supportive, welcoming, and professional. She enjoyed their academic and service programs and felt they genuinely cared about her well-being. Joe also admired the way the women in the chapter carried themselves.

Since Lambda facilitated Joe's introduction to Greek life in college, she was able to explore other Latina and Black sororities on campus. Joe believed Lambda possessed the greatest balance of social, academic, professionalism, and activism as compared to the other Latina sorority on campus. Additionally, Joe's decision *not* to join a Black sorority was rooted in her desire to build a deeper connection to her Puerto Rican heritage. Joe believed joining an NPHC organization meant that she was ultimately aligning herself solely with her Black heritage *over* her Latinx heritage. Lambda filled a gap for Joe in terms of connecting with her Latinx heritage and culture since she already felt connected and rooted in her Black heritage and identity:

> I don't know why it might just be like in my head, but it just seemed more like choosing that side of me and that might not make sense since I joined a Latin sorority which on the outside might seem like picking that side of me totally. Like I said, I always had so much like African American influence and stuff like that. And it just felt like totally choosing that side, and I had the Latina side, but that was definitely a little less emphasized.

Joe also mentioned being attracted to the racial and ethnic diversity within her chapter that she did not find in NPHC organizations. The diversity made her feel represented and accepted as a Biracial woman. Additionally, the motto, *Latin by tradition not by definition*, solidified her feeling that Lambda represents culture rather than NPHC sororities which have such deep historical roots to racial justice and equity.

Today, Joe prides herself on being heavily involved in both the Black and Latinx communities on campus. Upon joining Lambda, she maintained involvement and connection to monoracial Black organizations and encourages her sorority to build coalitions with Black organizations. Unfortunately, Joe is often met with resistance from her sorority sisters:

> So I feel that's sometimes where the identity part in me gets torn, because I am part of another group. So I know that I belonged there and maybe some of my chapter sisters might feel like they don't ... or because they're not Black themselves, sometimes they're like, "Well, we don't want to overstep." And I'm like. "Well, for me, I know I'm not overstepping. So I'm going to go do this, go attend the event, go support, go speak on the panel or whatever." So I think that's the only thing within my sorority that

> sometimes it's like, Oh, now I do have this other identity and sometimes I can't fully immerse [Lambda] in that because everyone else is not also part of that group.

Joe felt tension when she attempted to unify both heritages given her positionality as a Multiracial woman:

> So I don't think they challenge me as a person. But when I would try to put things out there that were like, "Oh hey, why don't we do BSU [Black Student Union]? Why don't we go?" It kind of gets the back burner if it's not a LSU [Latin Student Union] event or if it's not a PLUMAS [Political Latinxs United for Movement and Action in Society] event or LHM [Latinx Heritage Month], that's the other one, the Latinx heritage month one. It's like, 'Oh cool, on paper…' So just like having communities that are not Latinx get the back burner in terms of like us going to support or doing things like that.

Joe attempted to use her racial heritages and passion for the Black community to engage and unite Communities of Color at SU but feels a lack of energy or follow-through amongst her chapter which Joe described as isolating and frustrating.

Reflections

Joe's narrative is characterized by the notion that "the mix matters." As a Multiracial woman with two marginalized heritages, she felt inclined to forge coalitions to uplift her communities. Given that Joe holds membership in multiple monoracial organizations, she desires to bring these organizations together under a common purpose of advocacy. However, she was met with resistance from her sorority sisters to create

coalitions with Black organizations. When trying to blur the lines and exercise her multiple racial perspectives and connections, Joe faced some resistance. Although Joe understood why the Latinx community was prioritized over other marginalized communities within her sorority, she still believed the isolationism between communities problematic. Joe continues to push the limits, calling out the efforts of her chapter and her desire to forge more unity particularly given the current campus racial climate.

Joe's upbringing is characterized by a strong affinity and appreciation for both of her racial heritages. The pride was forged by the intentionality of her parents to include all cultural traditions in the home. Joe often reflects on the fact that she cannot speak Spanish fluently and the lack of connection she feels as a result. Joining a Latina sorority, while not explicitly helping her become more fluent in Spanish, does fill this cultural void. While joining a NPHC organization was a possibility, she thought that joining a lifetime organization so deeply rooted in the Black experience would have meant aligning herself exclusively with her Black heritage and that felt like a betrayal. These are the sort of in-between spaces that Multiracial folks live in and navigate.

Lana

And my spring semester of freshman year, my question was, do I want to join a Black sorority, or do I want to join a white sorority? We can say that that's not what it is, but that's what it is. And I thought about it for a really, really, really long time.

Family Background

Lana, African American/white, is a member of a white Greek letter organization. She was raised by her white mother and African American father. Lana has a 17-year-old sister. Her commitment and connection to her racial heritages is a reflection of her

connection and closeness to both parents, extended family and her parent's commitment to instill confidence and pride in Lana's Biracial identity throughout her life.

Racial Identity

Lana proudly asserts her Mixed heritage rather than one over the other. She attributes her strong Biracial identity to having both parents in her life and having good relationships with both parents. In essence, Lana believes she honors both parents by claiming both racial heritages rather than one. Like many students, college was a time of racial identity exploration for Lana, due in part to the "vastness of racial diversity" at SU. According to Lana, the racial diversity is minimized by the campus' equally noticeable racial segregation. Lana expressed her displeasure with the racial exclusion exhibited by students on campus and how the self-segregation of student organizations deeply impacted the ways in which Lana chose to affiliate and navigate in college.

Educational Background

Lana does not recall wrestling with her racial identity during primary and secondary school. She attended a racially diverse French Immersion elementary school, detailing "I had friends of every single race." Lana transitioned to a predominately Latinx middle school which was classified by her peers as the "bad school." Lana maintained a diverse set of friends throughout middle school thanks, in large part, to the friends she made in the French Immersion program. Outside of the French Immersion program, Lana's friend groups were primarily white. When Lana moved on to high school, she was no longer affiliated with her French Immersion friends. While Lana recalled attending a racially diverse high school and maintaining a racially diverse group of friends, she also remembered the racial self-segregation present in high school.

In terms of college choice, much like other participants, Lana did not want to enroll at SU. She desired a school with a strong football program because she associated a positive collegiate experience with athletics. Her decision to ultimately attend SU came down to finances. SU was the best and cheapest option. Additionally, Lana was admitted into a living learning program which made SU more attractive given the smaller community feeling living-learning programs afford. Lana was ultimately happy with her decision and found her academic home in the College of Education. Lana aspires to be a teacher.

Campus Racial Climate

When asked about the campus racial climate, Lana reflected on the numerical diversity on campus. Lana questioned the sincerity of the university's effort to increase and retain a racially diverse campus:

> I do agree that we are a racially diverse campus, there's no doubt about that. And the university makes sure that it's always printed in some kind of news pamphlet that we are racially diverse. But I feel very strongly that racially diverse does not mean integrated. I think this is a very segregated campus, and it has been one of the reasons why coming into freshman year of college, it was when I began questioning my racial identity. That's when race became something that I was thinking about.

Lana asserted that diversity does not mean integration or engagement, attesting to the segregation on campus which forced her to make difficult decisions in terms of her involvement on campus. Given that Lana is equally connected to both racial heritages, it was difficult for her to find ways to be socially integrated on campus such as the decision

to join Greek life and which type of sorority. Lana believed Greek life played a significant role in making SU look and feel segregated. She specifically highlighted the IFC, characterized by a strong fraternity culture, as a council that consistently made already minoritized folks on campus feel even more uncomfortable alluding to racial quota parties and exclusionary tactics that often take place at SU. Racial quota parties refer to the racist practice of fraternities setting limits on the number of People of Color they will allow in their house parties. Once the quota is met, they will not allow any additional People of Color into the party.

Lana's feeling of a negative campus racial climate is further exacerbated by her thought that Biracial folks are "rare creatures on campus;" a feeling that Lana and her best friend (Biracial) share. Without a hub or centralized organization[20] for Lana and other Multiracial folks on campus to meet and share experiences, she believed her racial identity is an anomaly and perhaps pathological (psychologically abnormal or unhealthy) on SU's campus specifically.

Sorority Experience

Lana had a difficult time determining which Greek letter council to join. She knew, since senior year of high school, that she would seek membership in a sorority in college. Lana specifically desired sisterhood and a unique bond that she believed only a sorority could uniquely offer. Although the decision to join a sorority was never in question, the decision to choose a specific council (i.e. racial grouping) was contentious.

[20] While SU does have a Multiracial student organization, MSA, the challenges associated with Multiracial student organizations such as the cyclical nature of student populations, the perception that Multiracial people are not a legitimate racial or ethnic club (Malaney & Danowski, 2015) and lack of connection across Multiracial experiences can result in a lack of visibility or activity, likely what Lana was experiencing at the time of the interview.

She felt she had to choose between a Black or white sorority an issue “never had to grapple with" before.

Lana researched all three councils and choose PHA because the process to get into a WGLO was “easier.” Specifically, Lana is referring to the transparent rush process associated with PHA and the more secretive rush process for MGC and NPHC organizations. Once Lana determined she would participate in the PHA rush process, she gravitated towards the most racially diverse chapters. Lana believed her chapter members “try to be inclusive” of folks from different backgrounds:

> I think that my sorority is very, I don't ... I think that it's kind of one of those things where they do want to be inclusive, and I think that we are very ... we do a good job, or most of the women do a good job at trying to understand. They would never shut anybody down for feeling the way they feel for being a minority.

Lana was paired with Women of Color throughout recruitment and once she became a full member of her chapter, she was assigned to a Latina “big” sister. Lana welcomed these seemingly “racialized” pairings because it served as an outlet for Lana to interact with People of Color in a predominately white environment. Additionally, Lana was drawn to the philanthropic organization connected to her chapter. Lana was a member of the same organization, Girls on the Run, when she was a child and felt deeply connected to its mission to build up young girls.

Reflections

Although Lana spends much of her time with her sorority sisters, she is not able to be her authentic self. As a member of a predominately white sorority in which most

women identify as white and whiteness is normalized, Lana is not given an outlet to express herself or share her racial heritages, identity, or experiences as a minoritized person. Specifically, Lana shared that race is not discussed in the chapter thus no one knows she is Multiracial, yet she claimed her chapter is inclusive and diverse. Lana claimed that the lack of acknowledgement of her racial heritages or experiences is "ok" reinforcing a colorblind philosophy common to PHA organizations. This finding was also observed during the social justice centered retreat when members of PHA and IFC organizations admitted they do not talk about race within their chapters. Additionally, I observed in small groups when white students were asked to describe how discrimination shows up in Greek letter organizations generally, they consistently distanced their own organizations from the topic, spotlighting what they know about "other" organizations suggesting they are not part of the problem.

Lana's chapter is more racially diverse than other PHA organizations, a factor that ultimately drew Lana to the organization. Interestingly, she was omitted from a group chat with other Black women in the chapter because she never revealed, nor did anyone ask or discuss, her racial heritage. She was not able to participate in a community effort to unite Black women in this predominately white organization. The exclusion and hyper-invisibility of her identity impacted opportunities for meaningful engagement and community building amongst her sorority sisters, a concept uncommon to NPHC or MGC organizations which are comprised of majority Women of Color. Based on participant interviews, NPHC and MGC organizations appear to be more aware and knowledgeable about the prevalence of Multiraciality as a lived experience and identity and thus perhaps better equipped to acknowledge Multiracial folks in their organizations.

Clare

> *It wasn't really until I came here [SU] that I didn't feel like I mixed anywhere. I was like, 'This is so weird.' So yeah, before I really didn't have problems with... I never really questioned myself. It was never a big thing for me, it was kind of just always easy.*

Family Background

Clare, a member of a predominately white sorority, was born to a white (English and German) mother from the deep south and an African American, Caribbean, and white father from the Delaware region. Clare's mother was a childhood runaway and entered the foster care system as a young person eventually establishing roots in the Delaware area. She met Clare's father in a local Baptist church. At a young age, the Baptist church helped to pay for her parents' wedding. Clare's mother was 21 when Clare was born and a year later her brother was born. Clare was 5 years old when her parents divorced. Although her parents shared custody, Clare lived primarily with her mother and stepfather, a white conservative man or as Clare described "extremely white in every single way there is to be white." Clare mentioned clashing with her stepfather, repeatedly referencing comments he has made about her race; Clare quickly attributed these comments to him growing up "with a very different background" than she did.

Clare is not close to her father or his side of the family, so although she identifies as African American and white, she suspects her father has Caribbean and white ancestry. Clare recalled her father and his family explicitly identifying as African American and thus she has adopted that same identity. Similarly, Clare's mother, who eventually reunited with her biological family, may have indigenous roots given the number of generations her family has been in the United States.

Clare has several siblings from each of her parents second marriages. As previously mentioned, Clare has a younger brother who is albino and identifies as Mixed. She mentioned he faces a number of challenges to his racial identity due to his physical appearance. Clare has two step siblings, one from her father's marriage and one from her mother's. Additionally, her mother had two more children with Clare's stepfather, aged ten and eight respectively.

Racial Identity

For Clare, her racial identity is defined by her family's deep roots and ties to the United States. Although she acknowledged that her racial heritage likely extends beyond a simple Black/white mix, she claimed Black and white ancestry when asked. Clare also used the term "Mixed" to describe her identity. For Claire, the term Mixed encapsulates all of her racial heritages into one holistic term.

Clare's racial identity is informed by her physical appearance and interactions. For some, Clare is white passing while others mistake her race/ethnicity for Latina. In general, Clare believed she looks racially ambiguous to outsiders. Clare's identity is also informed by her upbringing. While not connected deeply to her father or his extended family and having lived primarily with her white mother and white stepfather in a predominately white suburban neighborhood by second grade, Clare was often surrounded by white people and white culture.

Educational Background

Clare recalled first struggling with her race and racial identity in high school. Her racially segregated friend groups made her feel as though she had to choose between her racial heritages. Clare described her primary friend group in high school as

predominately white (Italian) and Brazilian. Although her friends were primarily white, Clare insisted she was friends or friendly with predominately Black friend groups, illustrated by her role as Vice President of Cultures Club. In this role, Clare ran the Black History Month assembly and helped organize events for Hispanic American heritage month.

Although high school was Clare's first encounter with racial self-segregation, it pales in comparison to Clare's shock when she entered SU.

> It wasn't really until I came here [SU] that I didn't feel like I mixed anywhere. I was like, "This is so weird." So yeah, before I really didn't have problems with... I never really questioned myself. It was never a big thing for me, it was kind of just always easy.

Aside from the perceived tension between races at SU, Clare was drawn to "the whole vibe of campus" SU offered. Additionally, Clare could capitalize on the in-state tuition status. Unlike other participants, SU was Clare's top choice. She is pursuing a double major in Government and Economics.

Campus Racial Climate

Clare described SU as a racially exclusionary and isolating place particularly for Multiracial students. As previously mentioned, SU was the first time Clare truly felt that she "did not mix anywhere" and felt pressured to choose a racial identification based on the types of friends and student clubs she was joined. When asked to describe the campus racial climate at SU, Clare definitively stated, "[it's] bad." According to Clare, SU is extremely racially segregated:

> I was shocked when I first came here, really shocked, because I think it's so segregated. It's so strange to me. I've never experienced such intensity for different groups. I don't know, just ASA and CSA, and there's some really strong Jewish groups, and there's really strong Indian groups, there's an Indian fraternity and I was like, "That's so weird." And I guess PHA also very strongly has a big white population, which is so strange to me that everyone's so secluded and kind of only mixes with their friend group.

Clare provided examples of how her racial ambiguity resulted in an uncomfortable interaction with a Black student on campus. Clare was speaking to a monoracial Black student and he immediately stopped speaking to her, spoke to her friend and asked if Clare "[got along] with Black guys." Her friend responded, "She is Black." He assumed Clare was not Black and proceeded to stereotype white women by saying "white girls are crazy." Clare provided additional examples of how her membership in a WGLO further ostracized her from the Black community on campus. Although Clare joined a WGLO, she desired connection and community with People of Color and found that community within the Multiracial Student Association (pseudonym). Multiracial Student Association (MSA) gave Clare "somewhere to go" to feel accepted.

Sorority Experience

Clare rushed PHA in her first semester of college. Clare's mother strongly encouraged her to participate in rush activities citing the fact that she never got an opportunity to join and thought it would be fun for Clare. Clare's mother agreed to pay

for initiation costs which was another strong motivator. Additionally, Clare felt drawn to participate after learning that her first year friends were all rushing in their first semester.

Clare preferred two sororities. She was interested in both organizations based on how effortless her interactions were and how welcoming the women made her feel. Additionally, Clare was drawn to the small yet visible racial diversity within her preferred chapters which was important to her as a Woman of Color. While her time in the chapter has been difficult and she has often questioned whether she wants to remain affiliated, Clare benefits from the social outlet Greek life affords, the opportunity to volunteer and engage with her chapter's philanthropy and networking opportunities. Beyond race, Clare found it difficult to connect with a majority of her sorority sisters because of her perceived lower socioeconomic status, her lack of desire to attend parties, and her lack of interest in attracting men on campus. Clare mentioned living in the sorority house in her sophomore year was the reason she ultimately decided to remain affiliated. Living in the chapter house allowed Clare to build stronger bonds with her sisters which she may not have developed otherwise.

As previously mentioned, Clare struggles with Communities of Color on campus. While cultural GLOs are well-represented on campus, Clare regreted that she was only exposed to WGLOs in her first year and believed that she made her decision prematurely. Given her decision to join a WGLO in her first year, Clare was disappointed to discover her decision set a trajectory for her to be further isolated and shunned from the Black community:

> I didn't really notice how bad it was until I joined Greek life, 'cause then it was like I'm in a really big white community, and I do know that the Black

> community doesn't really like [white] Greek life. I've also had comments that are like, "Oh, you're in a sorority, go be with your sorority.

Clare later joined MSA to fill the void and give her a sense of belonging within a community she thought could understand her. When asked why she did not pursue membership in the Black Student Union, she expressed not feeling like she would be accepted. Instead, MSA and the subcommunity within her sorority of similarly “ethnic” women provided Clare with the support and community she sought. Clare’s closest friends in the sorority are other Multiracial or monoracial Women of Color.

Reflections

Clare admitted that had she known about NPHC organizations, she would have seriously considered joining because perhaps they would have understood her more and she may have fit in more in a Black sorority. Interestingly, her mother encouraged her to join a white sorority because she did not have the opportunity to join. Clare’s mother and peers influenced her to make a premature decision. Additional unforeseen consequences of joining a WGLO for Clare included her subsequent interactions with Black folks at SU. On a racially segregated campus, associating oneself with a predominately white Greek letter organization further ostracized her from Black students, inhibited her confidence, and affected her exploration of her Black heritage.

In WGLOs, the recruitment pairing process is often racialized. It is also being a form of resistance for Women of Color in predominately white sororities. Clare was matched with Women of Color during recruitment, meaning the women who were assigned to speak with her during their open house were other Women of Color in the sorority. Additionally, Clare’s big is also a Multiracial woman. In fact, Clare claimed that

her “whole family” within the sorority look the same. Although racialized, this process is also a comforting space for Clare to occupy because the Women of Color in the chapter can forge connections beyond the confines of the general sisterhood. They can also create coalitions centered around various actions taken by the chapter leadership. For example, Clare recalled being explicitly and implicitly told to straighten her hair. The significance of hair in the Black community came into conflict with white communities and sorority contexts; this fortified the exclusivity and white standards of beauty. It was an “unspoken rule” to have "just loose curls or straightened hair," particularly during recruitment, to fit in, a rule she has since rejected.

Nina

> *I just became super pro-Black. I was just radically Black. There was no Mixed. Because then I started feeling like that whole concept of "Mixed," was to fetishize the beauty of a Mixed woman, and to attribute her beauty to her whiteness, or the otherness that wasn't the Blackness. I started rejecting the idea of Mixed and being more pro-Black.*

Family Background

Nina, a Black/Polish member of a Black sorority, grew up in State with her two older sisters and separated parents. Her mother, Polish, identifies as a very liberal woman although raised in a very white, conservative, Protestant family. Nina’s father, on the other hand, is African American and a civil rights activist. A member of the Black Panthers, Nina’s father was part of the first class of Black people to integrate Johns Hopkins University.

Nina has two older sisters from her mother’s side. They are white and Moroccan and hold various racial identities given their ethnic heritage, light complexion and phenotype. Their concept of racial identity is very different from Nina. "I think my idea

of race is a bit, literally, more Black and white." Nina recalled being the only “Brown person” on her mother's side of the family. She never felt like she belonged on either side of the family growing up being the lightest amongst her father’s extended family and the darkest amongst her mother’s extended family. Nina recalled that she “never felt enough.” Additionally, hair was often a source of stress for Nina growing up. None of her family members could do her hair and Nina was teased or ostracized by her family due to her “different” hair texture. With time, Nina’s paternal family turned out to be the more welcoming and accepting relatives:

> In terms of, my family, because it is blended, and it is different ... I know that, I think that my white side is uncomfortable. I think that when I come around, I am vocal, and I think that they're hesitant. I know they're Republican. I'm quick to call them out, and I'm not really apologetic about it. My white side is definitely uncomfortable. My Black side, I feel regular. I feel like the baby girl.

Racial Identity

Nina’s racial identity has shifted since her time in college. As a recent college graduate, many personal exchanges and a lifetime of pain has shifted her perspective about racial identity. Today, she confidently identifies as Black. "Before I would've identified as Biracial. And I do. I do admit and own that I am half-white, but if someone were to just ask me, I would say, "I'm a Black woman. I'm a Woman of Color."

When asked how she came to identify monoracially after previously identifying as Biracial she shared that her decision to identify as Black is:

> Mainly because I don't benefit from my whiteness. In terms of colorism, sure, but I don't have white privilege. I'll say I'm Polish, before I say, "I'm white." I'll talk about my ethnic background versus the white racial background.

Growing up, Nina's parents never forced her to pick a specific racial identity. Her parents allowed her to "be who I am," however, Nina's father instilled a lot of Black pride throughout her upbringing. As a result, being Black and identifying as Black always gave Nina a sense of pride and confidence. Her monoracial identity is connected to her desire to see Black folks prosper, a desire to support others in the ways she has been supported, and a desire to remember the struggle and history of Black people in the US. For Nina, her Blackness is connected to feeling pride in her "melanin," soul food, and the cultural experiences she shared with her dad at the local barbershop:

> I just became super pro-Black. I was just radically Black. There was no mixed. Because then I started feeling like that whole concept of "Mixed," was to fetishize the beauty of a mixed woman, and to attribute her beauty to her Whiteness, or the otherness that wasn't the Blackness. I started rejecting the idea of mixed and being more pro-Black.

Educational Background

Nina was the product of a variety of institutional types. She began her schooling in Baltimore public schools. Nina was considered a "problem" student, so her mother transferred her to a private Catholic school from 4th to 8th grade to give her more structure and discipline. Juxtaposed to Nina's initial public school experience, the private Catholic school was "so, so white." Nina recalled being the only Black girl in her classes. Her two

closest friends were Multiracial (white/Filipino and white/Mauritian[21]). Nina was a vocal student and would get reprimanded by her teachers because she was so outspoken about sexual assault, abortion rights, sexism, and racism in society at a young age. In retrospect, Nina believed she was reprimanded (received demerits) due to institutional racism and sexism being that she was a Women of Color in a nearly all white environment.

Upon entering high school, Nina was given a choice by her parents whether to stay enrolled in the Catholic school or to transfer to the local Magnet public school where her father went State City College (SCC). Given the isolating and traumatic experiences Nina experienced in private school and the long-standing family legacy forged at SCC, Nina decided to attend SCC. Nina's high school was predominately Black. She enrolled in their International Baccalaureate program, which served a majority white student population. Although Nina was in a more racially diverse high school, she was still one of few People of Color in her classes, while her friend groups outside of class were predominately Black students. Nina was also a student athlete in high school playing three sports. Her experiences in sports were also racialized. Lacrosse was predominately white, basketball predominately Black and soccer was predominately white.

Nina's decision to attend SU was made solely due to her in-state status. SU was Nina's safety school. She looked forward to leaving the state to attend a smaller size institution, yet SU ended up being the most affordable option. Additionally, Nina was accepted into a Living Learning program tailored to students interested in Public Health which provided her with a smaller campus feel and resources in the form of professors,

[21] The Republic of Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, part of the African continent.

dedicated staff, and a community of students with similar interests. Nina began her time at SU on the pre-med track, taking rigorous science courses, however, she felt "overwhelmed" and isolated by the paucity of Brown people in her classes.

Campus Racial Climate

Nina did not mince words when describing the campus racial climate of SU while she was an undergraduate student and describing her perception of the racial climate since she graduated. Nina described the campus racial climate in one word, "Heinous." She went on further to explain:

> I think that [SU] as an institution, does not care about People of Color, all People of Color, whether you're Indigenous, Black, Brown, undocumented, Muslim. I just don't think [SU] cares. I don't think it's really at the forefront.

Nina discussed various racist incidents that took place while she was on campus such as the murder of a Black student in her final year and the Klu Klux Klan recruitment flyers put up around campus to traumatize Students of Color. She described feeling unsafe on campus and receiving little support from university leadership. Nina believed the catalyst to the "heinous campus racial climate" stems from the 2016 presidential election. In the aftermath, Nina described a significant shift in the campus racial climate. "The day he was elected, I just felt like the climate got darker, it was sadder. I just felt even more, and more, uncomfortable."

As an undergraduate student leader, Nina protested university leadership and policies with a coalition of student leaders. "And I remember protesting. We were always protesting. I remember protesting, and then going to an exam. That was the norm." Nina felt no support from campus leadership and felt students' demands "fell on deaf ears."

Nina goes on to say, "I think it's just a dirty, dirty institution." Her affiliation and support for Black students at SU and her sorority specifically are what keep her motivated and connected to see SU make meaningful change in the future.

Sorority Experience

Nina did not enter college intending to pledge a sorority although she was exposed to Black Greek life prior to college. First, when Nina was in grade school, she visited a local HBCU, where her father worked. She first became enamored with Greek life after seeing BGLO plots all around campus during her visits. Additionally, in high school the two most important staff/student relationships she had were with Black women affiliated with the same Black sorority. Nina’s guidance counselor in high school and another employee affectionately called “Auntie” were both enthusiastic members of Beta (pseudonym). Their offices were decorated in their sorority’s colors and pictures lay plastered on the walls and both women recounted the ties and relationships they maintained decades after joining. They were the “two most influential Black women, in my life during high school, period, and they both were [Betas]." Both educators attended Nina’s initiation ceremony for Beta years later, known as the “Pinning Ceremony” to officially welcome her into the sisterhood.

Although Nina was exposed to Beta prior to college, she was not committed to joining SU’s chapter of Beta. That decision came after meeting the women in the organization, learning about the national organizations health platform and seeing the social justice mindset and commitment of the women in the chapter by attending various programs on campus. Nina would later become the chapter President committed to furthering the social justice mission. Nina especially felt compelled to expand the social

justice presence of Beta at SU given the hostile campus racial climate. For example, Nina's chapter hosted the event "Calling in Black" to provide support and resources for Black people experiencing mental health challenges given the national and local racial trauma Black faculty, staff and students were experiencing at the time.

Nina described Beta as her "sanctuary" in college. "I don't know if I would've survived without it. I really don't think so." Unfortunately, Nina's affiliation, while providing a lifeline, also created division within her family unit. Nina's mother felt Nina was rejecting her whiteness (and her) by joining a Black sorority. Nina's mother did not understand the deeper meaning behind the organization and did not understand why Nina would want to join an organization created by Black women to serve and uplift the Black community. The ongoing tension between Nina and her mother is still felt today.

Reflections

Nina was not as connected to the Black community at SU before joining Beta. Beta was deeper than a social organization for Nina:

> I had no Black community outside of Beta. I had class on the nights that BSU met, so I wasn't involved with BSU. I'm not African, so I didn't have that. If I didn't have Beta, I don't know how I would've connected to the Black community.

Beta was her source and outlet to be in community with other Black people, to explore and engage with issues related to her Blackness and to feel fully accepted within the Black community.

Nina's friction with her mother directly proceeds from her racial identity and alignment. Nina's mother associated Nina's Greek membership as a direct rejection of

her mother while Nina saw her membership in Beta as a powerful opportunity for support, sisterhood and community. Her mother expressed concern stating, "I just feel like you're just always tryna separate us. You're joining [Beta]." While Nina never intended on offending her mother, Nina recognized the void she felt, the need for solidarity, a sense of belonging and community which Beta afforded her. Although Nina maintained her own personal reasons for membership, she did agree that the process of joining specific Greek organizations was racialized. "To me, I felt like if you were Black, and you joined a white sorority, or fraternity, you did not identify culturally, as Black. You grew up going to majority white schools, that's what you know, and that's what you like."

Conclusion

This chapter provided thick, rich participant profiles (see Figure 1 below) for the twelve participants in this study based upon their demographic questionnaire responses and individual semi-structured interviews and informed by document analysis and the observation. Through these participant profiles, we understand the complexity of "the Multiracial experience" and how one's familial background, racial identity, and educational journey can inform their perception of the SU campus racial climate context and their subsequent Greek life experience at a research 1, flagship PWI on the east coast. Their stories highlight the commonalities and dramatic differences associated with the human experience which ultimately led them to a sorority affiliation. In the next chapter, Chapter 5, I provide a cross-case analysis of the participant's experiences and discuss the findings in relation to MultiCrit and scholarly literature.

Table 6

List of Participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Racial Identification	Racial/Ethnic Heritage	Type of Sorority	Sorority Name (Pseudonym)	School Classification	Major	Semester/ Year Initiated	Age
Kaden	Afro Latina	African American and Panamanian	Predominately white	Gamma	Sophomore	Dietetics	Spring 2018	19
Molly	Multiracial	Hispanic, Indian, Caucasian	Predominately white	Epsilon	Senior	Animal Science	Spring 2016	21
Ashley	Mixed (Black and Latina)	Black and Puerto Rican	Predominately Latina	Lambda	Senior	Information Science	Spring 2018	22
Jenny	Asian	Korean and Mexican	Predominately white	Chi	Senior	Marketing and International Business	Spring 2016	21
Shannon	Biracial	Cape Verdean and Chinese	Predominately white	Gamma	Junior	Government and Politics	Spring 2017	20
Maria	Latina	Caucasian and Latina	Predominately white	Epsilon	Senior	English Literature and Language	Spring 2016	21
Indie	Asian/ Caucasian	Taiwanese, Chinese, white	Predominately Asian	Alpha	Junior	Bioengineering	Fall 2017	20
Joe	Mixed	Puerto Rican and Black	Predominately Latina	Lambda	Junior	Hearing and Speech Sciences	Spring 2017	19
Lana	Mixed	Black and white	Predominately white	Gamma	Junior	Elementary Education	Spring 2018	20
Clare	Mixed white and Black	English, German, African American and Caribbean	Predominately white	Eta	Junior	Economics and Government	Spring 2016	20
Beau	Biracial	Finish American (Finland) and Zambian	Predominately Black	Beta	Alumna, Class of 2015	Supply Chain Management	Spring 2015	25
Nina	Black	Polish and Black	Predominately Black	Beta	Alumna, Class of 2016	Public Health	Spring 2015	23

CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS

The purpose of chapter five is to present the cross-case findings that were generated from a thematic analysis of twelve Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a PWI. After analyzing the data, I discovered eight themes that directly answer the two primary research questions: What motivates Multiracial women to join and stay in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution? What are the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?

Multiracial women were motivated by four main factors: Influential monoracial women including peers, sisters, mothers, educators, and fictional characters, the racial/ethnic diversity within their chapter, a desire for deeper connectedness to one of their racial heritages, and sisterhood, which I define as a desire to belong to a community of women. To address my second research question, Multiracial women across organizational type detailed various racialized experiences, which I organize into four categories. Participants described, being "Forgotten," Cultivating Women of Color Only Spaces, Navigating white standards of beauty, and (Multi)Racial Tokenism.

Motivations to Join and Stay in a Monoracial Sorority

Participants characterized a number of factors that contributed to their decision to first, join a sorority and secondly, to join their specific sorority on campus. Some of the most salient motivations included: (a) influential monoracial women including peers, sisters, their mother, educators, and fictional characters, (b) the racial/ethnic diversity within their chapter, (c) a desire for deeper connectedness to one of their racial heritages, and (d) Sisterhood: A desire to belong to a community of women.

The Role of Monoracial Women

Participants received various messages from influential women in their lives encouraging them to explore membership in a specific Greek letter organization or Greek life in general prior to and during college. From guidance counselors, high school teachers, student affairs administrators, peers, big sisters, mothers, and even fictional characters, participants attributed their Greek affiliation to the influence of various monoracial women.

While most participants expressed an initial lack of interest in joining a sorority prior to coming to college, Nina and Maria shared how their experiences prior to college informed their decision to join their respective sororities. Nina (Black and Polish member of a BGLO) stated:

> At City, when I was in high school, I had a guidance counselor that I was super close with, and I just remember her office being [sorority colors] everything. She had pictures with her line sisters ... She had paddles on her wall… I just remember being like, "What's going [on] with this? Why do you still care [about your sorority]? Why are you still involved?" Greek life was nothing I looked for when looking at college…

Nina's sphere of influence in high school centered around monoracial Black women who nurtured and guided her through secondary school. "My guidance counselor, and my aunt Brianna were the two most influential Black women in my life during high school, period, and they both were [Betas]." Additionally, Nina felt value and purpose in Beta's health platform which aligned directly with her major and career aspirations. Although Nina's interest in joining Beta germinated in high school due to the affiliation of two

significant Black women in her life, her decision to join Beta was further affirmed by Black women on campus:

> … seeing the Black women that I looked up to, on campus, they were all [Betas]. It wasn't like I went to [Beta] looking for them. It was just like, in the School of Public Health, the Black women that were speaking out were Jordan (pseudonym) and Sydney (pseudonym), and Jordan and Sydney were [Betas].

In addition to strong monoracial Black mentors and a desire for sisterhood, at each turn, Nina found comfort, stability, commonality, purpose and affirmation from Black women who were all affiliated with the same historically Black sorority. Her desire to align with a community of like-minded, socially conscious, and from her perspective, strong Black women, solidified her decision.

Maria (Caucasian and Latina, member of a WGLO) shared how her interest in joining a white sorority was ignited prior to attending college. She formed initial impressions of sorority life based on the images and messaging she received from pop culture, specifically, the lead character Elle Woods in the motion picture film, *Legally Blonde*. A white, blonde, fictional character served as Maria's primary role model when making Greek life organizational and career decisions:

> I always knew I wanted to be in Greek life. I wanted to be a lawyer since I was like seven and Legally Blonde's my favorite movie. I know it [the movie] by heart. I went into Greek life and I was like, I loved it and I loved the idea of it. It was so perfect for me at the time. I couldn't have been happier.

Unlike other participants, Maria recognized a deep desire to join a WGLO based on a fictional monoracial, white character. Maria's experience represents how pop culture and whiteness can influence the life choices of students particularly in terms of group affiliations. As the title of the movie, *Legally Blonde* suggests, the main character, a monoracial white woman, represented a commonly held racist ideology that upholds whiteness as property (Harris, 1993) and standard of beauty which likely informed Maria's decision to join a WGLO. These consistent media images and societal positioning structure whiteness as supreme.

Most participants were interested in exploring and joining a Greek letter organization only after attending college for one or more semesters. Different monoracial women informed their decision. Although Beau (Biracial, member of a BGLO) joined Beta in her final academic year, which is uncharacteristic in Greek life, she shared how role models throughout her time in college led her eventually to join her chapter:

> I had actually found out that a handful of women in my life who have made a positive impact were involved with Black Greek life, so, that was something that was really kind of like full circle for me. Speaking to the few of them about their experiences at college, they were really positive. So, I became interested and began doing my own research, as well as, attending different events on campus and just really being observant and kind of quietly decided to myself, end of my sophomore year, that this was something that I really wanted to be a part of.

While sororities were never on Beau's radar prior to enrolling at SU, she began to take inventory of the many influential Black women in her environment and realized that

these women shared a special connection apart from their race and gender: their organizational membership in Beta. The perceived values and positive outcomes expressed by these women pushed Beau to critically reflect on whether she wanted to commit to joining a lifelong organization.

Joe (Puerto Rican and Black, member of a LGLO, received encouragement from her Black mother to consider joining a Latina sorority, Lambda (pseudonym). Joe described how her mother's former student, Latina, also suggested that Joe join the sorority:

> I'm gonna say I never thought that I would not join Greek life, but I just never thought about it. Coming in I was not one of those people that knew like, "Oh, when I get to college, I want to be in Greek life." So actually, the way it happened was ... my mom's a teacher, so one of her former students is an [Lambda] that crossed at this chapter. And then she [mom's former student] told her [Joe's mom], she [mom's former student] was like, "Oh, tell your daughter to go to [the club fair] and look at [Lambda's] table".

As Joe details, she was not initially interested in joining Greek life but with the encouragement of both her mother and her mother's former student, two monoracial Women of Color, Joe felt motivated to explore Lambda specifically. In contrast, Nina's white mother felt betrayed by Nina's decision to join a Black sorority. Although Nina's mother was aware of the deep history and traditions associated with Beta sorority, their relationship began to deteriorate as Nina's racial identity development began to shift towards a strong monoracial, Black identity after joining Beta.

> … college is when I started having issues with my mom, when it came to race. When I wanted to join [Beta]. I just became super pro-Black. I was just radically Black. There was no Mixed. Because then I started feeling like that whole concept of "Mixed," was to fetishize the beauty of a Mixed woman, and to attribute her beauty to her whiteness, or the otherness that wasn't the Blackness. I started rejecting the idea of Mixed and being more pro-Black.

Clare shared a similar experience to Joe. Clare's white mother encouraged Clare to consider joining a WGLO because she "never got the chance to do it." Clare further explained:

> I feel like I rushed because my mom was like, "Okay. I never got to do this. I feel like you should give it a shot." And I was like, "Okay." A lot of people talk about it, a lot of my friends are doing it, so I joined…

Fulfilling her mother's dream of rushing a WGLO was the incentive Clare needed to rush in her first year alongside many of her peers who were also exploring membership in sororities. In addition to verbal support, Clare's mom chose to remove the financial burdens associated with joining a sorority:

> [Clare's mom] was like, "I'll pay for it." And I was like, "Cool. If you're paying for it [membership fees], you're the one that told me." So, I did that, and then all my freshman year… my friend group, all went through recruitment. Not everyone went through with it. So, I did that, and then I joined. Yeah, and I'm still here, so I guess it worked out.

Joe, Nina, and Clare's experiences illustrate how important maternal support or lack thereof is to one's decision to join a sorority and, for Multiracial women specifically, which type of sorority they would eventually join. Joe's Black mother encouraged membership in a Latina sorority, while Nina's white mother discouraged membership in a Black sorority. Additionally, Clare's white mother encouraged membership in a white sorority. The mix of challenge and support juxtaposed to the racial dynamics of Multiraciality, motherhood and monoracial sorority membership provide insight into the complex messages and symbols Multiracial women consider when making group membership decisions in college.

Additionally, most participants referenced their hallmates, big sisters and older friends from high school as the catalyst to join a sorority in college. Molly, a Multiracial (Hispanic, Indian, Caucasian) member of a WGLO, decided to attend rush activities based on her friend group, all white women:

> I decided mostly because most of my friends were rushing. I'm not a huge typical sorority girl, like girly girl. I used to ride horses and I'm just more outdoorsy. So, it wasn't like... Coming in, I wasn't sure that I was going to do it, but most of my friends were. So, I was like, "I don't want to be the only one not doing it, so I'll give it a go." And that's kind of why I chose to rush and join a sorority.

Shannon, a Biracial (Cape Verdean and Chinese) member of a WGLO, received strong, positive messaging from one of her old high school friends within her first year:

> I was a freshman. Actually, one girl from my high school, she's in Zeta, I think. She was like "oh, you should definitely join a sorority if you're

> thinking about it. It's one of the best decisions I made." I don't know exactly her background or ethnicity but she's of color. I was okay, cuz [*sic*] that's something I was thinking about because I knew like all my white friends from home ... A few of them went south and they were like "oh, it's [sorority life is] amazing." But I'm like that's definitely different than it is here. I was just like, I'm not sure.

Shannon took inventory of the fact that her older friend from high school was a Women of Color who joined a WGLO and had a positive experience. This revelation coupled with the fact that her white friends from home were also joining sororities helped Shannon decide to explore whether Greek life would be a good fit for her as well.

Students are constantly bombarded with different messages throughout college, from academic majors to pursue, clubs to join, classes to take, careers to explore, and how and where to enact (or not) their salient identities (Anderson, 2005; Kellough, 2006; Literte, 2010; Renn, 2004). Their behaviors are often attributed to their lived experiences, cultural norms and societal expectations. For Multiracial women, the messaging they receive can be even more complicated as they filter through multiple, sometimes competing racialized identities. A monoracial only paradigm of race forces students to perform the aforementioned filtering process. Society's rigid racial categorization and the saliency of racial categories to dictate how people move through the world inevitably place a burden upon Multiracial students to navigate a monoracial world. As evidenced in this section, Multiracial women are influenced in multiple ways by the racial identities and messages from their parents, friends, educational administrators and other central women in their lives.

Similarly, the monoracist histories and current practices of Greek letter organizations complicate how Multiracial women navigate these organizations. Participants in this study highlight the importance of role modeling, representation, and the power other women have to influence their decision-making process in college. While a majority of participants never considered joining a sorority before college many heeded the advice of older women to take the leap.

Chapter Diversity: "My Sorority is Probably One of the Most Diverse"

Participants were drawn to sororities with perceived racial and ethnic diversity. However, the definition of "diversity" within each chapter was expressed differently based on council-type. For example, for NPHC and MGC sororities, participants were drawn to chapters that included women outside of the sorority's historical racial category (i.e. Black members in LGLO or Multiracial women in BGLO etc.) while participants interested in PHA organizations sought chapters with any Women of Color.

Panhellenic Council (WGLOs): Motivated by Women of Color Membership

Five of the seven participants in WGLOs were members of the same two sorority chapters. The fact that participants were concentrated in the same few chapters on campus coincides with sense of belonging literature (King, 2008; Renn, 1998; 2007; 2008; Renn & Ozaki, 2005) as well as the concept of homophily (Kim, 2006; Marsden, 1987). Each participant in a predominately white sorority believed their chapter was one of the most diverse sororities on campus, albeit diversity within whiteness. Based on interviews and explicitly stated by various students throughout the social justice Greek retreat, students expressed their distinct belief that there are just a select few organizations that welcome WOC and thus these organizations were more attractive to

participants (Chen, 1998; Park, 2008; 2012). Specifically, Students of Color in WGLOs at the social justice retreat confirmed that the diversity of their respective chapters was a major catalyst when deciding which organization to join, echoing participant interviews. Kaden (Afro-Latina, member of a WGLO) explained:

> I would say my sorority is probably one of the most diverse Panhellenic ones. And I really appreciate that and so even when I was going through recruitment, I immediately picked up on that because you know, going through recruitment, especially Panhellenic recruitment, it's a big deal for most people. But when you're also a minority in that community, it tackles on a whole new set of concerns. I think I'm fortunate to have the sorority that I have. They're so understanding, they promote inclusiveness all the time.

Kaden asserted that she did not want to be "the only one" in her chapter and was attracted to the fact that she saw other Women of Color in her sorority both during rush and during the new member process. For Kaden, this spoke to shared values and gave her a sense of belonging she likely would not feel in a chapter comprised of only white women. When I asked her to elaborate on why she picked her sorority over another, she stated:

> I think that part of the reason why I like being in the sorority I am in now is because there's so many different types of people that not only looked different but have just a bunch of different interests as well and I think that with my background [as Multiracial], growing up with people of different backgrounds and going to private school and then going to public school, I think if I were to join NPHC, I would want to be in something with a little

> bit of everything, because I feel like I would be a better fit for that, versus if it's just one demographic.

Kaden's decision to join PHA specifically was based on her previous experience in private school, in predominately white spaces and her ability to navigate multiple spaces as an Afro-Latina in various contexts. Kaden believed that NPHC organizations are less diverse (i.e. "one demographic") and thus believed PHA organizations were "a better fit."

Molly, like all other participants in WGLOs, came from predominately white neighborhoods and educational environments prior to college and thus felt comfortable in predominately white spaces, yet, Molly still yearned for a sisterhood that included Women of Color. For Molly, racially and ethnically diverse sisters meant she could "feel at home" and comfortable within a predominately white environment:

> Diversity was definitely a big part in it for me. As I said, one of the girls who rushed me was African American, and also just looking around at any other sorority, I didn't see the diversity that I saw in [Epsilon]. So that was a big part for me that I wanted to feel at home, and looking around there I was like, "Oh, there's people who kind of look like me here. It's not just completely Caucasian, I wouldn't feel out of place." So that was a big factor, as well as how I just felt comfortable there. I think that probably played in with the diversity factor, but walking in there it was like, "I think I can like let everything out."

Although all participants shared in their disdain for the PHA recruitment process, Molly and Lana found comfort when they were paired with Women of Color. For Molly and Lana, this pairing and subsequent conversations with Women of Color in

predominately white sororities signaled possible acceptance, shared values, and comfort should they be selected to join their respective organizations. Lana shared “the reason I chose Gamma, is because from the outside looking in, we are one of the more diverse, racially, PHA sororities on campus. Do I think it's enough? Absolutely not”.

Lana continued:

> And one of the girls that I talked to who's currently my big, talking to her during recruitment, she was one of the only Women of Color I talked to going through all of recruitment, all sixteen chapters.

Shannon echoed the salience of racial diversity to her decision-making process, placing particular importance on the inclusion of Multiracial women in her sorority:

> I know my sorority has about thirty girls or so that are of color, of Mixed race, which is not that much but it's definitely more than all the other sororities on campus, which I think is why I feel more comfortable because it's like oh, I can identify with some other girls racially.

While some participants in WGLOs initially denied the impact of chapter diversity to their decision-making process, they later contradicted themselves. Participants clearly felt more connected and comfortable in more racially diverse chapters when given the choice to join a racially homogenous organization or not. Jenny, the only member of her sorority in this study, offered a unique perspective. Initially, Jenny asserted the racial and ethnic diversity within her chapter was not part of her consideration process to join, although now she finds great value in a racially diverse chapter:

> My sorority specifically is very diverse which we didn't ... I didn't realize when I joined. I didn't join because it was diverse but now that I've been there for three years, I guess seeing the diversity is actually really cool. It's from so many different things. We have had three girls in my sorority from Dubai.

Jenny elaborated about the beautiful tapestry of cultures and backgrounds found within her sorority and yet alluded to the fact that her sorority still maintains a level of colorblindness in their approach which was also confirmed by various participants throughout my observation of the university's annual Greek retreat centered on issues of diversity, inclusion and social justice. Attendees specifically spoke to the lack of dialogue around issues race and racism in predominately white fraternities and sororities which resulted in one attendee, Women of Color, disaffiliating from her PHA organization. Although Jenny characterized the racial and ethnic representation as unintentional, she also described it as "comforting" when she stated:

> People that aren't even from this country. People of all different backgrounds, all different areas, different majors. It's just really cool. I think that's something that we accidentally all stumbled upon because it's not like we talked about it really during recruitment. I don't remember that standing out to me and thinking, wow, there's so many people that are different in this. I think it's really comforting…

Lastly, Jenny explained why she choose not to join other sororities, directly unpacking what it means to "fit in" as a Multiracial woman:

> …everyone [in my sorority] was very laid back, people were funny, people were really funny. It wasn't so much about looks whereas it's very clear other chapters, I just felt so out of place in some chapters because it was just all blonde, beautiful people. You could name specifically in the chapter what people look like. Some of them, they're all blondes. Some of them they're all dark haired. One is all Jewish. Whereas my sorority specifically nobody had a fitting, "this is what everyone looks like." I think that was cool. I didn't wanna be somewhere where there was an overarching oh, all the girls here look like this. I don't look like anyone.

Jenny directly asserted that she sought chapters that were not homogenous in appearance. Initially describing personalities, cultures and personas, Jenny later goes on to describe the physical appearance of women in some chapters, women she did not look like. A sense of belonging in her sorority meant finding a sorority that was not comprised of "all blondes.[22]" Throughout the interview, Jenny described her chapter as a collection of misfits. They shared similar values, did not take themselves or sorority life, in general, too seriously. While she began the interview downplaying the significance of the racial and ethnic diversity, as the interview progressed, she realized how important a diverse chapter was to her sense of belonging. Finally, Maria offered a counter narrative. Maria described how her journey in Greek life began:

> When I first started, I never thought how I identified ethnically and racially would ever come into play. And at my old school it really didn't because everyone there ... we had a lot of the girls [from State] county, white

[22] It is important to note, Jenny associates "all blondes" as "beautiful people" which I discuss later in the theme related to white standards of beauty.

> Catholic people. But because the school itself was so full of minorities, it also meant ... one of my best friends in it [Epsilon] was Indian. We had ... actually I've checked since ... more and more Indian people... and that means they're Muslims and Sikh, which I think is great to have real, actual diversity is so amazing.

Upon Maria's transfer to State University, Maria thought PHA organizations would be *more* diverse than her previous institution. Maria held this assumption because of SUs size (large research I, flagship institution) and highly publicized, campus-wide racial/ethnic diversity. She was disappointed to find that the same chapter (Epsilon) she had once joined at ESU was not as racially diverse at SU and the women of Epsilon did not seek to change the status quo:

> And then coming here, I didn't see as much [diversity] but since it's a bigger school they always want to press for diversity. I think it became a big deal because here, diversity and recruitment meant ... I like pink and *Legally Blonde* but I don't go out. Whereas she likes red, white, and blue but goes out all the time. That's diversity to them, but I always understood it as something else. It became a bigger issue for me here because of the different definitions of what diversity is in Greek life.

Maria believed diversity was shallow and performative specifically at SU in comparison to ESU. In order to advertise that diversity existed within PHA sororities, they had to shift the emphasis from race and ethnicity to more superficial characteristics such as favorite color and movie preferences.

"All Blonde, Beautiful People": Whiteness and Sorority Tier System

Similar to Park's findings in her 2008 study, participants alluded to the fact that lower tier[23] sororities coincided with a greater percentage of racial/ethnic diversity within their membership. Jenny mentioned not feeling comfortable in chapters composed of "all blonde, beautiful people". Lana shared Jenny's sentiments not only describing where she found comfort, but also how Lana experienced chapters where she received messages that she was unwelcome:

> I got dropped by a fair amount of chapters, which was fine with me. There were some chapters that I wasn't comfortable with. The so-called, in PHA and IFC Greek life, Greek rank is a very large thing. The top tier sororities, there were two of them that were all, white, blonde women. There is one chapter on this campus that I'm pretty sure has no Black or Latina women. They were automatically, they were ranked probably high on everybody else's list. They were an automatic no for me.

Lana disqualified any chapters that were seemingly all white even if that meant joining a lower tiered sorority. Belonging and acceptance was more important to Lana. Shannon echoed Jenny and Lana's sentiments when she stated:

> … during recruitment, I definitely saw diversity and just like with the people I talked to, everyone was coming from different places and came from different backgrounds and was involved in different things on campus. That was important to me because I definitely wanted to get involved. I know

[23] Lower tier (informal ranking system) sororities also referred to as lower status sororities refers to the perception that they are less elite, less prestigious, easier to get invited to join and in this case less white (Park, 2008).

> some other sororities have images of all the girls looking the same or just like all of them being involved in the same thing. I was like, that's not what I want. Well, some, just like all white girls, I don't know ... I didn't have an issue getting along with them, but I think just diversity is important to me.

Shannon clearly voiced her need for a chapter with women from diverse backgrounds and interests when selecting the best fit. All white chapters did not meet her standards of membership.

Kaden used the word "authenticity" to illustrate how class, tier level and whiteness were interconnected. She observed this clearly during the rush process:

> Yeah, I had a house that was considered top [tier] and I didn't know it. And so when I was told that after preference round [last round of recruitment] and I was like, okay, but thinking back, the other house that I had seemed like they were very into their image and they wanted to project a very cohesive image but it wasn't in a good way and I felt like there wasn't very much authenticity in that sorority. And I just knew that I probably wouldn't fit in there because of that.

NPHC and MGC: Motivated by Non-Monoracial Majority

Unlike women in PHA organizations who sought Women of Color members, women in NPHC and MGC organizations sought chapters with non-monoracial Women of Color or monoracial women who fit outside the racial majority. For these students, the presence of such members indicated a greater probability of fit given their multiple racial heritages. For example, seeing Biracial or monoracial Black members in LGLOs or Multiracial women in BGLOs, signaled a level of acceptance for participants in this study

who fell outside the racial/ethnic majority of the chapter. Similarly, Beau found comfort joining a historically Black sorority with some semblance of non-monoracial Black women.

Beau was initially apprehensive to join a predominately Black sorority given her lack of knowledge and exposure to Black/African American culture growing up. Beau described feeling more comfortable joining Beta because she could see herself represented in the established membership due to the presence of other Biracial, Multiracial women:

> …there were more women with my complexion who were in the chapter… you know when you run into someone else who is Biracial or Multiracial, it's just a like, wow. This is cool. Someone who will understand this weird struggle. Identity struggle. So, I would say that certainly... and looking back, I think that may have been more of a subconscious thing. You just envision yourself out with people who look like you in general… So, on my line[24], yes. A couple of my direct prophytes [existing/older members], yes as well. So, those were who I was able to see on campus. That's initially who I saw in the organization.

Similarly, Ashley was conflicted when selecting whether to join a BGLO or LGLO given her Black and Puerto Rican heritages. For Ashley, the inclusive motto and the enactment of that motto in the racial/ethnic make-up of Lambda's (LGLO) membership indicated a good fit:

[24] Line refers to the group of women who join the sorority with you. This term is typically used by people in BGLOs and LGLOs only.

> … our national motto is "Latin by tradition, not by definition". So, that's one part of the fact that, to be Latino is a very broad word in of itself. That's another thing people are just kind of getting or understanding the concept of Afro-Latina. So, we have sisters of all races. Like I said, one of my line sisters isn't Latina, at all. She's actually just Black and white. She's there for everything. She never expresses any type of feeling left out or feeling unwelcome. She's around for literally everything, and just as happy as can be. We also, we have fully Black sisters. We have sisters that are half, as I'm half Latina, half Black… some that are half Latina, half white.

Joe echoed Ashley's sentiments about the significant role diversity played in her desire to align with a predominately Latinx sorority. Joe expressed how she did not feel the same level of appreciation and representation of racial/ethnic diversity within NPHC sororities as compared to her Latina sorority:

> They [some sorors] have no Latina background and that's even like "Latin by tradition, not by definition" is one of our mottoes, and we have sisters that are of different backgrounds and I'm not saying that NPHC didn't, but I couldn't see that… I didn't see that representation. Whereas [Lambda] I could see that there are people that were not a part of it. So, it [Lambda], to me, felt more accepting of where I can be both sides of my identity and not choose one. Whereas what I saw on campus for NPHC was choosing that side, which again, I'm not saying that's the case… Other campuses might be more diverse, but what was here for me was like that. So,

> Lambda happened effortlessly and then it had that representation and the diversity that I really wanted.

Multiracial students often feel pressure to choose one heritage over another. In an attempt to thwart the notion that Greek letter affiliation meant racial alignment; she specifically chose a sorority that she believed represented both of her racial heritages through the diversity of its members and motto. Joe felt fully accepted and affirmed as a Multiracial woman in Lambda. NPHC did not afford Joe with the same fluidity. For Joe, joining an NPHC sorority symbolized choosing one racial heritage over another which would be directly incongruent with her beliefs and lived experience.

In each case, participants expressed a desire to join a sorority where they felt represented, welcomed and valued. Specifically, they all sought chapters with racial and ethnic diversity regardless of council. Although that meant joining “lower tier” sororities or rejecting the “more beautiful” chapters for women in WGLOs or leaning into chapters with more liberal mottoes and enacted diverse membership, each participant was motivated by an overarching sense of belonging illustrated through structural diversity.

Desire for Deeper Connectedness to One’s Racial Heritage

College campuses are home to a number of student clubs and organizations created to build social integration on campus (Astin, 1993). These organizations link students across common career aspirations, social causes, athletic interests, and cultural traditions among other commonalities. Multiracial students who desire to connect with their peers along similar racial or ethnic lines may have difficulty given their connection to multiple racial and ethnic communities. Consequently, Multiracial students are

typically only given the option to join organizations that do not represent their full racial heritage (Daniel, 1996; King, 2008; Renn, 1998; Root, 1996).

Participants in MGC and NPHC sororities, specifically, referenced a deliberate desire to join their sorority due to the organization's unapologetic emphasis on one of their racial heritages. Participants believed their sorority provided a level of connection they were missing from their upbringings or missing from the general campus community environment. Indie (AGLO) and Ashley (LGLO) desired to amplify the voices of their respective communities backed by the prestige of a Greek letter organization. They thought their other racial heritages (white and Black respectively) were well represented on campus through broader organizational and institutional supports (i.e. Black Cultural Center and well-established Black Student Union). Participants believed these same kinds of institutional supports were not present for Asian American and Latinx communities on campus.

When Ashley transitioned to college, she felt an incongruence in cultural representation on campus, from the equal representation she experienced at home. Ashley believed her Puerto Rican heritage was less represented on an institutional, structural and cultural level at SU while her Black heritage was more established and represented on campus. In college, Ashley found multiple opportunities to connect with Black students and seemingly Black-related social justice efforts and fewer opportunities to connect with Latinx students and causes:

> …there is a Black [SU]. That's a thing… But there isn't a Latino [SU]. There is, but mind you, I didn't find out that there was until after I became [a member of Lambda]. So, it's not out there. There's not as much events going

> on. There's not as much togetherness, I would say in it. So, I ultimately ended up choosing [Lambda], because that's ... It was so easy for me to stay connected to both of my cultures when I was at home and it was kind of being forced down my throat. My father was constantly there cooking, or playing salsa or bachata, whatever it may be. Then, I came to school, and it's like that whole part of me was gone, but I still had the Black side of my culture. No one spoke Spanish, no one that listened to that kind of music. All my friends were Black, which was great, which was fine, but you know, you kind of start to miss that other aspect, especially when you come from a Mixed-race family that was very embracing of both sides. So, I ultimately chose [Lambda] as a way to compensate for me to have people that spoke Spanish, and have people that ate the same kinds of food that I ate, and knew what I was talking about if I reference this, and watch telenovelas, and stuff like that. So, it was kind of my home away from home.

Ashley's membership in Lambda was both a personal and political decision. She was able to stay connected to a community that equally represented her lived experience while attempting to amplify the Latinx community at SU through events and community building, which Ashley thought was missing from her college experience. Ashley's perspective was further validated through the observation as members of Latina sororities explained that as a result of limited Latinx visibility at SU, they strategically partner with non-Latinx organizations to magnify their message which illustrates why Ashley may have felt Lambda was most compatible with her lived experience.

Similarly, Indie consciously chose to join an Asian interest sorority to amplify the voices of the Asian American community, which she perceived as an invisible population on campus. She used her membership to immerse herself in the experiences and challenges of the Asian American community through involvement with strong, likeminded women who wanted to impact the greater SU community. Indie explained:

> The main thing are the people [sorority sisters] and then I also wanted to join a group of girls that empowered each other and especially because there's no voice ... there's not a large voice in the Asian demographic, so I wanted to help raise awareness about Asian American culture, Asian American stories. I also wanted something all encompassing, so I felt like [Alpha] had that where we could have service opportunities and leadership opportunities and spread cultural awareness.

In contrast to Indie and Ashley, Beau (BGLO) sought membership in Beta as a means to fill a void, a lack of education and awareness of the Black American experience that was missing in her upbringing. Beau felt a disconnect to her African and African American heritage, later leading her to join the first historically Black sorority. Beau elaborated:

> I still feel like there's a lot that I still don't fully understand and don't know. I just will try to, I think that's sort of my experience and joining my organization was, and still is, very pivotal in helping me learn more and be who I am. It's hard to think about that and summarize. There are so many facets. Onions, I don't know, levels, layers, whatever. I've only gotten to maybe the first or second.

Joe (LGLO) used her Greek letter organization to situate her Multiracial identity on campus. For Joe, the historical and contemporary significance of NPHC organizations to the Black community made her feel as though choosing to join one of the Black sororities meant she was "choosing" her Black heritage *over* her Latinx heritage. Whereas choosing to join Lambda felt like she was honoring both parents and thus both heritages because she had "always had so much African American influence." She used her affiliation and connection to Latinx women via Lambda as a means to develop deeper ties, education and understanding of her Latinx heritage:

> I don't know why it might just be in my head, but it just seemed more like choosing that side of me and that might not make sense since I joined a Latina sorority which on the outside might seem like picking that side of me totally. Like I said, I always had so much African American influence and stuff like that. And it just felt like totally choosing that side, and I had the Latina side, but that was definitely a little less emphasized. So, picking that is not going to help me learn my Spanish. Not that joining [Lambda] did help me learn Spanish... It just was like picking that side of me totally and again, on paper, it may seem like, "Okay, why'd you go the total opposite side," but we actually have sisters in our chapter that are not Latina at all.

As participant reflections demonstrate, Multiracial people often feel pressure to "choose" a racial heritage when in fact their lived experience represents more than one heritage. Joe made a conscious decision to pledge Lambda as a form of resistance to the Multiracial microaggression which often asks Multiracial people to "choose" one race

over another (Johnston-Guerrero & Chaudhari, 2016; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Museus et al., 2015; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2011; 2013; Nishimura, 1998). Lambda afforded her the agency to claim both of her racial heritages while using her membership as a means of gaining a deeper appreciation for and tie to the Latinx community.

Nina (BGLO) was unapologetic in her attachment to Black women and the social justice mission of her sorority. In addition to her own personal motivations for joining, Nina had to contest with her mother's perception that joining a Black sorority meant she was rejecting her whiteness. Nina shared:

> I do think that she felt I was rejecting my whiteness… But I think that also, I just became super pro-Black. I was just radically Black. There was no Mixed. Because then I started feeling like that whole concept of "Mixed," was to fetishize the beauty of a Mixed woman, and to attribute her beauty to her whiteness, or the otherness that wasn't the Blackness. I started rejecting the idea of Mixed and being more pro-Black.

Nina's membership in Beta directly aligned with her desire to connect with her African American heritage and culture.

In all five aforementioned cases, each participant desired connectedness to one racial heritage; however, for Joe, Beau, Indie, and Ashley, their decision to join their respective sororities fortified their Multiracial identity among the monoracial spaces they occupied on campus. By contrast, Nina's connection was a direct and unapologetic alignment with her Blackness at the expense of her white and Multiracial identities.

While participants in MGC and NPHC organizations intentionally sought connection to a single racial heritage that they felt less connection or alignment to either

on campus or generally in their lives, Jenny (WGLO) articulated a divergent view while expressing a common Multiracial narrative. Jenny never felt as though she belonged in either Asian or Latinx spaces, so she defaulted to spaces she was accustomed to, predominately white:

> I think also, in terms of just joining a specific organization dominated by culture I just never had that ... I align with Asian culture or with Korean culture, I guess, but I don't know that much about it. I don't feel 100 percent... Whenever I'm with a bunch of Koreans I don't feel like I'm a part of them. I just feel I'm there. That goes the same when I'm with Hispanic people. It's just a weird in-between. It's almost like, oh, let me just go hang out with a bunch of white people.

Instead of using her lack of knowledge about her Korean and/or Mexican culture as motivation to join the sororities that represented those communities, Jenny forged a different path and remained in spaces she ultimately felt comfortable.

Maria, in retrospect, appreciated the value LGLOs possess, to build community around one's racial/ethnic heritage, however, she had a clear vision of the type of Greek letter experience she wanted that she did not believe LGLOs could provide:

> …this [joining a LGLO] is not the Greek experience that I wanted. And I felt so bad because they [women in LGLOs] were like really nice people but I always imagined the Elle Woods [white] experience. I was like, that's not what I want... 'cause when I got into college, I was like, I love the pride that they [LGLOs] have and I want to be able to foster and develop that. But not through this way. Because I always thought you could only be a member

> of one organization. But I just was like, meh, I'm just gonna do PHA. Because it was more the social experience that I wanted. So that was why I kind of closed off any other thing. I think it was ignorance and closed minded.

Unbeknownst to Lana (WGLO), her affiliation with a white sorority built a barrier prohibiting her from building a connection to the Black community and ultimately jeopardized her cultural authenticity within some Black spaces. A result of the campus racial climate, the impact of Lana's decision to join Greek life interfered with the racial identity development experienced by her peers in NPHC and MGC organizations. Lana clarified:

> I remember ... for me, a distinct feeling that I usually have frequently felt is feeling the need to choose. Feeling the need to be Black or be white, which was never a problem before. It was never something that I had to grapple with... And my spring semester of freshman year, my question was, do I want to join a Black sorority, or do I want to join a white sorority? We can say that that's not what it is, but that's what it is. And I thought about it for a really, really, really long time. And I'm not a legacy of any organization, I didn't have any attachment to, but I made sure to do my research in all three councils, and I decided to go with PHA simply because the process was easier.

Due to the racial segregation within Greek life and SU's campus climate generally, Lana felt that she unintentionally "chose" her white heritage by joining a PHA organization and hurt her ability to connect with the Black community. Lana wrestled with the notion

that "once I made that decision to do PHA, I was like, how am I going to be accepted as a minority in a predominantly white sorority?"

Greek life represented a barrier for Lana rather than a bridge like it did for Ashley, Joe, Indie and Beau. Similarly, to Lana, Clare thought she could not express both her white and Black racial heritages after she joined a WGLO. Lana and Clare's cultural authenticity was called into question by Communities of Color at SU because of the racial segregation based on the rigidity of racial boundaries in Greek life and how it re-creates race and racial hierarchies. While their decision to join WGLOs was not promoted by a rejection of their Blackness or an embrace of white-only communities, the unwritten rules on campus as well as the symbols and norms of monoracial Greek letter membership placed Lana and Clare in a proverbial racial box, a form of monoracism. Unbeknownst to Clare, her choice created distance from some members of the Black community, leading her to join the Multiracial Student Association (MSA) to gain some sense of belonging:

> I really didn't notice how bad it [racial segregation on campus] was until I joined Greek life, 'cause then it was like I'm in a really big white community, and I do know that the Black community doesn't really like [white] Greek life. I've also had comments that are like, "Oh, you're in a sorority, go be with your sorority." It's so weird, and that's been my personal experience with it.

Clare continued:

> I don't know. I don't like that feeling, I don't like being secluded. And then especially at home, it [both racial heritages] is kind of like a bigger part of

> my life, so being here it's very strange to only be in the one community. Whereas where I grew up, or being in high school, I never had that problem. I don't know, I just enjoyed the company of everyone, so it's very weird for me to come here and that's not the case.

Clare also stated:

> I wish I would have known that [how segregated SU Greek life was] before [Eta], 'cause I definitely think if I would have waited a year and realized that I have different options I would have joined a different one for that reason, to be like okay, I want to have both sides, 'cause I would have had my friends in PHA either way.

Given the negative campus racial climate, Clare perceived her membership in a PHA organization, as opposed to an NPHC or MGC organization, as disqualifying her from full membership in the Black community and thus hurt her ability to become more connected to her Black heritage:

> Yeah… I think me being in PHA is kind of a huge deal. I think it definitely has a big stigma behind it. Do you think it makes it harder for me...? I definitely I would have struggled either way, 'cause I grew up with my mom so I don't have a really strong African American culture, so I think I would have struggled to fit into that community either way, which is something that I didn't struggle with before so I think that's weird, but I do think being in PHA makes it a little bit harder.

Campus context matters. Clare was unaware of the racial segregation on campus and within the Greek life system, which contributed to her inability to build lasting

connections with the Black community from within a PHA organization. Given that college is a time to explore one's various identities, Clare attributed her white sorority membership to stunting her racial identity development and connection to her Black heritage. Participants in the NPHC and MGC sororities intentionally joined their organization to bridge connections with a specific racial heritage. To the contrary, Clare and Lana's affiliation disconnected them from their Black heritage illustrating how Greek letter organizations can serve as both a bridge and barrier for Multiracial women.

Sisterhood: Desire to Belong to a Community of Women

If you live on the margins of society in any way, you are constantly looking for a place and space to belong (Anzaldúa, 1987). Participants in this study who held multiple salient identities, most notably multiple racial heritages, reflected on the significance of being in community with women through their sorority. While participants had the option (and some did participate) in non-Greek student run organizations, their motivation to join a sorority was rooted in their desire to connect with other women through a sisterhood. Additionally, the permanency of sororities, via the expectation of lifelong membership, signified an added level of comfort that participants could depend on. For Beau (BGLO):

> I moved a lot... like I said it's always like the struggle, like where do you fit in? I saw Greek life, Black Greek life in particular, as something that would stick with me my whole life. A place that I would always be welcome.

Constantly moving throughout the United States and the world, Beau rarely felt stability within her relationships. Beta provided Beau with a foundation and unique set of

relationships that she could depend on no matter where she moved after graduation and an even deeper connection to her alma mater.

Similarly, Jenny (WGLO) reflected on her desire to join a sorority, the purpose of which was to "just give me a place to belong." Maria's (WGLO) context of transferring chapters from one institution to another after a traumatic experience at her first institution meant that sorority life provided her with the support and network she needed upon transfer: a community of women. "In that time of my life, it was so perfect. It was everything I wanted." Although Maria's (WGLO) needs as a college senior changed overtime from an initial focus on social outlets to interpersonal connection with her sisters, joining and later transferring sorority chapters provided Maria with a built-in community of women. Maria's sorority sisters played a critical role in her transition.

Unlike other participants who hesitated to join a sorority, Lana (WGLO) explained, "I knew I wanted to be in a sorority. I loved the idea of sisterhood, it's great. It's what I wanted; I knew from the start." Given, Lana's high school experience, she sought a community of women she could depend on:

> Throughout high school, I didn't have the best of friends. And I think that I just had this idea that sisterhood was what a good friend would look like, and me not having that in high school, it was something that I wanted…Yeah, even my senior year of high school, I decided that I wanted to join a sorority just because the idea of sisterhood. I hold it really dear, and I take it very seriously. The fact that me and 100 girls are joined just by a title of [Gamma], I care about each and every one of them, and simply because that's what sisterhood is to me.

Ashley (LGLO) felt she missed out on strong relationships with women prior to college. Without hesitation, Ashley asserted “the number one reason I wanted to join a sorority was for sisterhood.” She deliberately sought a community of women. “I only have a brother, so I don't really have that sisterly relationship. I felt like that would be something that would be good for me.” Ashley continued:

> So, I wanted a less surface level relationship. I'm that way, because I'm very untrusting of people. Again, I don't really know people's intentions and all that stuff. So, I wanted a relationship with a group of girls that I knew I could trust and that would have my back, no matter what. That was one of the things. Also, because, yeah, because I only had a brother.

Similarly, Jenny’s (WGLO) lack of girlfriends made sorority affiliation more appealing after initially lacking interest to rush:

> I was always the type who was like "I don't need to pay for friends..." Freshman year, first semester… my roommate was super into it. I generally have more guy friends than girlfriends, so I was like “oh this is a good opportunity to I guess meet a bunch of girls.”

Indie (WGLO) explained the tension she felt when deciding whether or not to join a sorority. Indie eventually decided, “I wanted [to join] *that* sisterhood… I wanted to join a group of girls that empowered each other.” Reflecting on why she stayed in the chapter, Indie explained that she values the “constant support and the sisterhood.”

In Nina’s (BGLO) case, the sisterhood was transformational. Her desire to find belonging on campus led her to Beta which she attributed to the positive shifts in her life

even amongst the tensions in her relationship with her mother. When asked to share her most rewarding experience as a member of her chapter, with tears in her eyes she stated:

> Sisters ... seriously, they're just always there. They always make me feel like I'm being the best [Nina] I can be. My mom and I, we parted ways earlier this year. She actually kicked me out, and my line sisters let me live with them, until I moved here. They have literally been there for me, thru everything. Those relationships, they're super invaluable. Tina's (pseudonym) my best friend. If it weren't for [Beta], I wouldn't have her, and I wouldn't be here.

Nina continued:

> The relationships with prophytes[25] have been absolutely amazing. I just feel like I always have a place to go, here, in New York, they're everywhere. My aunt [Brianna]... The real sisterhood without the politics-

Belonging is a central theme for all college students and in particular Multiracial students who constantly feel an acute need to answer questions like, "where do I belong? Where will I fit in?" Monoracial spaces contribute to these feelings of isolation. Beyond the challenges to belonging as a Multiracial person in a monoracial world and the complexities therein such as not finding or being able to easily identify other women with similar multiple heritages, they found belonging and purpose among women.

While participants expressed countless reasons why they chose to join and stay in their respective sisterhoods on campus, these decisions were met with distinct and sometimes harsh racialized experiences that illustrate how the institution of higher

[25] Prophytes refers to older members within a sorority.

education and Greek life perpetuate (mono)racism in real and lasting ways. In the next section, I outline how participants characterized their racialized experiences in all three councils. This subsequent section addresses the second research question which seeks to understand how Multiracial women experience race and racism across monoracial sororities.

Racialized Experiences in a Monoracial Sorority

Participants described various racialized experiences as members of their respective sororities. Some of the most salient experiences included: (a) Multiracial erasure: "Being forgotten" in WGLOs, (b) white womanhood: Navigating white beauty standards, (c) cultivating Women of Color spaces, and (d) Multi(racial) tokenism.

Multiracial Erasure: Being "Forgotten" in WGLOs

Participants initiated into WGLOs recounted moments in which they felt "forgotten," unheard, and invalidated within their respective organizations. Participants commented both in the interviews and observation how colorblindness and a lack of dialogue about race resulted in the erasure of their heritages, traditions, lived experiences, and racial identity furthering their invisibility in a sisterhood of predominately white women. Kaden, an Afro-Latina member of a WGLO, illustrated this erasure by commenting:

> … if you look at me, you can't tell. So that's a big thing. Most people wouldn't suspect that I'm also Hispanic, so that's kind of something that I often deal with. If I'm getting a phone call from my aunt and I answer it and I start speaking Spanish, I get like a billion looks and so that's something

> that I've had to deal with socially for a while and so does my dad because my dad doesn't look it either. It's just kind of a part our lives.

Kaden's comments reveal the complexity of continually navigating the perceptions of others' assumptions about her racial/ethnic background based on her physical appearance. Her Latinx background and her Dominican heritage are not validated until she speaks Spanish and, even then, she is met with strange looks and questions. This begins to illustrate the ways in which Kaden's Dominican heritage is less visible and over time erased based on her physical appearance (Jackson, 2010). Kaden's darker skin tone conflicts with others' assumptions about her features and her ability to speak Spanish (Payson, 1996), a direct effect of having to navigate monoracial-only paradigms of race (Harris, 2016a) set by women in her WGLO. This tension coincides with Multiracial microaggressions and cultural authenticity tests that Multiracial people are forced to navigate (Chang Ross, 2010; DaCosta, 2007; Harris, 2016; Nadal et al, 2011). The frequency of these microaggressions caused her to dismiss the underlying monoracism embedded in these interactions since "it's just kind of part of [her] life."

Maria, Caucasian and Latina, member of a WGLO, expressed her frustration with her sorority sisters who "refused" to pair her with prospective Latina women during the recruitment process. As stated by other participants, when they visited sorority houses during the recruitment process to meet women from each sorority, they often mentioned being paired with other Women of Color in the chapter[26]. Maria looked forward to the opportunity to connect with other Latinx women, however, she was never given the opportunity. Clearly frustrated, Maria stated:

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[26] The racialization of the rush (recruitment) pairing process for WGLOs is further discussed in the Cultivating Women of Color Spaces finding.

> …they didn't match me with anyone who was Hispanic… [it was based on] where I went to high school. And I was like what the heck? I know there's Hispanic people here because you're putting them with the two ... my friend [Phaedra] (pseudonym) who's Greek and Isabella (pseudonym) who's Columbian. I'm like, "stop forgetting me," like "stop forgetting me"…

Maria hoped to serve as a role model for Latinas who participated in the PHA recruitment process. As one of few Women of Color in PHA and even fewer in her chapter, she was proud and excited to serve as a physical representative of WOC in PHA. Maria hoped to usher more Latinas into PHA and increase the representation of Latinx people in WGLOs. Although some might see matching current and prospective members based on race as a form of tokenism, Maria was proud of her Latinx heritage and wanted to share it with others who may have had trouble navigating the predominately white Greek life experience.

Not only did Maria's sorority sisters continuously "forget" or overlook her Latinx heritage when it came time to group prospective members across racial lines, as is customary, Maria also felt the erasure of her heritage from the only other Latina in her sorority. Maria's sorority sister, Isabella (pseudonym) kept "forgetting" that Maria was Venezuelan, likely due to her white-passing physical appearance:

> Oh my god. People never think... like there's a girl that I love, who is Columbian [Isabella]... so we always used to talk and we would always have that conversation of I'm from Venezuela, you're from Columbia… [but] she would always forget because I don't look Hispanic to her. And now we're close enough friends that she remembers, and we talk about [our culture] ...

> we actually talk about the political issues because they're neighboring countries and it's important to both of us. But it took a long time for that to happen. It was to me... like oh my god... you remember [Phaedra] who's Greek because her name is [Phaedra] and she looks like a Greek goddess... oh she's beautiful. But you can't remember that I'm Hispanic, but you also confuse... there's another girl whose last name is [Guzman] (pseudonym), but she's Filipino... everyone thinks she's the Hispanic one. So, it's very difficult for me to be recognized as a minority in my chapter because people always forget, and they just look at me. It's very frustrating.

Navigating predominately white spaces, in this case, her sorority, as a white-passing Latinx Mixed woman, proved to be a source of frustration for Maria, even when relating to another Latinx woman within a monoracial space. Maria constantly contended with other's perceptions conflicting with her lived reality (Renn, 2004). The daughter of a recently deported, undocumented immigrant mother, Maria was raised by a community of Venezuelan women and was justifiably discouraged with having to "out" her racial identity to be validated and seen by her sorority sisters. The added layer of being Multiracial is compounded by the mixed immigration status within her family unit thus making her Venezuelan heritage even more salient. Similarly, to Maria, Lana, (Black and white) member of a WGLO, explained how another Woman of Color in her sorority assumed she was white and was later shocked to find out she was Multiracial:

> …actually recently, it was last week, I had a conversation with a girl in my sorority, 'cause I was running for diversity and inclusion chair. And we were just talking, and I realized, she didn't know that I was Black. And she was

> like, “You're Black?” I was like, “Yeah, I'm Mixed, Black and white”. And she was like, “I really had no idea. You can be invited in our Black group chat", 'cause obviously we're the minority in a predominantly white organization. And I think that that's a commonality, that in college, people haven't seen my parents, so they don't really know. I'm racially ambiguous. And I don't feel the need to announce my race, it's my business and if you're going to look at me differently because of my race then… yeah.

Lana’s racial ambiguity resulted in the exclusion and erasure of her Black heritage. A common theme across WGLOs is the lack of dialogue and awareness about race within chapters. Because WGLO members rarely engage in any such dialogue, Lana initially missed out on the opportunity to participate in meaningful Women of Color-only spaces within her sorority. As the literature detailed, Women of Color spaces or “sister circles” often serve as critical enclaves of support in oppressive environments (Allen, 2019; Croom et al., 2017). The lack of dialogue about race within WGLOs, as demonstrated in these participants’ stories, further exacerbates the cloak of invisibility for Multiracial and monoracial Women of Color who seek membership in these organizations.

Lana described yet another example of being incorrectly racialized by her sorority sisters. Lana explained:

> Well, actually, after that interaction that I had with my friend that she was like, "I didn't know you were Black," I began to think and I was like, I bet you most of these people [sorority sisters] don't know what my race is. And looking at my appearance, they probably think I'm Latina. I remember,

> going through the big/little process, my big, she is a Latina woman. And… we were out sometime, and this other girl drunkenly said, "Oh, she just wants another Latina little." And I was like, but I'm not even ... what? So, I think that people think about, or not think ... I don't know. I don't know if they think about my race, but they probably just don't know, and that's fine with me.

Although Lana appeared indifferent by the Multiracial microaggression of being wrongful racialized, the practice of colorblindness exemplified in her sorority creates a chilling effect in which she feels unseen and unvalidated within a space that is meant to mimic the complicated familial ties of sisterhood. The aforementioned experiences reinforce a surface level relationship which seeks to erase the impact, beauty and complexity of race, ethnicity, and culture that is inherent in student organizations, even monoracial organizations. The added layer of Multiraciality and historic erasure of Multiracial people's heritage is exacerbated within the WGLO context and community.

Jenny (WGLO) shared how her personal lived experience within a majority white environment caused her to almost "forget" her own race/ethnicity:

> Oh, that's right I'm Asian! It sounds so silly and it's hard to explain to other people who aren't racially diverse. It's also weird being Multiracial. It [being Multiracial] makes it even more complicated. I really forget that I'm Mexican. I really do… I don't think that people in my sorority specifically think of me as Asian or not Asian.

Although Jenny identifies most with her Korean heritage due to her upbringing, she often "forgets" that she is not white. While some use college as a means to explore racial

heritages that they were less engaged with in their formative years, such as Jenny's Mexican American culture, others choose to remain in the communities they are most familiar and comfortable with. Perhaps if given more opportunities to share her lived experience within the white spaces she found comfort in, she may have grown to learn, gain confidence and comfort in all aspects of her identity.

Participants shared stories of being "forgotten" as a Women of Color in predominately white spaces due to monoracism, a monoracial only paradigm of race, their physical appearance and a lack of dialogue or engagement on issues of race and racialization in their respective WGLOs.

Navigating White Beauty Standards

Scholars argue that historically white Greek letter organizations continue to uphold whiteness through de-facto exclusionary practices (Cabrera et al., 2016).

> "Differing tactics may be used to 'secretly' exclude Women of Color from white sororities. Tactics include dissuading Women of Color to go through formal recruitment, funneling Women of Color into specific, low-ranked interest groups throughout recruitment, and ignoring Women of Color during the recruitment process" (Harris, Barone, & Finch, 2019, p. 19; also see Park, 2008; Vacarro & Camba-Kelsey, 2016; Webley, 2014).

As previously stated, participants selected, and were selected into, the same sororities based on the level of racial diversity and thus a perceived acceptance of Women of Color. Although participants expressed a general sense of belonging and tolerance from their sisters, they also received messages within their chapter signaling an expectation to fit into white standards of beauty.

Participants in WGLOs reflected on their liminality and pressure to navigate white standards of beauty as Multiracial Women of Color based on hair, body image, or other physical features. In each case, their beauty and acceptability in WGLO spaces were based on how closely they physically reflected white, Anglo womanhood. Additionally, participants used specific coded language to illustrate the idealism and perfectionism embedded in white womanhood that they could never attain.

Participants often referred to sororities with all white members as the "pretty ones." Molly described them as "prim, proper and perfect":

> …for some of the other ones, she was like, "These are kind of like top tier ones that are like, you know, just the really pretty girls." Well, not like in a negative way, but it's just kind of how the reputation is. And it's not that I went in there being like, "I'm not pretty enough to be here." I felt like I had to be proper everywhere and perfect. And walking into [Epsilon], it was just completely different. The girls were very calm, they were very chill, it wasn't super like "you needed to be perfect all the time," your hair is messed up, anything like that.

In the aforementioned quote, Molly introduced a common theme across participants in WGLOs, the need for straight hair. Straight hair represents whiteness in this study. Straight hair denotes hair that is not kinky, easy to comb, mimicking the soft or silky texture of a white person's hair (Ramsey, 2016). Maria and Clare echoed similar frustration to uphold white beauty standards as they described how they were asked to assimilate and adapt to the norms of white sorority life. Maria expressed her irritation with the coded, racist language directed at Women of Color in her sorority:

> When we go through things like recruitment, having natural hair is something that you need take care of. I think that's really ... like there was a whole thing about it. I'm on standards board so I hear these cases and I have to say to myself; I personally don't have natural hair. My mom has hair more like that, so I've seen ... it takes hours and money. Who is gonna do that for three weekends in a row? I see it getting worse and worse, I don't see it getting better… I think cultural awareness in my chapter is going down. It's actually really sad. It has made me ... I have distanced myself also 'cause I'm a senior and I'm just at a point where I don't care anymore.

Maria was given explicit instructions to "take care of" her hair—to conform to white standards of beauty. Maria also spotlighted the compounded impact of straightening one's hair via the economic inequality and time constraints associated with requiring women to maintain a straight hair style. The burden of time, money, and hair health, due to heat treatments, burdens women who fall outside the strict boundaries of whiteness. Maria continued to describe how she navigated white Greek life by adapting her physical appearance based on a set of expectations. She explained:

> I cared a lot about what people thought of me, what they said about me, the impression I put off in terms of, when I went into recruitment, I always was like hair straightened and perfectly Caucasian the way they wanted it to be. It would have mattered a lot to me what they thought.

Maria articulated her understandings of her sorority sister's expectations, to be "perfectly Caucasian" a task that is completely unattainable for Women of Color. Maria referenced

a concern with what “they,” meaning her white sorority sisters thought about her and how her desire to “impress” them required her to conform.

Clare chose to build coalitions with other Women of Color within her big/little family, to help her push back against the white beauty standards she was forced to navigate:

> So, my big was also Mixed, and when they told us, 'cause for recruitment they were like, "Oh, just loose curls, or straighten your hair." And she was like, "People that have curly hair don't have to do that. You can't tell people that." They didn't really enforce it, but they did say it. And it wasn't just me, there's probably 10-ish girls that have curly hair…

Clare recognized the pressure to meet white beauty standards through her hair style as well as her body type. While Clare did not receive explicit messaging from her sorority sisters that she had to lose weight, the implicit messages of being “slim and short” took a toll on her self-confidence:

> They're just all slim and short, and I think personally, I'm feeling that's just a personal thing... so that's been kind of hard. That was a little confidence blow at first. I've never suffered ... I don't know. I don't think that's a huge deal for me, my skin color, the way I look, maybe my hair. I have straightened my hair a lot. Not as much anymore, just 'cause I don't really care, but when I first joined I would straighten my hair a lot, maybe to fit in better.

To fit in, Clare admitted to straightening her hair more regularly than desired. She also addressed the internalized pressure to be skinny and petite like the majority of her

white sorority sisters. Jenny (Korean/Mexican, WGLO) went a step further to describe how her perceptions of beauty, as defined by white womanhood, impacted both herself and her Asian American sorority sister, when in the company of men. Jenny explained:

> My roommate, [also Asian American woman] she's like, "I feel… I think boys don't talk to me because they don't think I'm pretty." It's not even just whether or not they think we're attractive it's just our first immediate thought is oh, is it because of this. And I feel like, in general, this might just be our bias opinion, but my roommate and I feel like we don't make easy friends when we go to frats as much as other girls in our sorority.

In the face of constant pressure to meet white beauty standards, Jenny and her roommate could not help but to question why they received less attention from fraternal men. As one of few Women of Color in WGLO spaces, they assumed their race and subsequent lack of attractiveness caused them to feel a level of social ostracism. Jenny also acknowledged that beyond not feeling "pretty" enough, that these feelings also caused her to suffer from the continued trauma of questioning her beauty and worthiness which likely has a cumulative effect on her self-confidence.

Kaden (Afro-Latina, WGLO) offered a counter narrative that, although equally problematic, similarly serves to uphold white beauty standards. While Jenny was concerned with a lack of attention, Kaden recalled capturing the attention of many men.

> I'm not trying to sound cocky but a lot of them [men] will find me pretty and different because I look different than everyone else, so I'm always approached and they always wanna get my number, and they're like, "Oh you look different." I got called "exotic" once... so yeah that can be rough.

Kaden recounted being exoticized and hypersexualized by fraternal men. Kaden's otherness caused her to be hypervisible in white spaces. Based on her physical disposition and words, Kaden found the attention to be uncomfortable. Regardless of the frequency of attention, Multiracial women in WGLOs were racialized in comparison to their white women peers.

On a larger, systemic level, Lana (Black/white, WGLO) explained how interconnected the tiered (informal ranking) Greek system was to whiteness:

> …the first round, I got dropped by a fair amount of chapters, which was fine with me. There was some chapters that I wasn't comfortable with. The so-called, in PHA and IFC Greek life, Greek rank is a very large thing. The top tier sororities, there were two of them that were all, white, blonde women. There is one chapter on this campus that I'm pretty sure has no Black or Latina women. They were automatically, they were ranked probably high on everybody else's list. They were an automatic no for me.

Lana's characterization of the top tier sororities as racially homogenous, directly aligns with scholarship that asserted "the more selective a sorority is, the more racially homogenous a sorority will be/can remain" (Harris, 2019a, p. 1041; Park, 2008). Lana rejected the opportunity to be paired with a top tiered sorority, perhaps because she knew she would not fit in or perhaps because she knew she would not be admitted into the organization.

Below, Beau (Black and white, BGLO) offers a BGLO perspective using hair as a symbol to unpack why she ultimately chose not to join a WGLO:

> I don't look like them, at all. Literally, no matter how hard I try, I will not look like them. And that's okay. That's fine. Rather [than] being pressured to look a certain type of way, I would just rather be a part of an organization where there's so many different shades and curl patterns and features and they're all just celebrated, tremendously.

White beauty standards are a byproduct of white supremacy (Hall, 2004; Hunter, 2005; 2007). Beau's decision to reject a space in which she did not identify physically was her form of resistance at a predominately white institution. The manifestation of privileging white womanhood and positioning white women as the highest standard of beauty is not only evident in US society (Hunter, 2007) but foundational to the creation of and perpetuity of WGLOs. Participants in WGLOs were consistently reminded that although they had proximity to whiteness, either through their affiliation in WGLOs or their European heritage, that still could never be white. They learned how to navigate these spaces by distancing themselves from their chapter towards the end of their tenure in the organization or conversely building coalitions and spheres of support with other WOC in the organization.

Cultivating Women of Color Spaces

NPHC and MGC sororities were founded by and for Women of Color. They were built to uplift Communities of Color and inspire activism in the face of harsh campus racial climates (Chen, 2009; Hughey, 2006; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; Whaley, 2009). The intended benefits of these organizations live on in the participants in this study. Participants shared the importance of cultivating Women of Color spaces. Unsurprisingly, women in NPHC and MGC organizations were upfront about expressing

the importance of these spaces; Nina stated emphatically that her BGLO "was my sanctuary." Participants in NPHC and MGC sororities were unapologetic in their desire to unite with other Women of Color. What was shocking was that although participants in WGLOs either deliberately rushed a predominately white sorority or did not know about the NPHC and MGC prior to joining PHA, participants in WGLOs still managed to find and take comfort in building coalitions and spaces with Women of Color without expressly stating it.

Most notably, Kaden was one of the most outspoken about her unwavering desire to join a WGLO even though she was aware of sororities that may have better represented her racial/ethnic heritages (i.e. African American and Dominican). Kaden expressed contradictory thoughts regarding NPHC organizations, as she discussed the benefits and needs for WOC-only spaces in one breath and asserted that NPHC organizations are "one demographic" in the next. The intonation being negative rather than descriptive. While downplaying the diversity within NPHC organizations and neglecting to acknowledge the benefits of NPHC or MGC sororities, she expressed the benefits of her intra-group chat with Black women in her chapter. Kaden explained:

> Of course I have a good relationship with the people that are normally in my sorority but like, we, you know, you just, same experiences, same things that come with being in a PHA sorority that you just know they [Black sorority sisters] understand and so like when you talk with them, I was close with them before I was close with anyone else you know? So, and just knowing they're always gonna be there for you, we have a group chat of just the Black women in the sorority. And it's great, I love it.

Kaden did exclude the one Latina member of her sorority from this group chat asserting that it would be inappropriate for all the Women of Color to be in one group chat, thus denying her Latina sorority sister the opportunity to benefit from a shared WOC community.

Although adamant that a predominately white sorority was the best fit for her, Kaden shared the benefits of having intragroup spaces within her chapter of Black and Latinx women similar to what participants in NPHC and MGC organizations experienced:

> That is also really helpful. I think that, just having Black and Latino people in the sorority, having two people that understand your background is really helpful and just being able to talk to her about her home life and her parents and how it's just so similar to me. I also became very close with her [Latina sorority sister] before.

Despite a majority white membership of one hundred plus white members, Jenny formed her closest friendship with Laura (pseudonym), who is also Korean American. This illustrates the importance and need for racial/ethnic diversity in WGLOs for the simple fact that WOC in these organizations find connection, representation and are more likely to feel affirmed within these spaces:

> My roommate is Korean also… That's cool to go to things together… I talked to my roommate about this too, that we just feel when we're at socials we're very out of place and that people just kind of overlook us… we realized our friends don't understand.

Jenny's experience is consistent with Chen's (1998) participants. Chen examined the experiences of Asian American women in WGLOs. Similar to Jenny, Asian American women in Chen's study "actively recognized and refuted their minority status in various ways, such as befriending other Asian American women or constructing non-Asian identities" (Park, 2008, p. 108).

Similar to Jenny, who found connection and community with the only other Korean member of her sorority, Maria also highlighted the unique bonds she developed with the only other Latina in her sorority:

> …there's a girl that I love, who is Columbian ... so we always used to talk, and we would always have that conversation of I'm from Venezuela, you're from Columbia… And now we're close enough friends... we actually talk about the political issues because they're neighboring countries and it's important to both of us.

Although Maria developed a great relationship with Pheadra, she did not mask her frustration with the lack of racial/ethnic diversity in her sorority. She shared how that very same frustration forged a bond between the other few WOC in the chapter that share similar sentiments. Maria stated:

> But I definitely see less diversity in people and the people that do still bring diversity to the chapter feel the same way. They're the people I still hang out with. But we're like, we don't need the chapter to hang out with each other. That's kinda the sad thing 'cause it used to be what brought us all together.

Similarly, unbeknownst to Clare, her subgroup within her sorority were all WOC. "I made my friend group, and I kind of realized that all of my friends were people that were kind of ethnic, the only ethnic ones there." Although Clare alluded to the fact that her friend group was not intentionally built across racial lines, the consistency with which participants found themselves in WOC spaces aligns with literature about racially homophilous relationships in which Students of Color can find support and commonalities within these spaces (Allen, 2019; Mollica et al., 2003).

As previously mentioned, Lana shared the moment when one of her monoracial Black sorority sisters "discovered" that she was Multiracial and how that discovery afforded her an intimate community of Black women to connect with. Lana explained:

> And we were just talking, and I realized, she didn't know that I was Black. And she was like, "You're Black?". I was like, "Yeah, I'm mixed, Black and white". And she was like, "I really had no idea. You can be invited in our Black group chat", 'cause obviously we're the minority in a predominantly white organization... but yeah… it was more of a kind of connectivity, because there are obviously experiences that we [Black women] can speak to that the majority of the girls in our sorority can't.

Although participants joined a predominately white sisterhood, they found a unique sisterhood within these larger organizations. As a byproduct of isolationism and feeling othered on predominately white institutions, scholars consistently find that some Students of Color seek community and connection with other Students of Color typically through cultural and affinity-based clubs and organizations (Hurtado et al., 1996). While participants in this study opted into cross-racial engagement through their sorority

affiliation, they still experienced many of the same pressures and challenges other Students of Color experience at a PWI. Specifically, as Multiracial women, they endure the triple jeopardy (Gillem, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004) as they are People of Color and women with multiple racial heritages. Whether intentionally or by accident, students found community amongst Women of Color within predominately white spaces. While sisterhood may exist as a unit, the sisterhood within the sisterhood provided participants with a different kind of relationship.

Rush Process and Big/Little Racial Pairing System

During the PHA recruitment process, prospective members travel to various sorority houses as a way to ensure current and prospective sorority members meet each other. Returning members arrive on campus two weeks prior to the university-wide approved move-in dates to review all prospective candidates. They proceed to conduct research on each woman, their social media presence and reported data provided by the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life. One of the many factors that each sorority is privy to prior to formal rush activities is the perceived race and ethnicity of each prospective candidate based on picture and name. As participants recounted details about the PHA recruitment process, they shared that prospective members are paired with women from each house and forced to engage in conversation with “strangers.” Sometimes these conversations last 20-30 minutes and after each “round” of the process, the conversations with specific women in various houses get longer and more intricate. Some conversations are organic in nature, assuming the pairing has connected women who have similar interests (hobbies) and backgrounds (high school, geographic location, race). After participants are initiated into their respective sororities based on an intricate

selection process, each new member is assigned a “big sister” to help usher them into the sorority. This process is called “big/little pairing.”

Participants shared, and later confirmed throughout the observation, how the recruitment and subsequent big/little pairing[27] process is racialized in which one of the primary mechanisms for pairing during recruitment and big/little is based on race or ethnicity. Molly offered a prime example of this pairing and the *positive* impact the racialized process had on her decision to affiliate:

> I don't know if this has anything to do with it, but the first girl who rushed me was African American. And I for some reason just fell in love with her. I was like, "She is amazing." And she kept, every time I came back, I just kept seeing her familiar face and it just made me feel better about the whole sorority in general.

A common theme across PHA sororities was the pairing of participants with other WOC. While I initially associated this with a negative, racist practice of tokenism and racial profiling, I later realized, through the data analysis process, that although problematic in many ways, participants expressed a deep appreciation for this practice, and in some cases, attribute their decision to join their chapter to this connection with a WOC during recruitment activities. Specifically, participants shared that the racial heritages of prospective members are not disclosed during the recruitment process, however, based on photographs and perception, prospective members are grouped with current members

[27] Big/little pairing refers to intra-sorority family lineage. A “little” is a new member and is based on when a sister entered their Greek letter organization. A “big” is someone from an older pledge class. Typically, in a sorority “family,” you will have a “little, a big, a g-big (grand-big) and sometimes even a g-g-big (great grand-big)" (Page, 2015).

based on perceived race/ethnic affiliation. I initially found these practices to be extremely problematic particularly for Multiracial women whose physical appearance can often be misrepresented (Hall, 2004; Root 1994; 2004). While I still find these practices to be a harmful form of racial profiling, participant experiences reveal a tension that exists when strategically paired with other WOC. As literature found, WOC can find support, comfort and comradery within spaces of shared identity and experience (Allen, 2019; Dortch & Patel, 2017; Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Additional findings within this study reveal the benefit of racially diverse chapters and WOC-only spaces carved out within WGLOs, thus the finding that recruitment and big/little pairing yielded positive results for participants in this study aligns with our understanding of Communities of Color desiring safe spaces or counter spaces to feel validated with like-others (Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

Similarly, participants shared the benefits of being paired with WOC when matched with their "Big" (sister) as part of a larger intra-chapter family structure. This Big/Little family pairing structure also fell along racial lines. For example, Clare causally mentioned that "my big was also Mixed." Upon hearing this revelation, I asked Clare to explain the Big/Little pairing process more. Clare explained:

> Yeah, my whole family ... yeah, it's actually pretty common. My whole family, my G-big... we all look the same. And then my little, she looks like me, too. Our whole family, we all look the same, and I think it's just 'cause we ... I don't know if it's like, we do it purposely, it's like [we] connect with them better… when I went through recruitment, I know that certain houses, like I've talked to people who were light skinned. The girl that I talked to at

> the house I am now, she was light skinned, and the girl that I talked to at DG, she was light skinned, so I did notice that they paired me up with them specifically. And I was like, "That's so funny, that they pulled out their two light skinned people to talk to the one light skinned recruit."

Clare attributed her decision to stay in the sorority to the close relationships she developed within her family; a family that shares similar racial/ethnic identities:

> I was really struggling to fit in, I wasn't really sure I wanted to stay. Yeah. I really struggled with that up until recently, actually. I think the reason I stayed was my big, she was a big part in why I stayed, and then my friends also.

While this process may be considered problematic for predominately white organizations, to intentionally group WOC together, as the data suggests, participants appreciated and yearned for these connections. Although pairing within these organizations is racialized and perhaps is counter to cross-racial relationships that participants are seeking when joining WGLOs, they found comfort and connection within these spaces so much so, one participant was irritated when she was not grouped with women based on race. The lived experiences of Multiracial women within WGLOs reinforces the need to understand their decision-making process.

Multi (Racial) Tokenism

Some participants relayed stories in which their sorority sisters positioned them as tokens within their chapter for specific diversity and inclusion-focused positions and with prospective members who fit outside the monoracial/ethnic heritage of the sorority. Specifically, participants shared how they were expected to serve as the voice of

Multiracial members or members who fit outside the chapter's historical monoracial categorization. Additionally, participants in NPHC and MGC sororities shared how they believed, if they were members of a PHA organization, their presence would serve as only a token for historically white sororities. Nina (BGLO) expressed her rationale for not joining a PHA organization. She explicitly felt her presence in a WGLO would result in her tokenization:

> I'm not tryna really self-segregate, however, true diversity doesn't exist currently so the notion that you're not gonna be a token Black in a predominantly white sorority, or fraternity, to me, just isn't the current climate.

Ashley (LGLO) shared a similar sentiment to Nina:

> I already felt like I didn't really have too much of a home or a connection with my cultures and being in a PHA or IFC wouldn't have fixed that. It would've just made it worse. I didn't want to be in a position where I constantly didn't feel like there was anyone that I connected with on all levels. And I didn't want to be ... No one wants to be the only one ...

Even the perception of tokenism by some participants prevented them from considering membership in WGLOs. Kaden did not explicitly state that she was tokenized or used as a prop to benefit the sorority due to her race, however, she expressed her initial discomfort being "the only one:"

> …maybe on bid day when I found out I was getting into my sorority. It was like, I dunno, I was the only Black girl in my pledge class and I think, well there was one other Hispanic girl too which was great, but I think as far as

> someone who looked like me, I was the only one there. That being like the first day of like being in a sorority, I was like, "No, I wish I was like someone else." You know what I mean? I knew that there are other Black people in my sorority currently that were not in my pledge class so… As soon as I went in the house and started talking to everyone, I got a lot more comfortable but that initial, looking around and you're the only one that looks like you there, is kinda intimidating. Then fraternities, I've never had anything like, racially like, …but like some of, like microaggressions… if we're having a social with them or something, they'll be like, "Oh my God it's so cool that there's a Black girl here." I'm like, "Alright, okay."

On a number of occasions, including expressed through the observation, participants in WGLOs explained that only WOC hold or are pipelined into Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) positions within their sorority executive boards. When asked why Kaden thought her sorority sisters supported her bid for D&I Chair, she said:

> I think because they recognize that I have…I have firsthand understanding of the issues that come with being Black or Multiracial in a Panhellenic sorority, like being kind of a representative of that in our chapter, is good.

Ashley offered a different narrative related to tokenism. Ashley served as a non-monoracial Latinx voice in her chapter. She shared how her sorority tokenized her given the fact that she was not a monoracial Latinx sister. Ashley was solicited to speak to non-monoracial Latinx prospective members to serve as the voice for their potential experience:

> …if they know that there is a girl who is worried about that, they do usually peg either me or [Cinthya] (pseudonym)... that's my line sister that's not Latina, at all, as a good person for them to speak to. They'll tell them like, "Oh, you should talk to this sister. You should talk to this sister," based off of our experience, because you don't want something like that coming from somebody who is kind of like, "Okay, how would you know?"

These experiences highlight ways in which Multiracial women were positioned to benefit their chapter in specific ways. Ashley presented a case in which she was tokenized, not because she was the only WOC but because she was Multiracial and thus her sorority sisters believed she could speak to being non-monoracial to other Multiracial or non-Latinx prospective members. Similarly, Kaden's experience as the D&I chair illustrates how WOC are seen as the sole experts of diversity and inclusion work in WGLOs. Each of these examples illustrates how Multi(racial) tokenism persists for Multiracial women in monoracial sororities.

Conclusion

The cross-case analysis revealed that while Multiracial women in WGLOs shared similar motivations and influences to join a sorority (i.e. monoracial women, diverse chapters and desire for sisterhood) at SU as their cultural GLO counterparts, they differed in one important way. For women in Black, Latinx and Asian sororities, they strategically joined their respective sororities as a way to continue or create a stronger connection to one of their racial heritages. Additionally, participants in WGLOs experienced a more racially hostile sorority environment than Multiracial women in BGLOs, AGLOs or LGLOs. Through a cross case analysis, I discovered that Multiracial women in WGLOs

are faced with white women beauty standards, a need to cultivate WOC spaces and a higher degree of Multiracial erasure. Although not experienced as a negative, participants highlighted the impact of being paired with WOC in the recruitment and "big/little" process. A common experience across sorority type included feelings of (Multi)racial tokenism by women within their sorority.

CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION

Chapter 6 offers a detailed discussion and analysis of how the findings contribute to current literature in the field of higher education. Chapter 7 will delve deeper into broader themes and implications for research, theory, policy, and practice.

Discussion Theme One: The Role of Monoracial Women

Participants were motivated to join their respective sororities by monoracial women. This theme offers a new perspective within role modeling and mentorship literature for Multiracial women not previously explored. Specifically, this theme builds upon scholarship that examines the decision-making processes of Multiracial college women and the potential impact monoracial women can have as important sources of support.

Nishimura (1998) found that while Multiracial college students expressed that they lack adequate role models, in reality they were often influenced by monoracial people. My study reaches a similar conclusion in regard to deciding if and which sorority to join specifically. This finding is significant because it reveals how Multiracial women are being socialized to make important life choices such as lifelong sorority membership.

Additionally, this finding supports and extends Greyerbiehl and Mitchell's (2014) study which examined the factors that influence Black women's decision to join historically Black sororities. Greyerbiehl and Mitchell found that Black women look to familial connections (i.e. legacy status), role models and mentors as the catalyst for Black Greek letter membership. Although participants were not connected to their specific chapters via a familial or legacy status, many are influenced by their monoracial mothers to join a monoracial sorority. Subsequently, when mothers were the primary influencer in

participants' decision-making process, participants were encouraged to join sororities that either aligned with their mother's racial heritage or a different racial heritage. For example, Jenny and Joe's mothers encouraged their daughters to join a sorority different from their own racial heritage (white and Latina sorority respectively) while Clare's mother (white) encouraged her Biracial daughter to join a white sorority.

Current scholarship examines the mentor/mentee relationships for Women of Color yet focused on cross (mono)racial and same (mono)racial mentor relationships (Adams, 1992; Behar-Horenstein et al, 2012; Bova, 2000; Burgess, 1997; Fries-Britt, Younger & Hall, 2010; Grant & Simmons, 2008; Kalbfleisch & Davies, 1991; Packer-Williams & Evans, 2011; Patton & Harper, 2003). These studies, while critical, maintain a monoracial-only paradigm of race. As illustrated by the findings, Multiracial women are also influenced by monoracial women, a fact that is often missed in higher education scholarship because the experiences of Multiracial people are often subsumed within monoracial People of Color scholarship. Future literature on mentoring relationship dynamics should examine the unique needs and outcomes for students with multiple racial heritages and how high school counselors, faculty, college administrators, parents, and older peers can engage in meaningful practices to aid this burgeoning and multifaceted segment of the population (McKibben, 2014). While most participants did not necessarily classify the women that influenced their decision to join a Greek letter organization formally as "mentors," the findings suggest that to a certain degree they were. There is a need for a deeper analysis of the mentorship experiences of Multiracial women and the nature of these relationships in shaping their desire to join Greek life.

Discussion Theme Two: Chapter Diversity

Multiracial women were drawn to monoracial sororities that reflected a physical commitment to diversity and inclusion through its membership across all councils. This study supports Chen (1998) and Park's (2008) finding that WOC in WGLOs are more likely to join racially diverse chapters and adds the experiences of Multiracial women as well as how other types of GLOs factor in the conversation.

Similar to Chen (1998) and Park's (2008) findings, participants in this study felt uncomfortable in "all-white" chapters. Additionally, this study supports the perception that the most prestigious predominately white sororities at SU held the highest percentage of white members while the more diverse chapters were viewed as "lower tier" chapters (Park, 2008). Participants in this study echoed one of Park's (2008) participants,' Marissa, who shared that "messages about who belongs or does not belong in a group [i.e. sorority chapter] can be sent without a hostile word, action, or negative intention. Even in the absence of obvious bias, some women picked up on implicitly drawn lines on campus that marked racial boundaries and spaces" (Park, 2008, p. 126). Participants in this study also felt implicit messages of belonging based on their perceptions of racial inclusion of the chapter.

This theme also extends to cross-race GLO scholarship (Chang, 1995; Cockrell & Gibson, 2019; Hughey, 2010; Newsome, 2009; Park, 2008; Sargent, 2012; Thompson, 2000) by illustrating the level of importance participants placed on the racial and ethnic diversity in sorority chapters beyond WGLOs. Multiracial women in BGLOs, LGLOs and AGLOs also preferred chapters with ethnic diversity and found comfort in chapters

with women who fell outside the singular monoracial category for which the sorority was established.

Discussion Theme Three: Connection to One Racial Heritage

Participants in NPHC and MGC Greek letter organizations desired a deeper connectedness to one of their racial heritages or the opportunity to maintain a connection to one of their racial heritages. This finding was concentrated in NPHC and MGC organizations only. This finding supports scholarship that examines the identity-development impact Greek letter organizations have on POC (Guardia & Evans, 2008; Hernandez, 2000; Miranda and Martin de Figueroa, 2000; Nuñez, 2004; Patton & Booner, 2001; Reyes, 1997). Research examining the impact of LGLO and BGLO membership highlight how Black and Latina group membership supports a positive ethnic identity. Specifically, Guardia and Evans (2008) confirmed that multicultural Greek organizations can play an important role in the creation of ethnic identity-development by providing cultural education and assisting in the exploration of the Latinx side of one's ethnic identity. This was not only evident for LGLO participants in this study but also participants in BGLOs and AGLOs. This study supports the findings that cultural Greek letter organizations can provide a stronger ethnic identity development yet extends by illustrating how Multiracial students use Greek letter affiliation in unique ways.

This study aligns with Basu's (2010) study which found that Multiracial college women are likely to participate in student affinity-based organizations in order to feel a sense of group identity, membership and belonging. While a majority of women in this study joined WGLOs, the women who chose to join affinity-based sororities did so to

build or sustain a sense of identity and community that was missing. Additionally, the specific sorority environment my study focuses on provided a greater layer of connectivity and commitment to the community.

Ashley and Joe built greater connectivity to their Latinx heritage through their LGLO simply by having an outlet to speak Spanish with their sorority sisters and serve as leaders in the SU community. Additionally, Indie felt empowered to advocate for the Asian American community as a member of her AGLO thus strengthening formerly severed ties to her Taiwanese/Chinese heritage. Beau's BGLO gave her the space to engage in intellectual conversations and support programming related to the Black experience providing her with a greater sense of connectivity that she lacked prior to entering college. While this finding is consistent with former scholarship, this theme extends the literature by including Multiracial women's voices in this line of inquiry.

In addition to reflecting a positive outcome of cultural Greek letter affiliation, this theme also raises awareness of the impact monoracial-only paradigms of race can have on the Multiracial college student experience. Given that monoracial sororities are the most popular and subsequently, most highly resourced sororities on campus (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019), Multiracial students are often left to choose between racial group affiliation or refrain from participating in one segment of the campus experience.

Discussion Theme Four: Desire to Belong to a Community of Women

Each participant expressed a clear desire to find belonging at SU in the form of a sisterhood. This theme directly supports existing literature that suggests that gendered organizations like sororities are critical to belonging because they help to create a "sense of empowerment and pride" associated with joining an organization "founded by

women" (Greyerbiehl & Mitchell, 2014, p. 286). While most Multiracial research is about belonging from a racial standpoint (King, 2008; Renn, 1998; 2007; 2008; Renn & Ozaki, 2005), participants spoke of belonging to a community of women. Sororities offered a deeper and stronger bond beyond what clubs could offer. This theme illustrates how Multiracial women rejected the Multiracial microaggression of isolationism by seeking out communities of women to further develop a sense of belonging based on a common woman experience. The intersectionality of gender and multiple racial heritages experienced by participants heightened the desire for community in traditionally isolating environments (Gillem, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004).

Discussion Theme Five: Multiracial Erasure: "Being Forgotten"

Participants in WGLOs experienced two common Multiracial microaggressions: denial of a Multiracial reality (Basu, 2010; Johnston & Nadal, 2010) and the assumption of a monoracial identity (Harris, 2017a; Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Participants expressed being forgotten by their sorority sisters of all racial heritages. The experience of being forgotten stems from a legacy of "hypodescent," in which Multiracial, specifically folks with African and European ancestry, were singularly classified according to their Black/African heritage to "keep the white race 'pure' and in power" (Nakashima, 1992, p. 175). The practice of hypodescent is still evident in scholarship, practice and policy (Payson, 1996).

This study extends Multiracial erasure literature by illustrating how Multiracial women desired and, in some cases, verbally advocated for visibility and acknowledgement within monoracial spaces. Maria, Jenny, Lana and Kaden all described how one or more of their racial heritages were disregarded, ignored or misrepresented by

their sorority sisters of all racial heritages. In the case of Lana, one of her sorority sisters enacted this microaggression furthering Lana's feelings of isolation and erasure.

This theme adds to existing literature which depicts Multiracial women asserting their racial heritages and identities on their own terms. From Lana asserting that her Multiraciality is "no one's business" and finding a supportive community outside of her chapter (i.e. a Multiracial student club) to Maria repeatedly asserting her Venezuelan heritage to her sorority sisters at every chance, participants carved out and claimed their space on their own terms. While this finding is inspirational and validating, the possible trauma imposed upon Multiracial women having to assert their racial heritage or remain in the "shadows" can inflict pain and ultimately places the burden on Multiracial people to traverse monoracial spaces even within seemingly safe, familial spaces such as sororities.

Discussion Theme Six: Navigating White Beauty Standards

Participants in WGLOs often contended with navigating white beauty standards. Whether navigating overt and covert messages to repeatedly straighten their hair to create a uniform (white) cohesive image or verbally referring to all-white chapters as the "most beautiful" and top tier, Multiracial women internalized and at times fought against this white supremacist ideology. This finding supports Park's (2008) findings that the more racially diverse chapters were viewed as less prestigious punctuating the notion that white womanhood is the standard by which WGLOs are compared. The constant messaging of "all white chapters" as the top tier and most beautiful are also reflective of how WGLOs find alternative means to exclude Women of Color prospective members (Harris, 1993; Hughey, 2010).

This theme also supports the institutional and societal exclusionary practices taking place in WGLOs. Women in PHA organizations are expected to maintain an outward appearance that continues to prop up whiteness as the standard of beauty (Accapdai, 2007). This is illustrated through the unwritten, but repeatedly spoken, rules of maintaining straight hair, wearing certain clothing to reflect an outward representation of privilege and a high socio-economic status which are all typically associated with white Greek letter organizations. This finding coincides with CRT and Harris' (1993) concept of whiteness as property in which white members of WGLOs have the absolute right to exclude their Multiracial members by enforcing white beauty standards although they could never attain the full benefits of whiteness as Women of Color in a white organization. This is also consistent with Cockrell and Gibson's (2019) and Chen's (1998) findings. Cockrell and Gibson found that some Black and Brown members of WGLOs felt they had to hide parts of their culture, sexuality, and physical attributes (i.e. hair texture) to conform to unwritten white beauty standards. Asian American participants in Chen's (1998) study who joined a WGLO reported that they were careful to "construct a non-Asian identity in front of their white sisters as a strategy of accommodation" and as a means of submitting to an "elite white cultural model of womanhood" (p. 92).

Harris (2015) found that:

> "The Multiracial women in this research internalized white ideals of beauty. Frederickson and Roberts (1997) explained how women learn what is and is not beautiful from society, and more specifically, American media (which is centered around ideals of whiteness). These learned standards of beauty

> become internalized and are used to construct individuals' views and critiques of their own bodies. This internalization results in women's perceptions and formations of their physical image. In other words, a White standard of beauty is the filter through which women make meaning of, form, and assess their appearance. (see Harris, 2015, p. 193; Frederickson & Robertson, 1997).

Building on Harris' (2015) findings, participants in this study, in some contexts, fought against this standard; although they internalized whiteness as beautiful in some ways, they exercised their agency by building coalitions of support within their sorority "family" structure.

Finally, this study supports Harris' (2019) findings that Multiracial women (not affiliated with WGLOs) understand "white Greek life" as white. Repeatedly, participants in NPHC and MGC sororities expressed their view that WGLOs felt unwelcoming and they believed their presence would serve merely as a token. As for Multiracial women *in* WGLOs, their experiences ranged from feeling "completely comfortable" within their sorority, to feeling tension and microaggressed by the constant assertion that they had to conform to white standards of beauty through their physical appearance.

Discussion Theme Seven: Cultivating Women of Color Spaces

Scholars have addressed the significance of sister circles and other sources of support for Women of Color in the academy (Allen, 2019; Commodore et al., 2018; Croom et al., 2017; Davis et al., 2011; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Grant & Simmons, 2008; Patton, 2009; Porter, 2013; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Grant and Simmons (2008) defined "sistering" as "relationships with other caring and nurturing Women of Color for

social, professional, and spiritual support with networking opportunities" (p. 509). A participant in Davis and colleagues' (2011) study described her peer network as being "cocooned in the respect, consideration, and support of women who look like [her, with] shared experiences, [and] pressures" (Davis et al., 2011, p. 35). Although Grant and Simmons (2008) and Davis and colleagues (2011) found peer networks to be critical for graduate and professional Women of Color in higher education, the same can be said of undergraduate WOC generally, and specifically, Multiracial women (as found in this study). Put simply, "the primary emphasis of the counterspace is on finding shelter from the daily torrent of microaggressions and to be in a place that is validating and supportive." (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 23). While Multiracial participants did not suggest experiences of "daily torrent," they certainly encountered microaggressions which resulted in the creation of WOC spaces within their respective white sorority chapters. While participants did not name these interactions as "counter spaces" or "sister circles," the utility, composition and in some cases secrecy (i.e. Kaden) of their interactions certainly fit these definitions and offer new insight into how these behaviors can be created to provide support and ultimately persist in predominately white spaces.

Participants demonstrated a need for WOC only spaces in two ways. For participants in WGLOs, they created subcommunities of WOC through closer bonds of friendship, big/little family units or exclusive group chats to stay connected. For participants in BGLOs, LGLOs, and AGLOs, the sheer act of joining a sorority for and by WOC illustrates the significance and necessity of being in WOC-only spaces. Both scenarios are consistent with previous scholarship. This study extends scholarship on "sister circles" by redefining where these circles can exist, i.e. in sororities, and by

demonstrating how significant intra-groups are for Multiracial women and monoracial Women of Color in particular, even when they opt into predominately white spaces like WGLOs.

This theme also provides greater insight into sense of belonging literature for Multiracial students. Scholars found that Multiracial students can feel isolation and rejection in monoracial spaces leading to a low sense of belonging (Ford & Malaney, 2012; Jourdan, 2006; Renn, 2000; Rockquemore, 1998; Root, 1998). Multiracial participants in this study specifically chose monoracial spaces, although according to participants, a significant motivating factor was the racial composition of their sorority's membership. In order to combat possible feelings of isolation or tension in predominately white spaces (Ozaki & Johnston, 2008; Patton, 2009), participants sought community and belonging with other Multiracial women and monoracial WOC. This finding is an extension of the literature and illustrates how Multiracial women seek support in and navigate a specific collegiate subculture, sororities. This finding reveals how important sense of belonging is to Multiracial women who, whether aware or not, make conscious decisions to join particular collectives yet still prioritize their wellness by creating spaces and community when needed.

Given the challenges and realities of group membership in college for Multiracial people, Multiracial students are often forced to seek out more heterogeneous organizations (Jackson, 2009). This study, which adds to the Multiracial student-peer-interaction body of literature, specifically examines the experiences of Multiracial women who opted into monoracial organizations, including their need to find counter spaces among other WOC (Ong et al., 2018; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Scholars

found that counter spaces are critical for WOC in isolating and chilly climates such as STEM fields and other white-male dominated spaces. This study builds on counterspace literature by suggesting counter spaces are necessary even when folks opt for predominately white, same gender communities such as predominately white sororities.

Finally, scholarship often emphasizes the challenges Multiracial women face in Communities of Color (Brackett et al., 2006; King, 2008). With the use of a MultiCrit framework, this finding illustrates the impact of experiential knowledge, centering the narratives of Multiracial people, who in this study, found fellowship and strong support systems within Women of Color spaces. Additionally, through this study, participants challenged dominant ideologies of Multiraciality or the ability to refute white ideologies and elucidate Multiracial experiences. Not only do Multiracial women in monoracial sororities experience race and racism within and beyond their organizations but they are able to build coalitions and subcommunities when faced with Multiracial microaggressions, particularly found within WGLOs. Multiracial women in this study demonstrated their power, pain and agency often lost in Multiracial scholarship. While cultural and racial authenticity testing (DaCosta, 2007; Chaudhari & Pizzolato, 2008; Harris, 2016b; Museus et al., 2016; Rockquemore, 2002) is a Multiracial reality and experienced by participants in this study, women in NPHC and MGC sororities in this study expressed a deeply profound sense of acceptance and unity within their Black, Latina and Asian sorority sisters (i.e. WOC spaces). This counters some scholarship that emphasizes the negative peer interactions Multiracial women experience with monoracial groups of Color.

Discussion Theme Eight: (Multi) Racial Tokenism

Participants offered examples in which they appeared to be strategically positioned or tokenized by their respective organizations. For MGC and NPHC sororities, they were positioned as the liaison for prospective members who fell outside the dominant monoracial heritage of their respective sororities. For women in PHA organizations, Multiracial women were similarly positioned as the ambassador for members of color during recruitment. Additionally, four out of seven participants in WGLOs reported a consistent expectation, tension and later competition with other Multiracial people to serve as the Diversity and Inclusion chair in their chapter. Each of these examples highlight the ways in which Multiracial women were positioned through interest convergence to serve as tokens to benefit their respective organizations based on their racial heritages.

Harris et al., (unpublished) first introduced the concept of (Multi)racial tokenism when they examined the racialized experiences of Multiracial faculty at their respective HWIs. They found that Multiracial faculty are often positioned as "honorary whites" or a pawn in a "chess game" in various situations. This study adds to this future body of literature by offering situations in which Multiracial women were positioned in monoracial WOC spaces as well as white spaces to serve as a conduit for folks outside the monoracial norms of their sorority.

Multiracial people are often described or positioned as a bridge or buffer group and this study extends that finding (Nakashima, 1996). Nakashima (1996) explained:

> Many Multiracial people feel that the assertion that mixed race people are models of multiculturalism or bridges between groups is an unrealistic and

> unfair expectation and that it threatens to erase the significance of race and racial oppression in this society. It also contributes to a resentment toward multiracial people and the Mixed-race movement by drawing attention away from persisting inequality and focusing instead on the feel-good idea of a raceless or color-blind society (p. 94).

The experiences of these participants and countless findings from other scholars who examine the racialization of Multiracial people confirm that Multiracial people are anything but a bridge. Multiracial people are not an example of a post-racial society. In fact, the experiences of Multiracial people confirm that racism and monoracism is ever present (Harris, 2016a; 2016b; 2017a; 2017b; 2019; Museus et al, 2015; Museus et al., 2016).

Finally, this finding supports Park's (2008) study in which non-Greek letter affiliated Asian American women were turned off from joining WGLOs for fear they would be "the only one" (p. 126). A majority of participants confirmed this feeling by either not joining a WGLO or selecting only chapters with a substantive number of WOC to offset the potential feeling of tokenism and isolation.

Conclusion

This study sought to gain a better understanding of the motivations and racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution. Through demographic questionnaires, individual semi-structured interviews, one site visit and document analysis, twelve participants in three different racialized Greek councils identified four motivating factors for membership and four overarching racialized experiences as members in their respective sororities. This chapter presented a

discussion of the findings and explored how each finding contributes to various bodies of higher education literature such as scholarship on Multiracial women, Greek letter organizations, race and racism in higher education more broadly.

In the next and final chapter, I present an overview of this dissertation study, offer four larger overarching themes, while exploring the broader implications of these findings for research, theory, policy and practice both at the micro and macro institutional level.

CHAPTER 7 – THEMES AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter offers an overview of this study including context setting, statement of the problem, overview of the theoretical framework, methods, data analysis, a summary of the findings organized by research question, and concludes with a summary of the cross-case analysis. Following the overview of the study and findings, I offer four overarching themes juxtaposed to the relevant literature and theoretical framework. The chapter concludes with implications for future research, theory, practice, and policy, a direct institutional critique, and finally, the conclusion.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this single site multi-case case study was to explore how Multiracial women experience race and racism in racially homogenous sororities at a public PWI in the Mid-Atlantic region. The lived realities of these students offered insight into how Multiracial women navigate, discuss, and interact with race and racism in a sorority context. Utilizing a comparative multi-case study design, this dissertation study explored the following research questions:

1. What motivates Multiracial women to join and stay in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?
2. What are the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?

Through demographic questionnaires, individual semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and one observation, participants identified various considerations when joining monoracial Greek letter organizations and the complex ways in which they navigated these racialized spaces on campus. The sample consisted of twelve Multiracial

participants from seven sorority chapters within three different Greek councils, comprised of historically white, Latina, Asian and Black sororities. Participants were either enrolled at or recent graduates of State University and held membership in their sororities for a minimum of one year.

Context Setting and Statement of the Problem

Multiracial people represent a rapidly growing college student population (Jaschik, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001; 2010; Wehrly, 2003). The rapid increase in college bound students who identify with their Multiracial heritage underscores the need for greater understanding of their college experiences in hopes of deconstructing and problematizing current conversations about race and social justice in higher education beyond a restrictive monoracial categorization.

Most research within Multiracial discourse focuses on familial and peer interactions (Jackson, 2009; Jourdan, 2006; Nishamura, 1998; Root, 1992; 1998; Rockquemore, 2002; Talbot, 2008; Thompson, 1999). However, we know less about how Multiracial students navigate discrimination, prejudice, and racism on college campuses (Chang-Ross, 2010; Harris, 2015; 2016b; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2010; Museus et al., 2016). Specifically, the academy needs to understand the experiences of Multiracial women who face a unique form of racism and sexism on college campuses (Harris, 2015, 2016a; 2016b; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2010). While scholars have spent considerable energy examining the racial identity development (King, 2008; Osei-Kofi, 2012; Renn, 1998; 2003; 2008; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2009) of Multiracial students, higher education officials have limited imperial evidence available

to address how Multiracial women negotiate their experiences with racism in monoracial spaces on campus.

This study examined a collegiate subculture: social, monoracial sororities. Recent controversies[28] surrounding Greek-letter organizations and racist acts calls for higher education administrators to pay closer attention to the interpersonal interactions taking place within the fraternity and sorority context. Greek letter organizations (GLOs), specifically sororities, represent a context in which Multiracial women are likely to experience their racial heritages and subsequently (mono)racism in unique ways. The legacy of racial exclusion in white Greek-letter organizations has permeated higher education for centuries (James, 2000; Ray, 2013). Historically white Greek-letter organizations (WGLOs) maintain a host of ethnocentric, prejudicial, and exclusionary practices against persons of different races, religions, and other social identities (Hughey, 2010; Maisel, 1990; Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2004). These practices are demonstrated through their structures and activities, which encourage homogeneity and discourage interactions across difference (Laird, 2005; McCabe, 2011). Similarly, historically Black Greek-letter organizations (BGLOs), Latinx Greek-letter organizations (LGLOs) and Asian Greek-letter organizations (AGLOs), while deeply rooted in social justice and community building, also face challenges of inclusivity and transparency. However, studies also showed that Greek-letter organizations, broadly, can have positive impacts on students' social capital in the form of supportive social networks and access to information and resources via alumni networks (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019; Kimbrough,

[28] For example, racist themed parties by Greek organizations (Park, 2012), nooses found on college campuses (Baltimore Sun, 2017; CNN, 2017; U.S. News & World Report, 2017), and racist chants (Washington Post, 2015) among others.

2003) and a stronger ethnic identity (Guardia & Evans, 2008; Nuñez, 2004). Students can develop leadership skills (Astin, 1977; Cockrell & Gibson, 2019), and cultivate higher levels of on-campus involvement (Williams & Winston, 1985), which is linked to higher grade performance (Pike & Askew, 1990; Willingham, 1962), time management (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019) and greater satisfaction with their overall college experience (Astin, 1999).

Still, there is no research to date that specifically addresses the impact Greek letter organizations have on Multiracial students and their experiences within the Greek letter system on college campuses. This study fills an important gap in the literature by situating the racialized experiences and motivations of Greek letter-affiliated Multiracial women within a PWI. This dissertation broadens the scholarly narratives of Multiracial student experiences by exploring the racial climate at a PWI through the specific lens of Greek letter organizations for this diverse group of students in today's hyper-visible political and racial climate.

Overview of Theoretical Framework

Harris' (2016a) Critical Multiracial Theory (MultiCrit) served as the theoretical framework used to analyze the data collected for this study. MultiCrit was the appropriate application for this study because it centers the voices of Multiracial women to narrate their own experiences and processes and acknowledges the (mono)racism endemic in society. MultiCrit was an important framework to study the racialized experiences of Multiracial women within the context of Greek letter affiliation. MultiCrit provided a lens to address the role of race among participants who do not fit within the dominant monoracial paradigms constructed in society.

The central tenets of MultiCrit include: 1) challenge to ahistoricism; 2) interest convergence; 3) experiential knowledge; 4) challenge to dominant ideology; 5) racism, monoracism, and colorism; 6) a monoracial paradigm of race; 7) differential micro-racialization; 8) intersections of multiple racial identities (Harris, 2016a). Utilizing these tenets as a lens, this dissertation used MultiCrit to examine the institutions of Greek life, sorority culture, and historically white higher education institutions to center the experiences of Multiracial women within the aforementioned contexts.

Summary of Methods and Data Analysis

This study followed qualitative methods and a constant comparative multi-case study design (Merriam, 1998) to present the similarities and differences between Multiracial women in a variety of racialized sorority contexts. In this study, each participant represented a unique primary case embedded within their respective Greek councils (embedded case) at one PWI. Given the complex racialized structure of social sororities, a multi-case study approach (Merriam, 1998) allowed me to search for themes and patterns between and among individuals involved in different Greek councils and within councils. A comparative case study approach offered a more informed understanding of the phenomena being studied; in this case, how Multiracial women navigate monoracial spaces in a sorority context as well as the institutional context of a large, flagship, predominately white institution. Consistent with case study methodology, data collection came in the form of a variety of methods (Creswell 2013; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). I collected primary data from participants via a demographic questionnaire and one in-depth semi structured interview. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Secondary data included an observation and a review of institutional documents

and reports related to the campus racial climate and campus Greek letter organizations. Both sets of data were utilized to compile a rich and detailed set of case descriptions (i.e. case profiles) to synthesize the familial histories, racial identity, educational experiences, campus racial climate and sorority experiences for each participant.

Participants were selected through purposeful (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990) and later snowball sampling (Patton, 1990). I interviewed twelve Multiracial students for this study. Participants met the following criteria: (a) at least 18 years of age and currently enrolled at State University (SU) or recent graduate (within 1-3 years of interview) from SU; (b) identify gender as woman; (c) identified with "Two or More" racial groups and/or as a Biracial/Tri-racial/Multiracial/Mixed race woman, and (d) is/was a financially and socially active member of a monoracial sorority under the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life at State University for at least one academic semester.

After the data collection phase, transcripts were transcribed verbatim and reviewed against the recording for accuracy. I then created case profiles for each participant based on the aforementioned data points. Next, I engaged in open coding (Merriam, 2009) followed by axial coding (Merriam, 2009; Saldaña, 2016) in which I collapsed codes into categories that directly answered the research questions and aligned with the theoretical framework. In the last step, I engaged in cross-case analysis to identify the prominent themes that cut across participant, sorority-type and council.

Summary of Findings

Below is a summary of cross case findings categorized by research question. Following this section, I provide a larger set of themes that hold implications for higher education broadly.

What motivates Multiracial women to join and stay in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?

Data analysis revealed four themes that address participants motivation to join their respective monoracial sororities: (a) the role of monoracial women, (b) chapter diversity, (c) desire to build connection to one of their racial heritages, and (d) sisterhood: a desire to belong to a community of women. Some findings cut across councils while others were unique to specific councils. Participants across all three councils were motivated by the influence of monoracial women, were drawn to more racially and ethnically diverse chapters and desired to build community with other women through sisterhood while only participants in NPHC and MGC sororities sought connection to one of their racial heritages. First, participants shared countless stories of various women who influenced their decision to seek membership in a sorority. Influencers ranged from mothers and sisters to friends, older peers and guidance counselors, all of whom identified as monoracial. The variety of influences illustrate the importance of mentorship and role modeling in the decision-making processes for Multiracial women as it pertains to their decision-making processes and group affiliations while in college. Secondly, participants were drawn to racially diverse chapters. For women in NPHC and MGC organizations, they felt most comfortable in chapters with other Multiracial women or other monoracial women from different racial backgrounds while women in PHA

organizations sought chapters with racially diverse members as a signal of belonging and acceptance. Finally, participants, regardless of council affiliation, specifically sought connection with women forged through the unique bonds of sisterhood.

The final motivating factor for Multiracial women in NPHC and MGC organizations was their deliberate desire to join a sorority that celebrated one of their racial heritages. Participants expressed their intention to build a connection to one of their racial heritages through monoracial sorority membership. They shared how joining their respective sororities afforded them the opportunity to learn more about their racial heritage or fill a void in their collegiate community when they felt disconnected from one of their cultures on campus. Participants strategically selected the sorority that best aligned with their needs. A more detailed review of each cross-case theme can be found in chapter 5.

What are the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities at a predominately white institution?

Participants explicitly or implicitly expressed the following racialized experiences as members in their sorority: (a) Multiracial erasure, (b) cultivating Women of Color[29] (WOC) spaces, (c) navigating white standards of beauty, and (d) (Multi)racial tokenism. The first three aforementioned themes were expressed primarily from participants in WGLOs while participants across council-type experienced (Multi)racial tokenism in distinct ways.

[29] APA rule notwithstanding and as a way to honor the MultiCrit framework, I choose to capitalize "Black," "Asian," "Multiracial," "People of Color," "Students of Color" as a "form of linguistic empowerment" for minoritized populations (APA, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991; Harris, under review, p. 1). I do not capitalize "white" to challenge white supremacy and "reject the grammatical representation of power capitalization brings to the term 'white'" (Pérez Huber, 2010, p. 93).

First, participants described feeling invisible to their sorority sisters in WGLOs either through a lack of acknowledgement due to a collective colorblind rhetoric or a specific denial of their Multiracial identity. The perceived erasure of their Multiraciality made participants feel forgotten. According to participants, they were not only "forgotten" by their white sorority sisters but also by other WOC within their chapters causing feelings of frustration, isolation and at times, agency to name their racial heritages in the face of such microaggressions.

Secondly, although seven participants in this study deliberately joined WGLOs, they also sought or welcomed the creation of WOC-only spaces within their sorority. This insight illustrates the complex nature of sorority membership and group affiliation for Multiracial women. This finding confirms the importance and need for WOC spaces, regardless of subculture, to create supportive environments based on shared experiences (Allen, 2019; Commodore et al., 2018; Croom et al., 2017; Davis et al., 2011; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Grant and Simmons, 2008; Patton, 2009; Porter, 2013; Winkle-Wagner, 2019). Additionally, the remaining five participants in Black, Latinx and Asian sororities strategically joined organizations created for and by WOC which also supports the significance of WOC organizations for community building, persistence and retention.

The third theme, navigating white beauty standards, illuminated the tension participants expressed as WOC in WGLOs. From feeling racially and personally displaced from chapters that appeared "all white" during the recruitment process to feeling burdened to conform physically to white standards of beauty by constantly feeling pressure to straighten their curly hair, losing weight and/or not feeling "pretty,"

Multiracial women struggled to find their footing given these implicit and explicit messages embedded in white sorority culture.

Finally, participants from all councils discussed how they were tokenized in distinct ways depending on their sorority council affiliation. For women in NPHC and MGC organizations, participants were positioned as the liaisons to women who did not fit the historical monoracial category of the chapter's membership. For students in PHA organizations, they were situated as the voice for members of color, which resulted in being paired with any non-white prospective member during recruitment, being paired with other WOC during the big/little grouping process and finding themselves contending for the same Diversity and Inclusion Chair executive board leadership positions against other WOC. These findings illustrate the multitude of ways Greek letter organizations, which are inherently racialized (Chen, 2009; Hughey, 2006; 2010; Maisel, 1990; Park, 2012; Torbenson & Park, 2009; Whaley, 2009), further racialize Multiracial women. A more extended review of each racialized experience can be found in chapter 5.

Overview of Cross Case Analysis

The cross-case analysis revealed that while Multiracial women in WGLOs shared similar motivations and influences to join a sorority (i.e. monoracial women, ethnic racial diversity in their chapters and desire for sisterhood) similar to participants in BGLO, AGLO and LGLO, they differed in one important way. For women in Black, Latina and Asian sororities, participants strategically joined their sororities to continue or develop a connection with women representing one of their racial heritages. While problematic for women who did not want to choose one heritage over another, participants viewed their

sisterhood and the networks developed as safe spaces in a harsh national and campus racial climate.

Additionally, participants in WGLOs experienced a more racially hostile sorority environment than Multiracial women in BGLO, AGLO or LGLOs. Through a cross case analysis, I discovered that Multiracial women in WGLOs are asked to adhere to white women beauty standards and felt it necessary to create WOC spaces. Additionally, participants reported feeling "forgotten" by their white and non-white sorority sisters in WGLOs. Although not experienced as a negative, participants also highlighted the impact of being paired with WOC in the recruitment and "Big/Little" process. A common experience across sorority type included feelings of (Multi)racial tokenism by women within their sorority to serve as representatives for women who fit outside the monoracial heritages, further Othering participants.

Key Cross Case Themes and Discussion

The data illuminates the nuance and complexity of navigating campus environments and specifically sorority membership as a Multiracial woman. Based on the findings presented in this dissertation, I identified four major cross case contributions to the field directly related to scholarship on Multiracial women (Basu, 2010; Hall, 2004; Harris, 2016b; 2017a; 2018; Root, 1994; Gillem, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004), Greek letter organizations (Hughey, 2006; 2010; Laybourn et al., 2017, Laybourn & Goss, 2018; Kimborugh & Hutcheson, 1998; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; Park, 2008; 2012; Ray, 2013; Torbenson & Parks, 2009; Whaley, 2009) and Students of Color in higher education (Harper & Hurtado, 2011; Quaye & Harper, 2014; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Winkle-Wagner, 2019). These major areas of contribution include: (a) racial

exclusion in WGLO, (b) NPHC and MGC as sites for deeper connection and community but at a cost, (c) white standards of beauty revisited, and (d) Greek letter organizations: Sites of resistance.

Racial Exclusion in WGLOs

Consistent with existing literature, this study found that white Greek-letter organizations (WGLOs) are systems of exclusion that contribute to social and racial stratification on college campuses (Harris, 2019a; Hughey, 2010; Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Maisel, 1990). Racial exclusion was demonstrated when participants felt unwelcome in all-white chapters during the recruitment process. Additionally, this study confirms that Women of Color seek racially diverse chapters (Park, 2008) regardless of council. Similarly, to the Multiracial participants in this dissertation study, one of Park's participants, a monoracial Asian American woman shared, "I think a lot of my friends who were minorities were really turned off by the fact that it was all white. Just didn't want to [join] because they didn't want to be the only brown face" (Park, 2008, p. 126). For Multiracial women this is evident in the representation of non-white members in WGLOs and non-monoracial-only WOC chapters in NPHC and MGC sororities.

This study found, unsurprisingly, that a bulk of the negative racialized experiences fell on the shoulders of participants in WGLOs. This demonstrates that although their respective chapters were the most welcoming and diverse, WGLOs are generally still exclusionary and unwelcoming to Multiracial women (Cabrera, 2016; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Harris, 2019a; Park 2008; Sidanius et al., 2004). Participants in alternative studies expressed examples in which Black and Brown members of WGLOs have experienced "mistreatment, racism, or discrimination" or felt they "had to minimize

parts of their identity to associate" with their WGLO (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019). Examples include "feeling uncomfortable putting on [a] durag for my hair," editing their clothing choices to appear less "eccentric for their taste" and, similarly to participants in this study, changing one's hairstyle to ensure "more aesthetically pleasing" chapter photos (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019, p. 161-162). The exclusionary practices can be so stark that some participants express regret for selecting to join a WGLO early-on in their collegiate career while others spoke of actively distancing themselves from chapter activities. Additionally, many participants created WOC-only safe spaces within their chapter to build community while others sought membership in other affinity-based clubs to find a sense of belonging and wholeness while escaping, temporarily, their exclusionary WGLOs.

Acts of racial exclusion were not only evident *within* the sorority, but this study also confirmed Hughey's (2010) finding that Women of Color in WGLOs can face ostracism and criticism from non-Greek Communities of Color. This study confirms this finding and demonstrates how pervasive monoracism is for Multiracial students, suggesting that the same outcome experienced by monoracial students (ostracism by outside groups) is occurring for some Multiracial women; perhaps even at greater cost given that past studies found that Multiracial people experience racism at higher levels than their monoracial peers (Harris, 2016b; Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Multiracial women are managing the realities of multiple racial heritages and some desire connectivity with multiple communities and cultures. Encountering systems of oppression and ostracism can be even more damaging as they seek to find ways to embrace all aspects of their identity and heritages. For example, Clare desired acceptance in both Black and white

communities; yet through her membership in a WGLO and the stigma attached to white Greek letter organizations for some POC at her PWI, she became even further disconnected from some members of the Black community, thus offering another example of racial exclusion at the hands of WGLO membership for Multiracial women.

Finally, this study also confirms research that asserted Students of Color join historically WGLOs due to shared beliefs, values, interests or views of society (Cockrell & Gibson, 2019). In numerous studies, including this one, Women of Color in WGLOs justified racist or discriminatory statements or actions using colorblind rhetoric (Chang, 1995; Cockrell & Gibson, 2019; Gordon, 1964; Park, 2008) resulting in a greater probability that participants can either deemphasize or overlook racial or cultural differences (Chang, 1995; Gordon, 1964; Park, 2008). Participants in this study expressed shared experiences such as growing up in predominately white neighborhoods as well as attending predominately white public or private schools. While Multiracial women experienced race as a part of their daily lives, generally, race was not discussed within predominately white sororities which ultimately led to their (Multi)racial erasure. This finding extends what we know about Multiracial women and cross-race Greek membership literature by providing greater insight into what factors some Multiracial women require before making group membership decisions and the impact those decisions can make within a WGLO context.

NPHC/MGC: Sites for Deeper Racial Connection and Community at a Cost

Students in NPHC and MGC organizations expressed a genuinely personal and purposeful rationale for joining their sorority. While all five participants in NPHC or MGC organizations articulated a deep sense of gratitude for the relationships formed,

mission and vision of their organizations, participants also shared ways in which they navigated experiences of (Multi)racial tokenism and perceptions of "choosing" one race over another as a byproduct of their Greek letter membership. The unique tensions associated with monoracial Greek letter membership by Multiracial women signals the contributions of this work to higher education scholarship. While participants expressed a number of positive and social justice-oriented benefits (i.e. philanthropic efforts focused on uplifting Communities of Color and a WOC lifelong support system) to their affiliation, these experiences were also met with internal challenges.

The findings of this study confirm that monoracial Communities of Color are more accepting of Multiracial people (Basu, 2000) given that monoracial POC are likely more accustomed to interacting with Multiracial people (as a result of historical hypodescent laws and practices). Whether participants felt they could express Multiracial counter narratives and perspectives in these spaces is yet to be determined. Based on the findings, Ashley felt pulled to incorporate and advocate for a "Black agenda" and to build coalitions within her Latina sorority sisters yet she was met with some resistance. Additionally, Beau felt that she could not share her new relationship with her Black sorority sisters because her partner was a white man. These experiences serve as just two examples of the ways in which Multiracial women may have to edit themselves within monoracial spaces. Building upon Cockrell and Gibson's (2019) findings that Students of Color believed they had to "minimize parts of their identity to associate with their organizations" (p. 162), this study finds that Multiracial women not only feel a need to "minimize" themselves in WGLOs but also in certain ways within BGLOs, AGLOs, and LGLOs alike.

The broader theme of deeper racial connection within MGC and NPHC organizations offers a contrast to Rockquemore's (2002) notion that Multiracial women are not accepted by WOC. In this case, Multiracial women in NPHC and MGC organizations were accepted. The findings in this dissertation are consistent with King's (2011) finding that some participants (those who joined NPHC/MGC sororities) used college and Greek letter affiliation to develop a stronger sense of self and strengthen untapped identities, either from their upbringing or simply from a perceived lack of representation on campus.

This study confirms various scholars' assertions that Students of Color will use their Greek letter affiliation to build a stronger ethnic identity (Guardia and Evans, 2008; Nuñez, 2004). Specifically, Guardia and Evans (2008) and Nuñez (2004) found that Latino students at a Hispanic Serving Institution and Latinas at a PWI sought organizations that embraced their Latinx culture, provided a source of familidad, and overall enhanced ethnic identity. They found these qualities within their Latino and Latina Greek letter organizations respectively. This study expands on the motivations to join and subsequent impact of joining cultural GLOs by offering specific insights from Multiracial women's perspectives. Specifically, participants who chose to join sororities in the NPHC or MGC also used their membership either to connect with a specific heritage that they had little understanding of, minimal connection to, or in hopes of maintaining the level of connection they previously had at home, by aligning with other women from one of their racial heritages. This work builds on race scholarship in two ways: unlike Guardia and Evans' work, participants in this study have multiple racial

heritages. Additionally, the sorority they joined represented just one race, which was a conscious and intentional decision on the part of participants.

White Standards of Beauty Revisited

The findings highlight the tensions Multiracial women experienced in white Greek letter organizations and their separateness from white women and whiteness. Specifically, participants felt pressure to conform to white standards of beauty by constantly straightening their curly hair, feeling as if they needed to lose weight and/or not feeling "pretty" enough. This finding directly supports Harris' (2019) study which explored "how whiteness structures Multiracial women students' social interactions at a PWI" (p. 1025). In her study, Harris' participants understood themselves as outside the boundaries of whiteness and white womanhood based on the symbols and behaviors demonstrated by white women in white sororities. Similar to the findings in this dissertation, some of Harris' participants believed they would not be welcome in white sororities, while those that participated in white sorority recruitment, but ultimately did not join, believed they would not be accepted, were not "tiny" enough and felt they would be tokenized due to their race

This study adds to the literature by exploring how Multiracial women who eventually joined WGLOs (as well as BGLOs, LGLOs and AGLOs) navigated these organizations from a critical race perspective. This study illuminates how Multiracial women navigate white women spaces, including how they find connection amongst their white counterparts yet also build coalitions of resistance with other WOC within these spaces. From demanding acknowledgement when they were perceived as white-passing (Maria and Lana), to expressing their multiple racial heritages when one was erased

(Kaden) to refusing to damage their hair as a means of white assimilation (Lana and Maria) and developing communities of support (Kaden), participants illustrated a resistance to white beauty standards, thereby adding richness and complexity to critical Multiracial scholarship.

Greek Letter Organizations: Sites of Resistance

WOC-only spaces served as important sites of resistance for participants. These spaces allowed them to push back against white beauty standards imposed upon them and find commonalities in moments of isolation. This type of community and coalition building created bonds for some participants that stretched beyond their general sisterhood.

This study also extends Greek life scholarship by illustrating how tokenism, while a byproduct of white supremacy, also served as a source of community and resistance for participants. Put simply, although participants in WGLOs were grouped with WOC during recruitment and upon initiation, they expressed a level of comfort associated with being excluded in this manner. While this type of deliberate segregation is problematic, the result, based on the experiences of participants, was a more fulfilled and familial experience for women in the predominately white spaces.

BGLOs, LGLOs, and AGLOs are by virtue of their sheer existence sites of resistance (Chambers, 2013). Participants made conscious decisions, based on their personal upbringing, family dynamics, and the campus racial climate to join a sorority for and by Women of Color. While Multiracial women in WGLOs sought WOC-only spaces within their sororities as a form of resistance, seeking a sorority affiliation with WOC is also a form of resistance. Through their philanthropic efforts and on-campus

programming, these organizations serve as counter spaces to racial tensions on campus and within Greek life as a whole. Additionally, participants in BGLOs reflected on the collectivism, solidarity, and community with other Black women that their sororities provided. BGLOs served as a safe place, a "sanctuary" to ward off racism pervasive on campus. Similar sentiments were shared by women in MGC organizations.

Implications

Based on the rich data collected through demographic questionnaires, participant interviews, observation and document analysis, findings from this study reveal important implications for future research, theory, policy, and practice. Implications are directly applicable for higher education practitioners and scholars in matters concerning Multiracial students and offices of fraternity and sorority life. There are also important implications for using MultiCrit as a framework to critique the larger State University context. What follows is an examination of each of these areas of implication as well as recommendations for scholars and practitioners throughout.

Future Research

Future research should consider disaggregating racial/ethnic heritages when studying Students of Color. Findings in this study confirm the need for further research on the experiences of Multiracial students in higher education. While studies do currently include Multiracial people, their experiences are not highlighted nor used as important illustrations to explain how their choices may differ from their monoracial peers. This study examined the experiences of a subset of the broader Multiracial student population, Multiracial women in sororities, illuminating their complex decision-making processes and racialized experiences. This research also illustrates the multitude of differences

found within the Multiracial population at large. So many factors inform their collegiate experiences and decisions. Future research will benefit from a deeper examination into the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in other contexts.

Additionally, scholars should be intentional about efforts to highlight and unpack Multiracial students' unique experiences by naming monoracism and Multiracial microaggressions in their work.

This study diverges from other studies on fraternity and sorority life by highlighting how a multifaceted group of Multiracial women decide which Greek letter organization to join; and their racialized experiences as prospects and members. Rather than focusing on just white or Black Greek letter organizations, a line of inquiry overrepresented in the literature, this study expands the notion of cross-race Greek letter membership, drawing experiences from all three councils thus encompassing all monoracial Greek letter organizations. The research design furthers our understanding of the Greek letter experience from various contexts, adding important dimensions of understanding to the literature.

Additionally, the theoretical framework used in this study compliments the examination of monoracial Greek organizations and Multiracial women. Fraternities and sororities are inherently racialized organizations and Multiracial people inherently fall outside the monoracial paradigm of these exclusive, yet significant organizations on campus. By utilizing a MultiCrit lens, I was able to unpack the interest convergence illustrated in (Multi)racial tokenism, and the inherent experiential knowledge found in participant narratives from women with archetypical experiences that span centuries of race relations in the United States. MultiCrit was instrumental in naming the differential

micro-racialization exhibited by some participants' characterization of erasure within their organizations.

MultiCrit is a fluid framework, which was critical given the diversity of participants' lived experiences and the diversity of sorority type included in this study. Participant narratives brought attention to the challenges and triumphs Multiracial women face in monoracial sororities by revealing their experiential knowledge; these stories and experiences paint a complex picture. Critical race frameworks gave me the ability to highlight the resilience of each participant to navigate her chosen environments by pushing against white beauty standards after succumbing to them in early years, by creating WOC safe spaces when they felt isolated, and by joining sororities built on the backs of strong WOC such as BGLOs, LGLOs and AGLOs.

MultiCrit should continue to be used and strengthened by future scholars to explore the experiences of Multiracial people. Aside from centering the voices of Multiracial people to narrate their own stories, naming the racism and monoracism endemic to nearly all aspects of society and how Multiracial people are used to benefit various institutions (i.e. interest convergence), MultiCrit offers a valuable lens to help name and dismantle white supremacy (Harris, 2016a; 2019).

While this study focused on Multiracial women in sororities at a PWI on the east coast/mid-Atlantic region, further research should examine multiple institutional types such as HBCUs or HSIs. PWIs remain the dominant site for studies about fraternities and sororities (Chang, 1995; Greyerbiehl & Mitchell, 2014; Harper, 2007; Hughey, 2010; Kimbrough, 2003; Park, 2012; Ray, 2013; Ross, 2000) although a majority of BGLOs were created at and continue to thrive at HBCUs. While this study is also situated at a

PWI on the East coast which is a departure from most cross-race Greek letter organization studies (Hughey, 2010), future research should examine the motivations and racialized experiences of Multiracial students at minority serving institutions (i.e. HBCUs and HSIs) and private institutions.

Additionally, the east coast/mid-Atlantic region presents an opportunity to investigate a unique, rich context that is untapped. While perceived as very liberal part of the country, home to a large Multiracial population, and the site of the historic Loving v. Virginia supreme court case that ended anti-miscegenation laws, the mid-Atlantic region is still beset with racial challenges as illustrated by the campus racial climate at SU. Context matters, as evidenced by participants expressed view of campus diversity as a caricature, a fake and disingenuous term/concept, (mis)used by the administration. Research must reflect the context of the institution (Kezar et al., 2018). As SU was recovering from consecutive racist acts on campus, participant interviews and observations reflected the steep challenge facing the university to find ways to be more authentic in their message and actions. Talking about racial diversity Lana shared:

> I do agree that we are a racially diverse campus, there's no doubt about that. And the university makes sure that it's always printed in some kind of news pamphlet that we are racially diverse. But I feel very strongly that racially diverse does not mean integrated. I think this is a very segregated campus, and it has been one of the reasons why coming into freshman year of college, it was when I began questioning my racial identity. That's when race became something that I was thinking about.

Here, Lana offered a first-hand illustration of SU's moderate level of capacity building described in the American Council on Education report by Kezar and colleagues (2018). In their report, Kezar et al. (2018), explained how institutions maintain either high, moderate or low levels of capacity building to engage in critical diversity and inclusion work and to adequately address campus racial crises. High level capacity institutions provide a strong foundation and are better equipped to address issues of diversity and inclusion while institutions like SU, as described by participants and seen in observations and document analysis, focus more on rhetoric and the performativity of D&I and perhaps lack true, authentic investment in D&I across all stakeholders and levels (Kezar et al., 2018). Administrators and scholars alike should examine their institutions capacity building levels and make the necessary adjustments to fortify their institution which includes examining the racial dynamics within Greek letter organizations and beyond.

Some participants spoke about the impact their Greek affiliation had on their family members and the relationship they had with them. For some, membership was encouraged as a means of fulfilling their mothers dream of sorority membership, yet another mother felt betrayed by her daughter's decision, as if she were choosing one race over another. The relationships forged or splintered by Greek letter affiliation can have a deleterious effect on the mental wellness and racial identity development of Multiracial students, as illustrated in the participant experiences from this dissertation. Future research should explore the multiple relationships Multiracial women hold and how monoracial sorority membership can impact those relationships, including the impact to their mental health.

Given that participants consistently expressed how monoracial women influenced them in some of their most formidable life decisions, such as lifelong sorority membership, this study suggests a need for greater understanding around the need and impact of Multiracial mentors particularly in the life of Multiracial students. Multiracial mentors should also be highlighted in mentorship literature to further diversify and disrupt monoracial only paradigms of race in scholarship that explores the experiences of Students of Color and how a wide range of people with diverse racial backgrounds can impact how students navigate college.

Additionally, a problematic yet consistent finding among WGLO members was that participants believed they could only offer value as Diversity and Inclusion chairs, likely due to their lived experience. Only in very few instances did participants in WGLOs express a desire to lead their chapters in a different capacity. Joe, Black/Puerto Rican in LGLO, expressed the various skills she had to offer as an elder member who had been through the job search process and Nina, Black/Polish in a BGLO, served as president of her chapter demonstrating her leadership capacities. Further research should explore how predominately white institutions may pigeonhole the few People of Color within their organizations for D&I initiatives. While some participants welcomed the idea of serving in this role, leaders at all levels, in all industries must realize the breadth of knowledge, skills and diversity of thought POC can bring into their organizations beyond and in addition to diversity and inclusion.

Implications for Theory

The Greek letter organizational system is raced, classed, sexist, and homophobic (Hughey, 2012). CRT was an appropriate lens to unpack the racist structures and systems

within education and specifically the Greek letter system. MultiCrit was the appropriate theoretical framework to analyze these unique contexts and honor the voices and experiences of Multiracial women. This study extends critical Multiracial scholarship by moving beyond identity development work to directly critique racism and monoracism at the institutional level. Additionally, this study further negates the notion that Multiracial people are the anecdote to racism or the tragic mulatto. Their presence within these organizations were neither detrimental to nor instrumental in creating a thriving diverse community. They were unable to create bridges of understanding and instead sought healing spaces within their organizations, yet again most participants made the conscious decision to join and stay in their respective sororities.

To date, MultiCrit has not been used in an empirical, comparative, multi-case case study. As demonstrated by the thematic breakdown, the data analysis finds that racism and monoracism are present in WGLOs. Additionally, this study found that NPHC and MGC organizations, while imperfect, were better equipped to welcome members with multiple racial heritages and the unique experiences, insights, perspectives and challenges they bring to their organizations. Perhaps connected to a history of hypodescent and the normalcy of Multiracial people within their respective Communities of Color or stemming from the fact that these organizations were birthed out of exclusion from white sororities, the findings in this study suggest NPHC and MGC sororities are better equipped to support Multiracial women. Given that racial and social justice are core values of NPHC and MGC organizations, they are better prepared to create inclusive spaces for women who fall outside a singular racial paradigm. However, these organizations have their own distinct challenges. Based on the data analysis, NPHC and

MGC sororities at PWIs should work to acknowledge and find creative ways to incorporate Multiracial members, such as demonstrating a desire to engage with and build coalitions with organizations and traditions that represent other racial heritages. While the core principles and targeted initiatives by which these organizations were founded should not change, if participants like Joe and Ashley wish to, for example, incorporate and bring together their Latina sorority with the Black Student Union, they should be met with support and encouragement. Additionally, DFSL and other support services should be prepared to help students navigate the backlash they may face from family and peers if they choose to align with any sorority, such as Nina and Clare who underwent criticism for their decision.

The intersectionality tenet has the ability to encapsulate a number of identities beyond race as it currently stands. While participants specific racial heritages certainly impacted the experiences of participants (i.e. whether a participant was white/Black versus Black/Puerto Rican or Mexican/Korean), other salient identities surfaced as deeply connected to their perceptions and enactment of their racial heritages, their sorority experience and their perception of their campus racial climate. For some participants, additional salient identities included: mixed-family citizenship status (Fix & Zimmermann, 2001) and military "brat" identity (Queair, 2018) among others. These particular identities uniquely speak to Multiracial people as, due to their multiple racial heritages, they are likely to fall within these communities more readily (Miville et al., 2005). These identities further complicate their racialized experiences.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study present multiple implications for policy and practice for faculty and staff at PWIs. One of the aims of this study was to bring awareness of and highlight the existence and diversity within the Multiracial student experience. This study directly sought to highlight various Multiracial student experiences, allow them to narrate their own stories, and highlight the heterogeneity of this group of students. Multiracial students, as depicted by the participants of this study, are not a monolith which is a direct implication for greater awareness and education about Multiracial college students. On the surface Multiracial students are viewed in monolithic ways, however disaggregating within-group differences, as is the case in this study, reveal that Multiracial women have a diversity of experiences based on a number of factors.

Specifically, DFSL, all Greek councils, chapters and sorority and fraternity members as well as higher education leaders generally, should educate themselves about the multiplicity of identities represented in their organizations, including Multiracial people. Greater education can provide chapters and leaders across industries with the language and tools necessary to acknowledge and encourage greater dialogue among members across all councils about race, racism, monoracism and racial microaggressions, and further how to refrain from engaging in such behavior. Opening doors for dialogue provides a more welcoming environment where people can share their experiences more authentically amongst sisters, peers and colleagues. This study uncovers the gaps in recognizing and validating the existence of Multiracial students in Greek life through participant narratives revealing the colorblindness pervasive in their sororities and the lack of support encountered when forging with other Communities of Color.

Another implication of this study is the need to reevaluate the Big/Little process and recruitment match up process. As detailed by the participants in this study both processes are highly racialized. Although my initial inclination was to recommend eradicating this process, participants shared that they were more likely to join a chapter with visible racial/ethnic diversity, preferred to be paired with WOC during recruitment (both as prospective and seasoned members) and felt a greater connection to their "Big" or "Little" when matched with other WOC. Participants reflected on the benefit these spaces afforded. Additionally, some participants, such as Maria and Lana, were disheartened when they were not considered or acknowledged as a WOC. This revelation begs the question why Multiracial women would prefer WGLOs if they eventually sought WOC-only spaces within these organizations. Perhaps this reflects previous scholarship which found that Students of Color are likely to join WGLOs based on shared values, feeling accepted and welcomed as compared to non-WGLOs (Cockrell and Gibson; 2019) or the perceived hierarchy of WGLOs both on campus and in pop culture.

While some participants affirmed their decision to join their respective sorority, others wished they had greater understanding, awareness and education about other councils (and their recruitment and initiation process) prior to making a final decision. Many students are just beginning to understand and develop an awareness of their racial identity and heritage when they enter college. College is a critical time for this exploration so prematurely asking students to choose a sorority before they have learned about their options can stifle this growth opportunity. Participants reference being laser focused on specific Greek councils or having a lack of exposure to certain Greek councils, which ultimately prevented them from having a full picture of their options

before making a lifelong decision that would ultimately inform their networks, connections, environment, and ecosystems in college and beyond which is consistent with Cockrell and Gibson's (2019) findings. Clare expressed this discontent perfectly:

> I wish I would have known [about NPHC sororities] before, 'cause I definitely think if I would have waited a year and realized that I have different options I would have joined a different one for that reason, to be like okay, I want to make this, I want to have both sides, 'cause I would have had my friends in PHA either way.

Maria also expressed:

> I feel like partially stupid now. At the time ... I think I'm also more aware because here [Latina sororities] do more than they actually did at my old school. It is more, I think, really of a social unit. They just incorporate more of the actual heritage ... I won't say heritage, but like racial ethnic appreciation that I also never knew I wanted. I didn't see that from my old school. But I have seen it here after the fact. And I'm like, oh my gosh. I definitely have kicked myself…

Amongst WGLO participants, a few felt the decision to join a WGLO was made in haste given the timelines set forth by PHA organizations. To ensure a more engaged, committed, and higher retention of its membership, the findings of this study suggest PHA organizations should reconceptualize eligibility requirements. Perhaps requiring students have 45 credits and attend events in at least two councils before joining to ensure exposure to more organizations. Another option is to create webinars that further unpack and educate potential members about the history, mission and vision of each council and

sorority. Prospective students could ask questions anonymously to gain a better understanding of the process of NPHC or MGC membership. Given the volume of new student priorities on campus as well as the secrecy inherent in some BGLOs and LGLOs, perhaps a webinar is a more realistic and efficient platform for students to engage with prior to making a final decision.

An implication for practice is the role of the Diversity and Inclusion Chair. Amongst WGLOs, the Diversity and Inclusion Chair position was consistently viewed as a Women of Color position. Similarly, Wilson (2013) found that Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) positions in higher education institutions typically hold a personal, emotional connection to issues of diversity which typically leads POC to seek out the position. In this study, WOC in WGLOs were expected to serve in this role or the few WOC would compete for this role creating a false narrative of competition for scarce resources or positions. While DFSL institutionalized the D&I chair position and other organizational requirements to emphasize the significance of diversity and inclusion for Greek letter organizations, analysis from participant interviews and observations suggest that diversity and inclusion is still very much considered a NPHC/MGC issue as well as considered the sole responsibility of the D&I chair in WGLOs. Owen (2009) also confirmed that diversity leadership positions, particularly in higher education, are expected to be held by folks with marginalized social identities and *not* white men. Beyond institutionalized requirements without meaningful engagement or follow up, WGLOs could benefit from more frequent and significant conversations around issues of race, ethnicity, culture, and values to help build awareness and community. As a way of departing from the notion that issues of diversity rest with POC, WOC should not serve as the sole educators or

tokens leading meaningful dialogue. Instead WGLOs desperately need to move away from sporadic colorblind comments, as evidenced by the data points in this study, towards more frequent color brave conversations (Hobson, 2014).

The recruitment process in PHA is consistently referenced as a miserable process. The introduction to sorority life is met with stress, a lack of confidence, fakeness, despair, and questioning oneself. From the words of Lana, “So the rush process was awful. It was two weekends, and it was treacherous and heartbreaking and exhausting. But I knew what I wanted, and I actually went through recruitment twice.” Clare agreed, “Okay. I hated rush. Rush was absolutely awful. I think that really is what shot my confidence so low. I don't think that should be the process at all, that's really awful.” All participants in WGLOs and those in other organizations who initially attended recruitment events for PHA agreed they felt completely miserable, illustrating a need for a complete overhaul in their practices and policies as it relates to PHA recruitment. If not, WGLOs risk losing WOC in the process. The recruitment process specifically in PHA needs to be changed by student leaders and campus administrators to ensure the longevity of PHA organizations.

This study confirmed the power and impact of WOC coalitions in higher education for Multiracial women as a source of support even in white Greek sororities. While scholarship contends that WOC caucus’ or sister circles (Allen, 2019; Commodore et al., 2018; Croom et al., 2017) significantly contribute to the retention and persistence of WOC in higher education, this study finds that the same benefits are critical for Multiracial women even if WOC spaces were not the goal or intention of their WGLO affiliation. DFSL administrators should support and provide the infrastructure for WOC within WGLOs to hold counter spaces and sister circles if they wish. As previously

mentioned, participants created these spaces spontaneously. Greater support from institutional leaders can ensure WOC have various outlets within their sorority when needed. Although participants did not always explicitly identify them as such, their actions to create WOC-only spaces illustrate the importance of creating physical and emotional spaces to empower, develop and build community (Allen, 2019).

Institutional Critique

An important element of CRT is the elimination of white supremacist practices, policies and forces within societal systems and institutions (Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). MultiCrit not only seeks to disrupt whiteness and white supremacy but also call out monoracism as an embedded byproduct of a racist society (Harris, 2016a). This study reveals that Multiraciality in general or Multiracial students in particular are yet to be acknowledged at the institutional level and in Greek letter organizations. This is evident in the lack of disaggregated data found in fraternity and sorority statistical information and the lack of awareness reflected by sorority members.

The findings from SU also underscores the importance of the campus racial climate in conjunction with campus racial diversity (Kezar et al., 2018). On numerous occasions, participants expressed frustration with the university's irresponsibility in touting the number of minoritized students yet not making the institutional and systemic changes necessary to protect or integrate the population. Laybourn and Goss (2018) refer to this as "weak diversity."

> "Together these demonstrations underscore the futility of promotional racial diversity without multi-level engagement with the history, power relations,

> and material manifestations of race, or what we describe as 'weak' diversity. Stemming from 1980s multiculturalism, which celebrated cultural differences while also promoting assimilation, 'weak' diversity effectively undercuts attempts to acknowledge and address racial disparities." (p. 5).

Additionally, there is a call to expand the notion and education on who is considered a "Student of Color" (ChaIverson, 2007) and how the experiences of Multiracial students, who are inherently Students of Color, not only evade monoracial paradigms but highlight the reality that there is no set Multiracial experience, as folks come to college with different racialized backgrounds, heritages and experiences. Although Multicultural sororities exist, they are less popular organizations thus it is inevitable that a majority of Multiracial women will join monoracial sororities, if they rush at all. As an institutional agent, DFSL needs to take the necessary steps to educate themselves as well as councils and chapters about the presence and unique needs of Multiracial members rather than erase their existence amongst monoracial POC.

Multiracial women have little to no institutional (university, Greek letter organizations, specifically sororities) recognition or visibility except when their presence serves the interests of the institution or in this case the organization also known as interest convergence. The ramifications of being at once both invisible yet hypervisible harms Multiracial students, strips the university of value, and is ultimately deleterious, racist, and counterproductive to the inclusive mission and vision PWIs often project. Participants shared how their presence as POC was erased by sorority sisters. If happening on the micro-level, they are surely being forgotten or erased by the institution. However, when expedient and convenient to their sorority, they were utilized to recruit

other WOC, help to retain WOC through the big/little process or perhaps expected to lead the chapter as the Diversity and Inclusion chair.

Another example of monoracism committed by the institution is the timeline of white sorority recruitment. Scholars agree college is an ideal time for students to explore their multiple, often fluid, identities. However, WGLO recruitment structures essentially force interested students into initiation during their first year. This privileges white organizations by placing their processes at the forefront while NPHC and MGC organizations are less visible to women who fit outside the monoracial paradigm of race and who may need more time to gather information before aligning with one organization over another. As demonstrated in Clare's case, her premature decision to participate in white Greek life resulted in a loss of opportunity to build a community with some Black students on campus, perhaps restricting her access to a stronger racial consciousness and deeper understanding of her Black heritage. The added challenge of BGLO and LGLO secret recruitment practices also inhibits access for Multiracial women who are less familiar with the histories and "underground" nature of Black and Latinx Greek life.

The erasure of Multiracial people in society and in higher education is evident in scholarship (Leong, 2010; Nakashima, 1992). This study contributes to what we know about Multiracial erasure in Greek letter organizations from both a macro and micro level. While Multiracial women in general are often grouped as monoracial WOC or assumed to be white (depending on phenotype), participants in this study found that even within their sorority spaces, with their sisters of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, their heritages, identities, cultures and experiences were subsumed or erased in hurtful ways. Whether it be denying their Multiracial heritage, questioning why a white passing person

would *want* to identify with their oppressed heritage, requests to connect with other prospective WOC, or perpetuating a monoracial paradigm of race in general, GLOs fostered an environment where Multiracial women constantly battling whether their lived realities were real or valid to their sisters. The context of sorority life further illustrates the monoracist challenges and structures facing higher education, so much so that even within more intimate spaces, Multiracial students were denied their identities/realities.

Whiteness "as a structuring property" controls the entire social order (Owns, 2007). "As a structuring property, whiteness situates white individuals in positions of supremacy and privilege, while people of color are positioned as inferior within its structures" (Harris, 2019a, p. 1024; Owen, 2007). This is evident in the Greek letter system at PWIs. While on paper, recruitment takes place around the same time, women in WGLOs arrive earlier to campus for recruitment, possess an uncanny number of resources and institutional support, and remain the face of sorority life on campus. Among students with no context of the breadth and diversity of sorority life at a PWI, Multiracial women will continue to be pipelined to WGLOs as the only perceived option.

CONCLUSION

This study builds on the academy's understanding of Multiracial women, their experiences with microaggressions in monoracial spaces, and how Multiracial women uniquely navigate and engage with race and racism in sometimes hostile racial campus climates. While at the heart of sorority affiliation is sense of belonging, this study pushes beyond sense of belonging and identity scholarship to understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by Multiracial students, the fastest growing demographic group in the United States, within an organizational subculture at a large, flagship PWI. This study

offered a glimpse into the challenges and opportunities monoracial Greek letter organizations present for students who fall outside the traditional monoracial categories. Below I present a few major conclusions grounded in the findings of this study.

This study confirms that Multiracial students are still invisible on campus particularly in WGLOs. Additional education and intentional dialogue around social identities will push WGLOs to engage in color-brave conversations (Hobson, 2014) in which students can opt into sharing their racial/ethnic heritages, traditions and lived experience to move the sisterhood beyond the merely social to build intentional, thoughtful relationships in which all identities are welcomed.

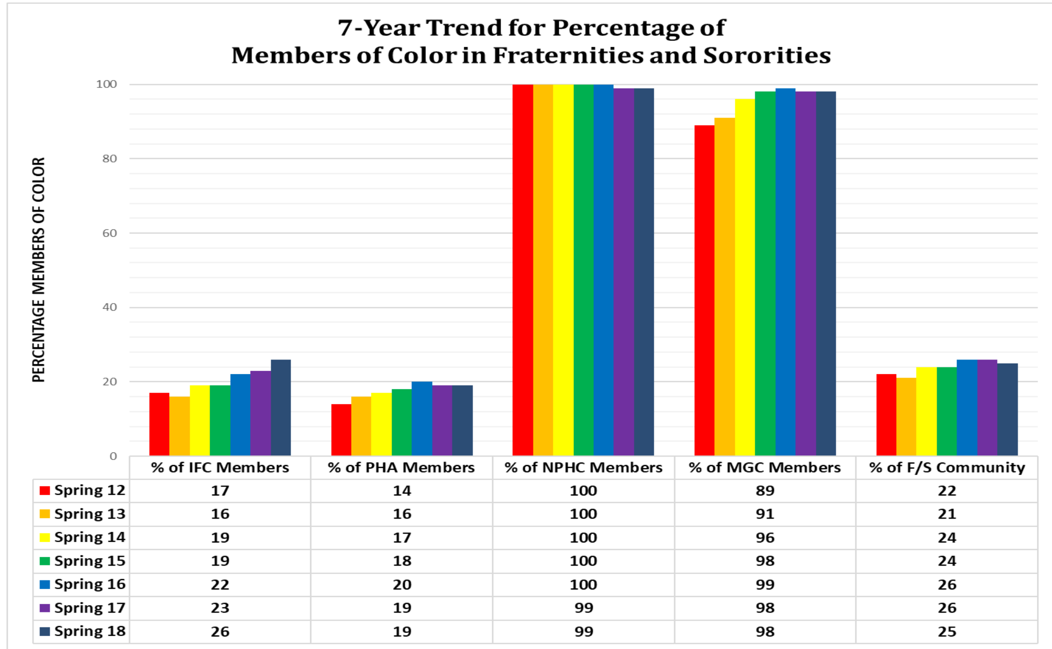
NPHC and MGC organizations serve to take the burden off of PWIs to serve Students of Color. They serve Multiracial women in special ways. While in college, a pivotal time in every student's life, Multiracial students either yearn to establish racial/ethnic connections they previously lacked or express a desire to learn and grow within a community to which they have never felt connected. NPHC and MGC organizations provide a significant community they may not otherwise find. The significance of NPHC and MGC organizations was further validated by the experiences of Multiracial women in PHA organizations who sought WOC spaces. Even when Multiracial women choose to align with white women, they still desired to be in community with WOC.

Greek life provides a set of benefits for its members such as leadership development, networking, and building a sense of belonging, which is why I do not call for the eradication of Greek life. Rather, I call on Greek letter organizations and university officials to be a more welcoming and intentional space of leadership

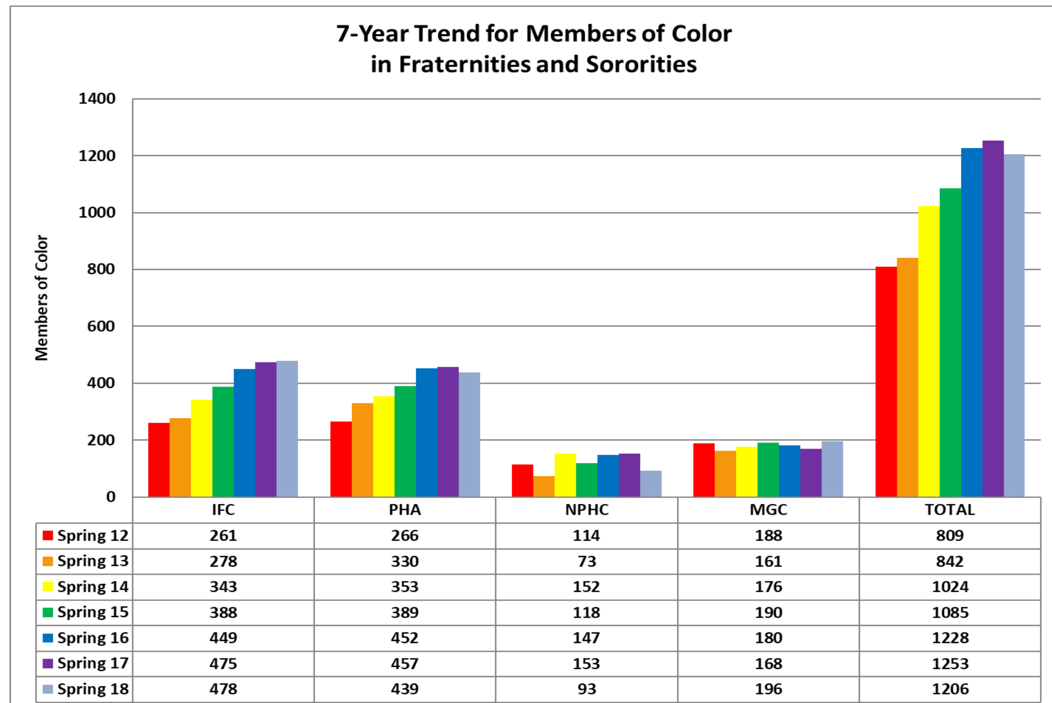
development across all members. GLOs must be communities of learning that engage in difficult discussions of race, racism, monoracism and move towards sources of authenticity, healing, and understanding. Students in Greek letter organizations become campus leaders, industry leaders and hold deeper ties to their alma mater. By investing in the growth and development of all GLOs, higher education stakeholders are investing in the eradication of white supremacy in one small yet powerful sub environment on campus which can have deeper implications for larger systems and structures beyond the higher education context. Eliminating monoracial organizations does not advance social justice or reduce inequality or racism. Acknowledging that Multiracial students are important members of our communities and that they hold unique realities and experiences is a critical first step.

Appendix A

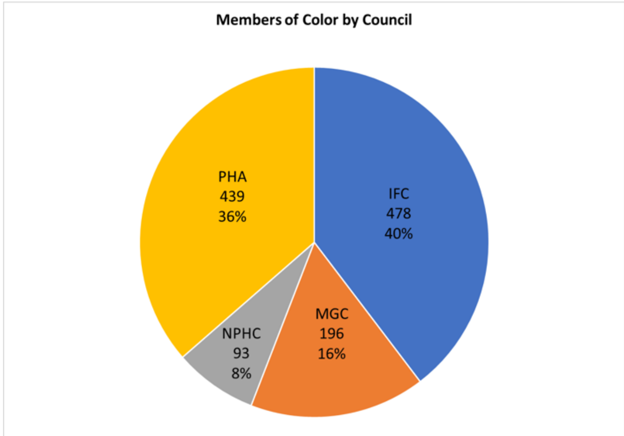
State University Fraternity and Sorority Demographic Data

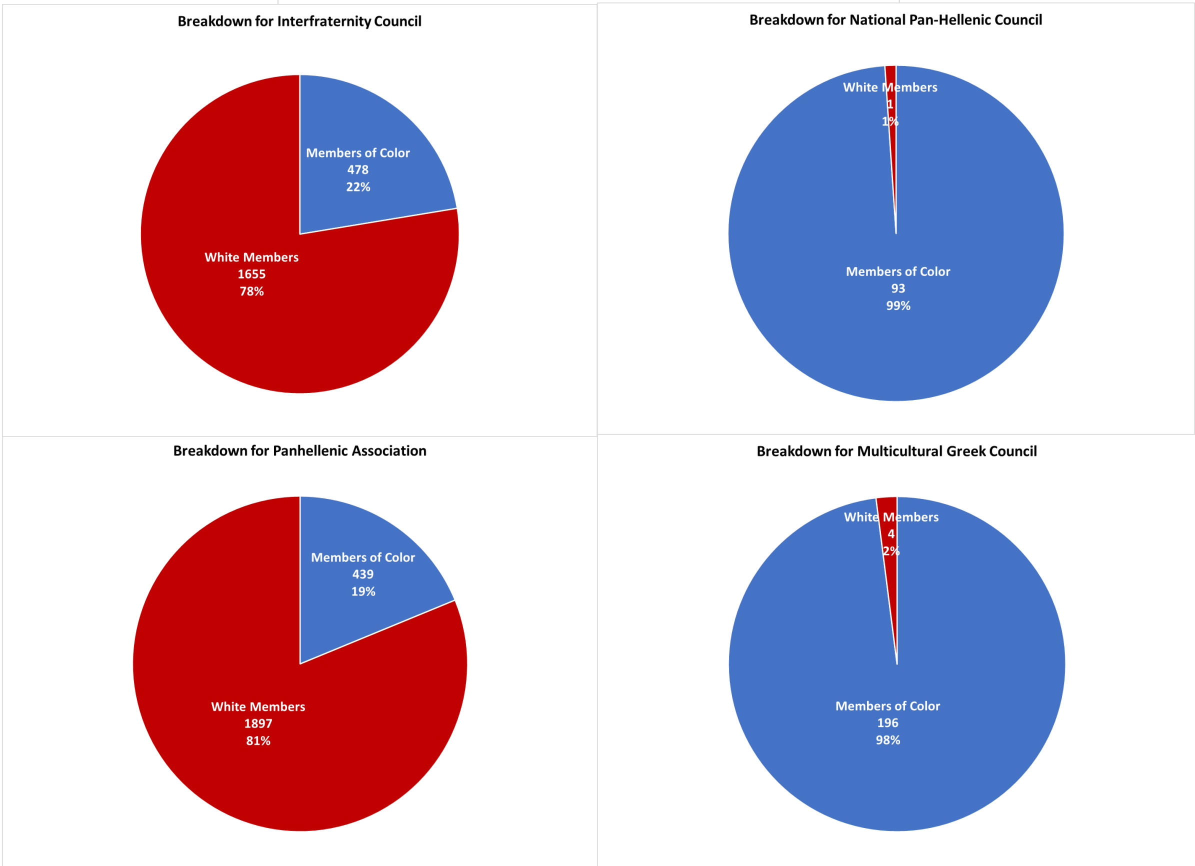


	% of IFC Members	% of PHA Members	% of NPHC Members	% of MGC Members	% of F/S Community
Spring 12	17	14	100	89	22
Spring 13	16	16	100	91	21
Spring 14	19	17	100	96	24
Spring 15	19	18	100	98	24
Spring 16	22	20	100	99	26
Spring 17	23	19	99	98	26
Spring 18	26	19	99	98	25



	IFC	PHA	NPHC	MGC	TOTAL
Spring 12	261	266	114	188	809
Spring 13	278	330	73	161	842
Spring 14	343	353	152	176	1024
Spring 15	388	389	118	190	1085
Spring 16	449	452	147	180	1228
Spring 17	475	457	153	168	1253
Spring 18	478	439	93	196	1206


Members of Color by Council
PHA
439
36%
IFC
478
40%
NPHC
93
8%
MGC
196
16%


Breakdown for Interfraternity Council
Members of Color
478
22%
White Members
1655
78%
Breakdown for National Pan-Hellenic Council
White Members
1
1%
Members of Color
93
99%
Breakdown for Panhellenic Association
Members of Color
439
19%
White Members
1897
81%
Breakdown for Multicultural Greek Council
White Members
4
2%
Members of Color
196
98%

Appendix B

Recruitment Email and Information

Hello,

My name is Jeanette C. Snider and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park in the Higher Education Program researching the racialized experiences of Multiracial women in social sororities on campus.

The experiences of Multiracial women receive limited attention in higher education research. This is a critical issue as the demographics of college students are quickly shifting to include a large increase in the Multiracial student population and the experiences of Multiracial students are unique and distinct. As a Multiracial woman and member of a sorority, I personally designed the study with the intent of exploring the experiences and motivations Multiracial women encounter as they navigate college life and how these experiences impact their identity, retention in college and overall sense of belonging. I am passionate about this topic and hope you will be interested in participating.

To participate you must at least be 18 years of age. You must identify with "Two or More" racial groups and/or as a Biracial/Tri-racial/Multiracial/Mixed race woman who is a financially and socially active member of a social sorority at your university. It is important that you have participated for at least one full semester in your sorority. As a participant in the study you would be asked to participate in a 60-90-minute individual interview that will be audio recorded. These interviews will be centered on your personal background, racial identity, and experiences as a member of your sorority. You will also be asked to bring three photos with you to the interview that depict you with your sorority sisters. The risks of participating in the study are believed to be minimal as the interview will provide a space for you to reflect upon your past and current experiences and this could bring up memories and accompanying feelings. Your participation is completely voluntary and if, at any time, you feel uncomfortable you can stop to take a break and or completely withdraw from the study. In addition to participating in the interview, you will also be asked to review the transcript of your interview to make sure that it accurately reflects what you shared.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please let me know and I will provide you with more information about the study including a consent form. You will, also, receive a copy of for your records.

Again, I hope that you will take the time to participate. I can answer any questions you may have about the study. Thank you so much for considering this request.

Take care,
Jeanette C. Snider
jcsnider@umd.edu
703-405-8762

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Background Information (google form):

1. Please select a pseudonym that you would like to use:
2. How do you racially identify?
3. What is your racial/ethnic background?
4. What racial/ethnic identities do your parents hold?
5. Age:
6. Year in college:
7. Major:
8. Country of origin:
9. Hometown (city and state):
10. Greek council affiliation:
11. Name of sorority/chapter:
12. Number of years since initiated:
13. Current position held in sorority:
14. Past positions held in sorority:
15. Other on-campus involvement/ extracurricular activities:

Appendix D

Participant Interview Protocol

Description of Study and Pre-Interview Procedures Script

Thank you for taking the time to interview with me. My dissertation study focuses on the experiences and motivations of Multiracial women in monoracial sororities. The purpose of this study is to expand research on the experiences of Multiracial women in higher education.

This interview will be recorded. I will not use your name, university, sorority or chapter name in any research reports, presentations, or publications that are produced from doing this investigation.

This interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participating in the interview or answering a specific question at any time. Do you have any questions I may answer before we begin?

I. Background

1. Tell me a little bit more about how you identify racially.

    a. Can you tell me a little about what identifying as BLANK means to you? or Why do you choose that particular way of identifying?

2. Describe for me your experiences with race prior to coming to college. What was the role of community, family, and friends, in your racial identity prior to college?

II. **Collegiate Experiences**

3. Explain your decision to apply to and enroll at this institution.

4. How have faculty and/or staff at the institution impacted your time in college?

5. What is your perception of how others (i.e., faculty, staff, peers, family) respond to your racial identity?

6. How would you describe the overall racial climate or culture of this college/university?

7. How is that climate similar or different from the climate in your sorority?
8. How do you think your appearance influences your daily interactions in your sorority?

III. **Sorority Experiences**

9. Tell me more about when and why you decided to join Greek life?

10. What factors contributed to your decision to join your specific sorority? or Why did you decide to join your sorority? Or What drew you to your sorority?

11. What was the recruitment/initiation process to get into your sorority like? or What was rush, recruitment and your initiation process like?
    a. How comfortable did you feel throughout the recruitment/initiation process?

12. Tell me a little more about why you decided to join your chapter instead of another.

13. Did you ever consider becoming a member of an PHA/NPHC/MGC sorority (opposite of what they are a member of)? Why or why not?
    a. Tell me about your involvement or relationship with other Greek councils and sorority women on campus.

14. Tell me about a time when your sorority sisters challenged your racial identity.

15. Tell me about a time someone in your chapter questioned and/or challenged your racial identity?
    a. When did it happen and what was the context?

16. How would your sorority sisters describe you?
    a. Do you feel like you "belong" in your sorority/chapter? Why or why not?

17. Tell me about the most challenging experience or aspect of being a member of your sorority?

18. Tell me about the most rewarding experience or aspect of membership of your sorority?

19. Tell me more about why you to stay in your organization?

20. How do you perceive the universities support of your organization/council?

IV. Closing Questions

21. Is there anything else about your experience in your sorority that you want to share?

Post-Interview Script

Thank you again for taking time out of your day to interview with me, if you have any questions after today please do not hesitate to contact me via email. Once I have transcribed your interview, I will email it to you to ensure accuracy. Thank you again and have a great rest of your day.

Appendix E

Observation Protocol

1. Discourses of race and diversity – specific examples.

2. The perceived racial identity of Greek community based on council, who is represented.

3. Any students disclose Multiracial identity and name specific experiences – which councils are they in?

4. Mention of any racist incidents on campus (what, when, how and any feelings or emotions connected – who is speaking, who is defending, etc.).

5. The approximate number of participants that appear to be POC compared to the size of the group.

6. The physical setting and non-verbal communication in the setting.

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