

Leadership, Hermandad (Brother/Sisterhood), and Organizational Culture: Crossing
boundaries to build collaborative relationships among Latino fraternal organizations

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore the identity development and organizational culture of a student organization, the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations council (NALFO) by implementing a community of practice approach at a large, public university in southwestern United States. The objective is to construct a sustainable camaraderie among the existing Latino fraternal organizations at the university to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, consequently transforming organizational culture. This study investigates the factors that contribute to and/or inhibit increased communication and collaboration and to describe the experiences of Latino fraternal members who are purposefully engaged in a community of practice. There are 57 fraternal organizations in five umbrella councils at the university, including predominately Caucasian, historically African American, Latino, and Multicultural groups, whose platforms are commonly leadership, scholarship, and philanthropy. This action research examines the experiences of six NALFO members individually and working as a community with the guidance of a mentor (the researcher). The researcher employs use of an anonymous initial and post electronic survey, a participant personal statement, an intentional and purposeful community of practice, a semi-structured individual interview, and focus groups to collect data. Findings suggest that length of membership and fraternal experience influence participant responses; however, the themes remain consistent. Building relationships, perception (by members and outsiders), identity development, organizational management, and challenging perspectives (from outside influences) are factors that influence the organizational culture of the

organization. On the post electronic survey all participants indicate that the implementation of an intentional community of practice can benefit the organization by encouraging participation and increasing communication. While participants suggest activities for encouraging member engagement, they determine that actual participation would be dependent on individual motivation.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of:

Mauro Alejandro Bravo

Leonarda Enriqueta Bravo

Manuel Zótico Heredia

Ricardo Ortiz

Luanda Elizabeth Cavaco

For my mom. Mommy, you are the absolute bravest (and luckiest!) woman I know. You are a survivor, have beaten the odds, and are such an inspiration. I love you.

For “my kids.” Kyara, Brandon, and Gabriel, you make me the proudest aunt I could ever be. The sky is the limit – reach for it and beyond! You can do whatever you put your minds and hearts to. Believe in yourselves always; I know I will forever. I love you.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Historically, educational attainment by Latino/as has been stricken by high drop-out rates even though many Latino/as view a post-secondary education as important for a successful future (Gándara, 2010; Lopez, 2009). A survey conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center (2009) found familial financial responsibility to be the largest barrier to pursuing a degree, and often times, for completing secondary education. The 2000 U.S. Census revealed that the Latino population doubled since 1980. A decade later, the number of Latino/as has grown by 43%, attributing to more than half of the growth of the country (U.S. Census, 2010). A similar increase is not observed in the number of students attaining a four-year degree. In 2000, 9.7% of Latino/as between the ages of 25 and 29 earned a baccalaureate degree and that number grew slightly to 13.5% in 2010 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Latinos continue to complete degrees far less than other groups.

An increase in women's educational attainment, specifically for Latinas, is evidenced in the rise of Latinas between the ages of 25 and 29 earning a baccalaureate degree from 11.0% in 2000 to 16.8% in 2010 (NCES, 2012). Comparatively, 8.3% of Latinos earned a baccalaureate degree in 2000 and 10.8% in 2010 (NCES, 2012). Latinas have surpassed their male counterparts and will influence a shift in workforce dynamics.

Degree completion will be vital to securing Latinos' position in the imminent labor force – not only in their immediate environment, but also in a global context (Criado & Singley, 2013; Maldonado & Farmer, 2006; National Council of La Raza, 2012). Interpersonal communication skills and relationship building skills may be some

of the competencies needed to add value to the workforce. These skills can be developed among engaged student leaders on college campuses (Cabrera, Nora, Crissman, Terenzini, Bernal, & Pascarella, 2002). Fraternal organizations for college students, whose platforms are commonly leadership, scholarship, and philanthropy, have become a conduit for initiative and service for students across the country (Gregory, 2003; Torbenson & Parks, 2009). Latino fraternal organizations, rooted in cultural traditions, activism, and kinship, provide a sense of family and a support system (*familismo*) as members maneuver through their college experiences (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Torbenson & Parks, 2009; Torres, 2004). These experiences cultivate leadership opportunities and can propel students to become informed leaders and prepared contenders in an increasingly global society (Dugan, 2008).

James Macgregor Burns (1978) describes transformational leaders as “those who lead through social exchange...those who stimulate and inspire followers” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3). Such leadership can be fostered through participation in fraternal organizations on college campuses across the country and in post-graduates. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders in their own right by responding to individual followers’ needs and empowering them and aligning the objectives of the individual followers, the leader, the group and the overall organization. Fraternal organizations, dating back to 1776, brought forth a subculture of student life to higher education (Gregory, 2003; Torbenson & Parks, 2009). With such groups came an idealized influence; students wanted to join the groups and follow the movement. The emergence of historically African American and Latino fraternal organizations began this process for students of color in higher education

(Guardia, 2006; Ross, 2000; Torbenson & Parks, 2009). The groups created by and for white people were social outlets, while those created by and for cultural minorities formed a means of survival and acceptance (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). Astin's (1984) research indicates that the more students are involved, at varying levels, the more likely they are to persist in their education. Noted research (Astin, 1984; Pike and Askew, 1990) shows "members of fraternal organizations had more interaction with their peers and worked more effectively in groups" (Gregory, 2003, p. 11). Fraternal organizations provide a vehicle of persistence to degree for members.

Situational Context

Three years ago, the researcher made a life altering decision to leave her home state of Connecticut to pursue a professional opportunity in southwestern United States. It meant she was leaving her *familia*, friends, and support network, to venture on her own. While the move continually tests her resilience, it has proven to be a meaningful undertaking filled with cultural awareness and personal growth.

The researcher is currently an academic advisor to undergraduate students at one of the largest, top ranked research universities in the country – a leader in innovation located throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area. Additionally, she serves as the staff advisor to a Latina sorority (initiatory/member organization for females) and a Latino fraternity (initiatory/member organization for males) at the campus. Her interest in Latino fraternal leadership development stems from personal and professional experiences. The daughter of Peruvian parents who came to the United States at a young age and who do not possess a college degree, she went on to be the first in her family to pursue a college education.

She attended primary school in a predominately African American community, where there were few Latino or Caucasian students. As such, she was fortunate to have had women of color as role models, one who introduced her to historically African American sororities before the researcher could make sense of them. As middle school approached, the school administration suggested that she enroll in a program that supported school desegregation by bussing city students of color to predominately Caucasian schools in the suburbs. This was a culture shock. She lived in a Latino neighborhood, grew up in an African American culture and was then immersed into white society. Her own identity was challenged. She has generally been successful in acclimating to her surroundings. Growing up, her inherent mentors and role models were the women in her family – her mother, her *Mamita* (grandmother), and aunts. They instilled the morals, values, cultural pride, and respect that she embraces in her life, and they led by example.

As an undergraduate, she became actively involved in several organizations and was a work-study student in the Career Development Center and Office of the Dean of Students. It was in this capacity that she became more aware of the power of mentorship. The dean of students, a woman of color and member of a historically African American sorority, was instrumental in the researcher's positive perception of women in higher education. Her supervisor in the Career Development Center saw her potential and cultivated a mentoring relationship. Most importantly, the researcher established a significant relationship with someone who not only taught her about professionalism, but encouraged her, challenged her, supported her, and inspired her. Over fifteen years later, this relationship continues to be an integral element in her professional career.

While these experiences and relationships helped shape the woman and professional she is today, one of her most memorable and meaningful accomplishments was founding the first Latina sorority at the small, public university in Connecticut where she attended. The campus had few fraternal organizations consisting of primarily historically Caucasian organizations and no Latino fraternal organizations. Four students took the initiative to found the 43rd chapter of the first Latina sorority in the nation, Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. This created a new outlet and voice, not only for the researcher, but for the growing diverse student population. She expanded her associations, building collaborative relationships with individuals and organizations that would have previously been unlikely. In retrospect, she is able to recognize the impact the experience has had on her life personally, professionally, in leadership, and in her work with the students she serves.

Local Fraternal Organizations

In the fall 2012 term, there were over 59,000 undergraduate students enrolled at Arizona State University (ASU) – 11,465 of which were categorized by the university as Hispanic and degree seeking (Arizona State University, 2012). While many of these students may be engaged outside of the classroom in multiple ways (e.g., honor societies, student organizations, athletic teams), of the enrolled students, only 60 students held active membership in a Latino fraternal organization (NALFO, personal communication, December 28, 2012).

Fraternities and sororities are membership organizations that have varying levels of member participation and serve multiple purposes including leadership and character development and service (Gregory, 2003). Most often, membership is sought and active

during the undergraduate years, but notably, for cultural/ethnic fraternal members, can also be sought at the alumni level and active participation persists beyond graduation (Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

The fraternal community at ASU is comprised of five councils: Interfraternity Council (IFC), National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO), and Multicultural Greek Council (MGC). These national coordinating entities were established to represent and promote the advancement of their respective member fraternal organizations; colleges and universities have local chapters of these entities on campuses across the country. It is important to note that not all ethnic organizations are found exclusively in the culturally represented overhead council. Although these groups are individually managed, they collaborate to an extent as a collective.

Problem Statement

This study focused on the interpersonal relationships and leadership of the organizations in the NALFO council at the university. There were three sorority member organizations and two fraternity member organizations with a membership totaling 60 students during the fall 2012 semester. These organizations are charged by their overarching association to “develop positive, supportive relationships” and “establish a positive and productive campus presence” (NALFO, 2010). Throughout the researcher’s involvement with fraternal organizations on the campus, she observed interactions between several fraternities and sororities across various councils. There are few collaborative events executed between Latino fraternal organizations and a good deal of miscommunication suggesting a competitive nature. Such activity is contradictory to the

purpose of the national association to “promote and foster positive interfraternal relations, communication, and development of Latino/a fraternal organizations through mutual respect, leadership, honesty, professionalism and education” (NALFO, n.d.).

Education, skill, and collaborative relationships will become increasingly important for Latinos entering the workforce because, according to the forecast of the U.S. Census Bureau, Latinos are the fastest growing minority group (U.S. Census, 2010). Dugan (2008) suggests that fraternal experience is commonly perceived as instrumental for leadership development and for practicing learned skills. While such competencies are imperative for anyone entering the workforce, what differentiates this population is the forthcoming impact that Latinos will have on the population of the United States. In a report for the National Council of La Raza, Singley (2009), pointed out characteristics that differentiate Latinos in the workforce:

- *Relative youth.* Latino workers, especially immigrants, are significantly younger than the workforce overall.
- *High rate of participation.* Hispanic men are more likely to be working or actively searching for a job than any other group in the labor force.
- *Large foreign-born population.* Many indicators of job quality look quite different for Latinos born in the U.S. and those born abroad. More than half of Latino workers are foreign born.
- *Lower educational attainment and English proficiency.* These challenges are more profound for immigrant Latinos, although they also limit the job opportunities of many U.S.-born Latinos. (p. 2)

If fraternal organizations offer a platform for preparation of leadership skills as Dugan (2008) suggests, institutions have a fundamental duty to foster an environment for students to produce knowledge, contextualize it for solving relevant and complex problems, ultimately creating a learning experience (Fried, 2012). Fried (2012) contends

that “from cross-cultural communication to the management of global business, we must develop approaches to learning that integrate theoretical knowledge, empirical data, and personal experience” (p. 5). The fraternal culture, with its inherent nature of developing leaders, serving communities, peer interaction and student retention, offers an ideal channel for identity development, building collaborative relationships, as well as creating and defining organizational culture (Dugan, 2008; Gregory, 2003; Wright & Littleford, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

This study was timely as it coincided with an initiative charged by the university’s Educational Outreach and Student Services to examine 21st century fraternal students and their leadership development. The researcher found several studies addressing the identity development of Latino college students (Castillo, Conoley, Choi-Pearson, Archuleta, Phoummarath, Landingham, 2006; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Schneider & Ward, 2003; Torres, 2003; Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004), gender perception (Bovell, 2009) and adjustment to campus climate (Garcia, 2005; Mendoza Patterson, 1998). She also found literature regarding the effects of Latina sorority membership on ethnic identity (Layzer, 2000; Olivas, 2006) and Guardia’s (2006) study on the identity development of Latino fraternity members at a Hispanic Serving Institution; however, the researcher found no study that explored the organizational culture and identity development of Latino fraternal organizations as a collective (sororities and fraternities).

The purpose of the study was to explore the identity development and organizational culture of a student organization, the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations council (NALFO) by implementing a community of practice

approach. The objective was to construct a sustainable camaraderie among the existing Latino fraternal organizations at the university to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, consequently transforming organizational culture. These relationships may benefit from intentional engagement and common ground leadership development beyond the standard university and/or organizational requirements. The skills developed in and supported by fraternal engagement paired with degree completion are critical to securing Latinos' position in the workforce. This study investigated the factors that contribute to and/or inhibit increased communication and collaboration and described the experiences of NALFO members who were purposefully engaged in a community of practice.

The mixed method, yet highly qualitative, enhanced the richness of data provided by participants. Although the results of this study cannot be generalized for all institutions, the implementation of an intentional and purposeful community of practice may result in determining a model for supporting collaboration and leadership development of not only Latino fraternal members, but other student organizations at a university. Creating a community among and within student organizations enabled students to learn by being active members and understanding their role in their communities (Wenger, 1998).

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What factors contribute to and/or inhibit increased communication and collaboration among Latino fraternal organizations at the university?

2. How will a community of practice influence prospective collaborative relationships and leadership of Latino fraternal organizations at the university?
3. How will participants experience influence the likelihood of sustainability of the community of practice?

Definition of Terms

This section will define terminology used for the purpose of this study. Some terms listed are commonly used by the specific fraternal organizations that participated in this study. It is important to note that terminology can be geographical and may differ according to the region of the country where an institution is located. This is also not an all inclusive list.

1. Latino vs. Hispanic - The terminology to identify members of this community has been deliberated over time. The term Hispanic was officially adopted in the 1970s and coined to cover ethnicity of persons of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Central American, South American and other Spanish-speaking country origins on the U.S. Census; Latino was added to the Census in 1997 (Taylor, Lopez, Hamar Martinez, & Velasco, 2012).

In a 2012 study conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, 51% of respondents stated no preference to either term, but when preference was offered, 33% of respondents preferred the term Hispanic versus 14% preferring Latino.

It is important to note that the university uses the term Hispanic for reporting purposes, not Latino/a.

2. Fraternal organization – for the purpose of this study, fraternal organization was used to describe men’s and women’s fraternal organizations and did not use “the term ‘Greek’ since some fraternal organization do not use Greek letters to identify themselves” (Gregory, 2003, p. 4); all of the participants’ organizations use Greek letters. The term “Greek” is used in participant responses in Chapter 4.
3. Mainstream fraternal organization – for the purpose of this study, mainstream refers to fraternal organizations that are historically Caucasian; typically associated with the North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), Interfraternity Councils (an affiliate of the NIC) and National Panhellenic Conference. The term “white” is used, at times, interchangeably with Caucasian.
4. Multicultural Greek Council vs. multicultural – for the purpose of this study, when referring to fraternal organizations specifically belonging to the Multicultural Greek Council, the term “Multicultural” is capitalized. When referring to Latino, Multicultural, and African American fraternal organizations as a collective, the term “multicultural” is used, at times, interchangeably with “ethnic.”
5. Sorority - initiatory/member organization for females.
6. Fraternity - initiatory/member organization for males.
7. Chapter – campus membership of an organization usually referenced by Greek letter order. For example, a founding chapter would be Alpha Chapter at ABC University, typically followed by Beta Chapter at XYZ University, and so on.

8. Interest – individuals interested in joining an organization; also referred to as prospective members.
9. Sister/Soror/Hermana – term used between sorority members of the same organization.
10. Brother/Hermano – term used between fraternity members of the same organization.
11. Line Brothers/Sisters – members who are part of the same intake class.
12. Sands – individuals from different chapters who joined organizations during the same semester; used by some organizations to identify members who are part of the same intake class (i.e., line brother/sister).
13. Neophyte – newest members of an organization, typically members for less than a year; also referred to as “Neos.”
14. Propkyte – members for more than a year, typically those that have experienced/witnessed at least one intake process.
15. Paraphernalia – items worn by members displaying organizational letters, colors, symbols; often referred to as “para.” Para can include pins, organization crest, t-shirts, jackets, teekees (medallions similar to a necklace).
16. Crossing or Crossover – term used to describe when an individual transitions to full membership at the conclusion of the membership intake process (Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, 2009).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will first discuss the models of identity development and Latino culture. Next, transformational leadership will be outlined, followed by an overview of fraternal organizations, including historical aspects of mainstream, historically African American organizations, and the emergence of Latino fraternal organizations and the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations. Finally, a review of a university assessment for the health of the fraternal community will be presented.

Identity Development

Arthur Chickering developed a psychosocial model of identity development that serves as a basis for identity formation. Ethnic identity development is complex and experiential with several models based on context. Chickering identified seven vectors of student identity development that have been revised to be inclusive and apply to adults (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The first vector, *developing competence*, refers to intellectual, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competence; *managing emotions* is the ability students have to express, control, and accept emotions; *moving through autonomy toward interdependence* describes the students emotional independence from others they constantly seek approval of, self-sufficiency; *developing mature interpersonal relationships* involves “tolerance and appreciation of differences” and “capacity for intimacy” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The fifth vector, *establishing identity*, distinguishes the student’s concept of personal stability, self-esteem, and being comfortable with in the means of your lifestyle.

Developing purpose, the sixth vector, consists of being engaged and committed in activities that are of personal interest. Finally, *developing integrity* consists of humanizing, and personalizing values, along with developing congruence, which allows the student to focus on their value system (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2009).

People of color have historically been oppressed and bundled together initiating generalized identity development models (Sue & Sue, 1999; Wright & Littleford, 2002). Researchers have found ethnic identity models to be broad and often inadequately define the population being studied, therefore creating specific models (e.g., Cross, 1978, 1991; Ruiz, 1990). The term Latinos encompasses a vast array of cultures; therefore, to create a model or theory, the term narrowly defines an entire population (Torres, 2003, 2004). Several models have been created by previously documented identity theories (e.g., Cross's Nigrescence model [1971] and Atkinson, Morten, and Sue's minority identity development model [1993]). Such theories, compiled, create a composite that would most accurately assess the development of the Latino/a student. Although not every student shares the same experience, some common themes can be constructed when evaluating the influences of ethnic identity, positive relationships with students and faculty, methods of support, student, and academic achievement. According to Gracia (1999), what makes up one's identity is essentially what sets one apart from others. Researchers have generated several ways of understanding the Latino students' identity development.

Phinney (1990) developed a three stage model initiated with acceptance of values and attitudes of the majority culture, followed by a forced ethnic identity search, and finalized with a clear and confident sense of identity. Ruiz (1990) proposed a five-stage

model from a clinical perspective for Latino/Hispanic American identity development based on several underlying assumptions. In the first stage, *causal*, the ethnic heritage is negated or ignored causing failure to identify with the Latino culture. Next, the *cognitive* stage entails invalid beliefs such as the association of poverty and prejudice with the ethnic group, assimilation to the dominant culture viewed as the only means for avoidance and the only possible way to achieve success. During the *consequence* stage, a person feels ashamed by ethnic markers (name, accent, skin color) and estranges from the heritage. In the fourth stage, *working through*, a person becomes unable to cope with identity conflict and increases ethnic consciousness. In the final stage, *successful resolution*, greater acceptance of culture and ethnicity is achieved.

Culture. Latinos often have a strong ethnic identification and align themselves with their country of origin to preserve traditional values and norms (Rotheram-Borus, Dopkins, Sabate, & Lightfoot, 1996; Taylor et al., 2012). Adolescents experience biculturalism, or identifying with and navigating between two distinct cultures, to a higher degree more recently (Giguère, Lalonde, Lou, 2010; McLean-Taylor, Veloria, & Verba, 2007). Experiences of women of color with respect to racism, sexism, living in poverty, being bilingual and biracial, has been fairly ignored in literature (De Reus, Malone-Beach, & DeGenova, 2000; Reid & Kelly, 1994).

Traditionally, Latino culture is male-dominated, defined by *machismo* or honor, respect and dignity, but also aggressiveness (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Sager, Schlimmer, & Hellmann, 2001). The women place family and children first, respecting the man's authority and being sexually dominated, or *marianismo*. Young Latino males are raised with the expectation of providing for their families, often at the expense of their own

education (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). With the continuous arrival of an immigrant population, some cultural norms remain unchanged evading acculturation to an extent (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Familismo, a cultural value of nuclear and extended family, familial honor, loyalty, is a prominent feature in Latino culture where the community has a strong relationship to immediate and extended family (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Torres, 2004). The family provides encouragement, which may also be perceived as pressure. Fear of disappointing the family can serve as a motivator to students (Hernandez, 2000; Sue & Sue, 2008). Greater value is placed on the larger community (collectivism), rather than the individual (individualism), often sacrificing individual needs for those of the family to avoid conflict (Muñoz-Laboy, Yon Leau, Sriram, Weinstein, Vasquez del Aguila, & Parker, 2009, Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Sue & Sue, 2008). The concept and importance of familismo, while it can deter Latinos from pursuing higher education, can also be the motive for their persistence in higher education (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Torres, 2004). Hill and Torres (2010) suggest that Latino families define being “well educated” to include morality, responsibility, respect, and good behavior.

Additionally, Latino cultures value community and interdependence and social relationships (Hill & Torres, 2010). To sustain relationships, it is common for Latinos to employ use of certain characteristics to maintain accord. *Simpatía* (sympathy) includes “a willingness to conform to others and be agreeable” (Hill & Torres, 2010, p. 104).

Personalismo (personal) involves people trusting people, rather than institutions or

organization to which they belong. Finally, *respeto* (respect) incorporates “empathy, respect, and intimacy in relationships” (Hill & Torres, 2010, p. 104).

As such, many identity development theories, which focus on individualism, conflict with the values of group-oriented cultures (Rotheram-Borus et al., 1996). The innate complexities of identity development and Latino experiences, including their strengths and survival strategies, are rarely examined (Rotheram-Borus et al., 1996; Trotman-Reid & Kelly, 1994). Sue & Sue (2008) suggest emphasis should be placed on ethnic identity and what it means to be Hispanic/Latino (p. 383).

Leadership

Northouse (2012) asserts that there are a multitude of theoretical frameworks used to explain the complexity of leadership, but simplistically defined it as a “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p.5). Penn (2008) provided an outline of leadership theories: *great man theory* supporters believe people are born leaders, including royalty and ranked military personnel; *trait theory* implies that a person’s character or personality creates a leader. One can study an individual and imitate or learn behaviors (i.e., competence, dependability, intellect) that propel them as leaders. *Behavioral theory* suggests an individual can learn to act like a leader by adapting behavior to the context of the task at hand; *contingency theory* involves a complement of a leader to a particular situation; *transactional theory* claims outcomes are met because of external rewards; and *transformational leadership* places onus on the individual to help others reach goals.

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers’ needs and empowering

them and aligning the objectives of the individual, the leader, the group and the overall organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Sarros, Cooper, & Santora, 2008). In transformational leadership, participation and contributions are valued, different perspectives are considered, experiences and contexts are learned, and leadership is shared (van Linden & Fertman, 1998).

Leadership is a developmental process and can be shaped within specific organizations and groups (van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Many changes occur during adolescence. Van Linden and Fertman (1998) break down the adolescent period into two parts, early (ten to fourteen) and late (fifteen to nineteen) and define leaders as those “who think for themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others, and help others understand and act on their own beliefs; they influence others in an ethical and socially responsible way” (p. 17). Each group has specific needs based on the stage the individual is in. For the leadership development process to be significant to adolescents, their idealism, autonomy, and construction of identity must be considered. Fried (2012) suggests that:

Learning is most powerful and transformative when it involves interpersonal communication, the simultaneous awareness of multiple points of view, respect for knowledge construction based on different and unequal life experiences, and a general sense of the context in which learning occurs, almost every assumption of traditional approaches to education is challenged. (p. 15)

Gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are generally what differentiate an individual from another (van Linden & Fertman, 1998); in the context of fraternal organizations, this can infer the separatist structure of mainstream and multicultural organizations, social consciousness, and social and financial capital (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). Developmentally, characteristics attributed to boys and girls vary, especially when

considering leadership. What may be considered strengths in boys may be considered aggressive for girls. As such, these factors affect one's ability to lead and also evidenced by several studies indicating gender [and ethnicity] differences in learning practices, and leadership style (Cabrera et al., 2002; Dugan, 2008; van Linden & Fertman, 1998). To better understand individual development, these categories should be examined, although these are beyond the scope of this study.

Communication

Communication has been viewed as essential to organization and a fundamental aspect of leadership (van Linden & Fertman, 1998; Putnam, Nicotera, & McPhee, 2008). Van Linden & Fertman (1998) assert that "effective communication helps adolescents break down barriers between themselves and others, and between themselves and adults in particular" (p. 43). Effective communication is a learned skill that can begin with leadership development.

A leadership program can begin with a dissection of the components of communication for increased awareness of verbal and nonverbal cues. Communication is composed of sending, receiving, and responding to any contact (van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Communication style refers to the way in which a message is sent, the perceived tone, amount of eye contact, what subjects are approached and not approached and is also associated with race, culture and ethnicity (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Cultural implications. Conflict can surface heavily based on interpretation of communication styles including nonverbal communication. *Proxemics* describes sensitivity to personal space (Sue & Sue, 2008). For example, in mainstream America, it may be uncomfortable to be in close proximity to another individual when having a

conversation. Alternatively, a closer position during conversation with Latinos is interpreted as being engaged in a given topic rather than seeming distant and unapproachable (Sue & Sue, 2008). *Kinesics* refers to physical exchanges including “facial expression, posture, characteristics of movement, gestures, and eye contact” (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 163). A smile inherently represents a positive expression of happiness or likeness, whereas in some cultures, a smile may denote embarrassment or nervousness (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Historical Perspective of Fraternal Organizations

Fraternal organizations, dating back to 1776, brought forth a subculture of student life to higher education (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). The emergence of historically African American and Latino fraternal organizations began this process for students of color in higher education (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; Ross, 2000). While many mainstream organizations were formed as social outlets, the multicultural groups formed as a means of survival and acceptance on college campuses (Kimborough, 2002; Ross, 2000; Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

While each student has a personal reason for pursuing a fraternal organization, the premise of all the organizations is virtually identical. In most instances, fraternal organizations have shared values including at least one primary philanthropic cause they support, provide service to their campus and surrounding communities, promote scholarship and strive for academic excellence, and hold their organization in the highest regard (Dugan, 2008; Gregory, 2003; Ross, 2000; Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

Historically African American Fraternal Organizations

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., having the distinction of being the first African American fraternity, was founded on December 4, 1906, at Cornell University (Ross, 2000). During a racially hostile time, the men in the organization bound themselves through Alpha to ensure that they would return to the campus and continue their education. This act created the onward and upward movement for African American male college students at the time. The organization provided a support structure for students of color, not only providing an outlet for students with similar interest, but also provided housing, study groups and a social environment where they could grow and learn from one another (Ross, 2000).

This motivation prevailed, enabling men of color to form organizations at their respective institutions. Subsequently, four more fraternities were established: Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. at Indiana University on January 5, 1911; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. at Howard University on November 17, 1911; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. at Howard University on January 9, 1914. The last African American fraternity emerged in the wake of the civil rights movement, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. at Morgan State College on September 19, 1963.

Fraternal leadership did not remain solely with male students. Higher education for women was usually frowned upon by society and much less likely to occur for African American women (Ross, 2000). A group of women at Howard University created the first African American sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in January 1908. Conflict arose within the group of women causing some to spawn off thus creating Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. on January 13, 1913 at Howard University. Zeta Phi Beta

Sorority, Inc. would follow on January 16, 1920 at Howard University, and lastly, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. on November 12, 1922 at Butler University.

These nine African American fraternal organizations are governed by their respective national boards, but make up the membership in the National Pan-Hellenic Council that was formed in 1930. The council was formed as an umbrella organization for what are known as the “Divine Nine” organizations. The shared values include scholarship, service, and brother/sisterhood. The National Pan-Hellenic Council serves as a facilitating agent for communication and collaboration.

Emergence of Latino Fraternal Organizations

In an effort to inform student affairs professionals of the forthcoming change in organizational climate, Kimbrough (2002) offered:

Latin fraternal organizations have mirrored the phenomenal growth of Latinos in the United States during the 1990s. A minimum of 29 groups emerged in that decade, bringing the total number to over 50 groups; with additional estimates indicating that over 70 Latin fraternal groups are presently in existence. (as cited in NALFO Latino/a Fraternity and Sorority Research, n.d.)

The mainstream and historically African American fraternal organizations began a movement. The foundation of the Divine Nine, as a basis for survival on college campuses, permeated to other groups as time went on and more students of color gained access to higher education. This new wave of students brought forth a growth in fraternity and sorority life. Just as the African American students in the early 1900s needed a place to fit in, a place to be encouraged and supported, so did the Latino, Asian, Native American, and multicultural students starting in the early 1970s. It is estimated that at least 365 national fraternities and sororities have been established since 1776,

though not all remain active, as some have gone defunct or merged with other organizations (Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

Muñoz and Guardia (2009) present the history of Latino fraternal organizations in four phases: (a) *principio* (the beginning), 1898-1980, secret societies; (b) *fuerza* (force), 1980-1990, organizations established for survival; (c) *fragmentación* (fragmentation), 1990-2000, large influx of organizations established; and (d) *adelante* (moving forward), 2000-present, developing national structures (p. 107).

Latino organizations may have existed since the late 1800s, but more as secret societies rather than organized fraternal organizations (Guardia, 2006; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; Torbenson & Parks, 2009). The literature notes a merger of Latino societies, creating Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity, Inc. as the oldest existing Latino fraternity, established on December 26, 1931, at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York (Guardia, 2006; Miranda & Martin de Figueroa, 2000; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009), a somewhat controversial claim within the Latino fraternal community as two organizations assert the recognition. The organization [Phi Iota Alpha] became defunct and was restored many years later. It was not until the 1970s that Latinos developed a means to promote student success among each other and cultural awareness on college campuses. As the nation's largest and fastest growing minority group, the population does not correlate with the number of Latinos earning college degrees. Today, members of Latino fraternal organizations join in solidarity, almost representative of the acts survival and support that were emphatic on campuses in previous years (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009). These organizations serve as a vehicle of persistence to graduation for Latinos by fostering "a need to academically and socially thrive" (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009, p. 127).

Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Inc., founded on December 1, 1975, at Kean College (now University), contends recognition as the first Latino fraternity because there were no Latino fraternities, as we know such organizations today, in existence at the time (Lambda Theta Phi website, n.d.; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009). The founders “realized there was a need to unite the Latino students, develop their leadership skills, impart upon them the value of an education, and instill in them a commitment to their community and culture” (Lambda Theta Phi website, n.d.).

The first Latina sorority, Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. was also founded in 1975 at Kean College in Union, New Jersey, as the institution was establishing its Latino and Caribbean Studies program – a time when Latinos were emerging in higher education (Lambda Theta Alpha website, n.d.; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009). These students worked to make their voices heard and take on positions in the student council and government. For these women, these Latinas, the sorority was more than an organization; it was a movement, a statement that they were present. In its 37 years of existence, the organization has grown to over 120 undergraduate and alumnae chapters across the U.S., including Puerto Rico (Lambda Theta Alpha website, n.d.). The 1980s saw an explosion of Latino fraternal organizations as higher education became more accessible to these students (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009).

All fraternal organizations have created a subculture within the larger culture of academia. Each has an individual mission, but all provide support for student success, service to the community, leadership development, enhancing the college experience and creating lifelong camaraderie (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). The membership intake and educational program of each organization varies as well; this is part of what sets the

organizations apart from each other and makes them each a unique experience (Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO)

The establishment of many Latino fraternal organizations was the impetus for developing a national umbrella organization. Organizations were operating on campuses with existing fraternal systems (i.e., NIC/IFC, PAN, and NPHC) that were unclear how to support these students. The Latino fraternal community felt compelled to find a means to support and meet the needs of organizations on campuses across the country; therefore they created one over time. The first Latino Greek Council was formed in 1991 at the University at Albany, SUNY by members of Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009). The council focused on building a national structure for longevity. The east coast council was renamed the Concilio Nacional de Hermandades Latinas (National Council of Latino Brothers and Sisters). According to Muñoz and Guardia (2009), another umbrella organization, the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO) was established in 1998 on the west coast; it existed simultaneously with the Concilio Nacional de Hermandades Latinas and was more inclusive of the younger fraternal chapters.

The two entities met in 1999 with an agenda to create a system most beneficial to the Latino fraternal organizations and their members. A compromise could not be reached. Consequently, the Concilio ceased to exist and NALFO continued to serve its purpose to “promote and foster positive interfraternal relations, communication, and development of Latino/a Fraternal organizations through mutual respect, leadership,

honesty, professionalism and education” (Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; NALFO website, n.d.).

There are currently five collegiate NALFO councils established in the country at: (a) Arizona State University; (b) California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; (c) Rochester Institute of Technology (New York); (d) Syracuse University (New York); and (e) State University of New York at Stony Brook. Pace University, Pleasantville (New York) will add a collegiate NALFO council in fall 2013.

University Fraternity & Sorority Assessment

The Fraternity & Sorority Coalition Assessment Project (the Coalition) is a collaborative effort between the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA), National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO), National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), and North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC). The purpose of the Coalition is to provide an objective assessment of the overall health of fraternal communities at institutions across North America (North American Interfraternity Conference website, n.d.). The Coalition determined five areas to review when assessing fraternal communities: developing positive interpersonal relationships; leadership development; build/strengthen social IQ, citizenship, service learning; advance academic interest/graduation of membership; and effective campus interface to and support of fraternity sorority community.

In fall 2011, Fraternity & Sorority Life at Arizona State University welcomed the Coalition to assess the fraternal community at ASU. The team met with university and departmental leadership, undergraduate and alumni fraternal members from the five councils at the university, and chapter advisors. Using the five review areas, the

assessment team compiled a report outlining four topics: basic summaries, areas of strength, areas of improvement, and recommendations. The information collected by the team included input from various sources and data provided by the university. In their final report, the Coalition stated they were “impressed with the level of caring and support the community is fortunate to have at so many levels” (Coalition Report, 2011). The information and data was to be considered the “perspective of an objective, third-party team of professionals engaged by the university to assess the health of the fraternity/sorority community during a specific, snapshot point in time” (Coalition Assessment Project Final Report, 2011, p. 3).

The following are some notable areas that had particular impact on the Latino fraternal organizations on campus. The basic summaries section included basic data of the fraternal community at the university. Some interesting points included:

- Approximately 56,562 undergraduate men and women were enrolled at ASU in fall 2010; 32.3% were students of color.
- The fraternity/sorority community comprises approximately 5.48% of the total undergraduate student population at ASU.
- The fraternity/sorority community at ASU, in large part, is a very positive option for students to connect in smaller communities while exploring opportunities for leadership development, academic guidance, service initiatives, and social interactions on the large campus.
- The concept of “One University – Many Places” was prevalent and emphasized throughout many interviews, but it was apparent fraternities and sororities and some departments do not recruit or engage students from the other campuses.
- Few programs and services on the topic of leadership development and training appear to be provided to fraternity/sorority members.
- There was a great emphasis placed on large-scale philanthropic initiatives within the fraternity/sorority community. (The Coalition Assessment Project Final Report, 2011, p. 3)

The strengths of the community based on the five review areas were reported based on perceived and real representations. The Coalition acknowledged that the

fraternal community certainly possessed strengths that were not included in the report. As such, the five target areas included:

Developing Positive Interpersonal Relationships

- Fraternity & Sorority Life staff communicates regularly with chapter advisors, mostly via email.
- Fraternity & Sorority Life staff started hosting advisor meetings for the National Panhellenic Conference advisors in 2003, which have been very well received.
- Each governing council appears to be cohesive with a sense of community amongst their respective member groups.
- There appears to be strong collaboration between Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Conference chapters.
- Students involved in fraternities and sororities are very proud of their membership and “Greek pride” is visible as students wear letters and host events on campus.

Leadership Development

- Fraternity and sorority members are perceived as leaders on campus, specifically within Undergraduate Student Government or the Homecoming Court.
- Fraternity & Sorority Life staff host a Fall Leadership Retreat for chapter and council leaders, and some students have attended regional and seasonal conferences.

Build/Strengthen Social IQ, Citizenship, Service Learning

- The team observed that many ASU students exhibit cross-cultural competencies and appear to value diversity in myriad forms.
- There is wide support among the fraternity/sorority community and institution for local Tempe and Phoenix charities and philanthropic initiatives.
- Community service has helped maintain a positive image of fraternity/sorority life on campus.

Advance Academic Interest/Graduation of Members

- Data provided from the spring 2011 semester indicate that the fraternity and sorority community grade point average (2.99) was equal to that of the overall undergraduate population (2.99).
- Chapters host study tables for individual member academic support and development.

Effective Campus Interface to and Support of the Fraternity/Sorority Community

- The institution’s investment in the community is strong, and administrators sincerely want to strengthen the programs and services provided to the fraternity/sorority community.

- The institution has invested specifically in the residential component of the ASU fraternity/sorority experience. Residence Life is supportive of the fraternity/sorority community by allocating staff and space to support member housing. (The Coalition Assessment Project Final Report, 2011, p. 5)

The limitations of the community based on the same five target areas also included both perceived and real information gathered by the coalition team. As such, the following are the limitations in contrast to the aforementioned strengths:

Developing Positive Interpersonal Relationships

- The five councils generally operate in independent silos and there are no facilitated opportunities for all council officers or chapter presidents to work together.
- There is no shared community space for chapters in any council, outside of the National Panhellenic Conference. Some NPC chapters have challenges filling their houses, and do not have adequate space for communal eating, meeting, and ritual activities.
- There is a sense by students and alumni that the “university” is not interested in partnering with Fraternity & Sorority Life.

Leadership Development

- Despite decent attendance, a course on the topic of leadership development was recently cut, reducing an already low quantity of leadership and training programs and services offered to students.
- There is little training provided to students on member accountability, hazing prevention, and bystander intervention.
- The university does not currently provide a formalized officer transition, chapter presidents’ retreat or basic chapter officer training provided to fraternities/sororities.
- There are few opportunities provided for the fraternity/sorority community for councils and chapters to gather together in a community-wide leadership program.

Build/Strengthen Social IQ, Citizenship, Service Learning

- While large-scale philanthropic events were described in detail, hand-on service was mentioned less frequently and with less appreciation and commitment among the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Conference communities. Culturally-based fraternities and sororities, on the other hand, were known for doing a significant amount of hands-on service.
- The annual Greek Week of Service, although popular among students, has become competitive in nature and has begun to overshadow the true purpose of the week.

Advance Academic Interest/Graduation of Members

- Although the spring 2011 academic data shows that the fraternity and sorority community grade point average was equal to the overall undergraduate grade point average, this has not consistently been the case in past semesters. In fact, according to data found on the ASU website, the fraternity and sorority community grade point average was below the overall undergraduate grade point average for five of the past seven semesters.

Effective Campus Interface to and Support of the Fraternity/Sorority Community

- The team perceived a widespread lack of knowledge as to what an ideal fraternity/sorority community could be, including the concept of fraternal values.
- There is a perception that certain councils feel marginalized and receive disparate treatment from university staff. This may be due to the current Fraternity & Sorority Life staffing structure.
- Communication between Fraternity & Sorority Life staff, Residence Life staff, and chapter advisors is poor. (The Coalition Assessment Project Final Report, 2011, p. 7)

Some of the recommendations for further development of the fraternal community at the university included implementing “proactive, regular methods for communicating with local chapter advisors...if necessary, these communications should be customized to address different needs of Panhellenic, Interfraternity, and National Pan-Hellenic Council groups” (The Coalition Assessment Project Final Report, 2011, p. 12). For leadership development, a recommendation included “offering an educational program at the time of officer transitions, or at the beginning of each semester” (The Coalition Assessment Project Final Report, 2011, p. 13). “Chapters and councils should be encouraged to review their individual and community academic standards” was recommended for advancing academic interest/graduation of members (The Coalition Project Final Report, 2011, p. 17).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the identity development and organizational culture of a student organization, the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations council (NALFO), by implementing a community of practice. Thus, constructing a sustainable camaraderie among the existing Latino fraternal organizations at the university to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, consequently transforming organizational culture. This study investigated the factors that contribute to and/or inhibit increased communication and collaboration and described the experiences of NALFO members who were purposefully engaged in a community of practice.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study provided two perspectives from which to draw an understanding of the experiences of NALFO members at the university. Wenger's (1998) communities of practice, a social theory of learning, entails learning as social participation allowing for a broad description of how this particular student organization forms a community. Schein's (1992, 2010) theory of organizational culture allowed for an in depth description of the unique culture of the Latino fraternal organizations at the university.

Active participation in social communities and constructing identity within a particular community are key components to a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice are groups of people who share a common interest for a particular practice and work together to improve and make meaning from learning

together (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, Snyder, 2002). According to Wenger (1998), three characteristics are imperative to be considered a community of practice: *the domain*, a network of people with a shared domain of interest who value collective competence and learn from each other, even though few people outside the group may value or even recognize their expertise; *the community*, as part of the shared interests, members engage in joint activities and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; and *the practice*, as practitioners, members develop, over time, a shared repertoire of resources – experiences, stories, tools, methods of addressing recurring problems.

Earlier, Lave and Wenger (1991) studied apprenticeship and relationships during apprenticeship (mentor/mentee) as a construct of learning. Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP) describes the orientation of new members into a community of practice by increased active participation and learning by experiencing in such practice (Wenger, 1998). To establish a coherent community, Wenger (1998) states there are three dimensions to the actual practice, which served as a framework for the study: (a) *mutual agreement* (members actively engage in and make meaning together); (b) *joint enterprise* (collective response to situation, taking ownership and having accountability); and (c) *shared repertoire* (resources, including concepts and routines, that give meaning to a community of practice) (Wenger, 1998). Van Linden & Fertman (1998) assert that “thoughtful leadership development helps individuals learn more from their experiences and formal training” (p. 36). Figure 1 displays the dimensions of practice that give a community meaning over time and enable the community to exist.

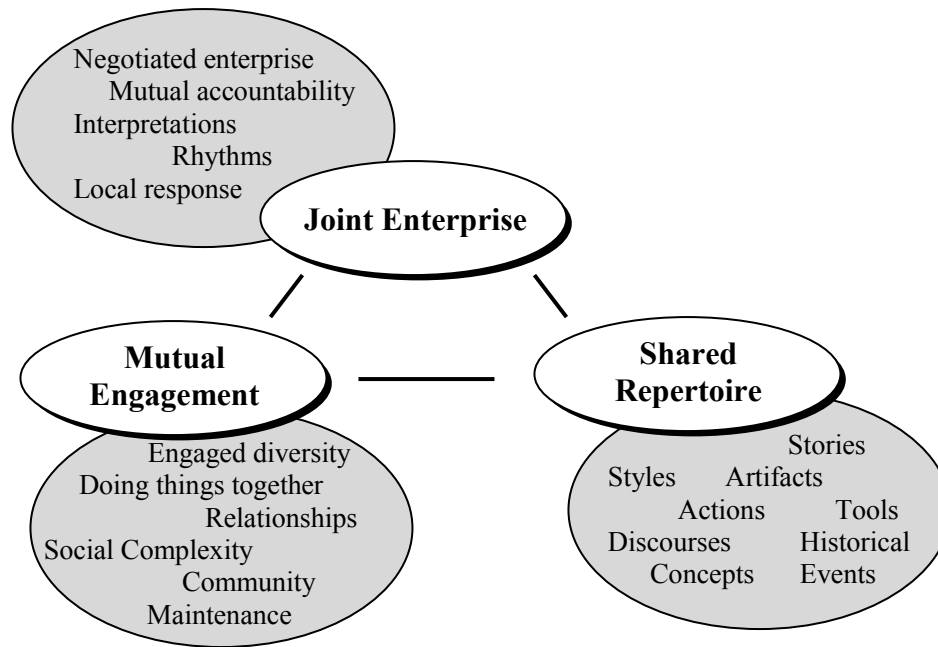


Figure 1. Dimensions of practice as the property of a community. Adapted from *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity* (p. 73), by E. Wenger, 1998, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

For the purposes of this study, the application of Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice is significant as many of the participants belong to the fastest growing population in the country and should be prepared contenders in an increasingly global society.

The implementation of an intentional and purposeful community of practice could result in determining a model for supporting collaboration and leadership development of not only members of Latino fraternal organizations, but other student organizations at the university. Creating a community of practice among and within student organizations can enable students to become more active participants, make meaning, and construct identity (Wenger, 1998).

Schein’s (1992, 2010) theory of organizational culture complemented Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice to describe the nuances of the culture of NALFO at the university. Schein (1992) states “[w]hen one brings culture to the level of the organization and even down to groups within the organization, one can see more clearly how it is created, embedded, developed, and ultimately manipulated, managed, and changed” (p. 1). The components of this theory were used to contextualize participant responses and determine potential need. Figure 2 shows the “levels at which culture can be analyzed” (Schein, 1992, p. 16).

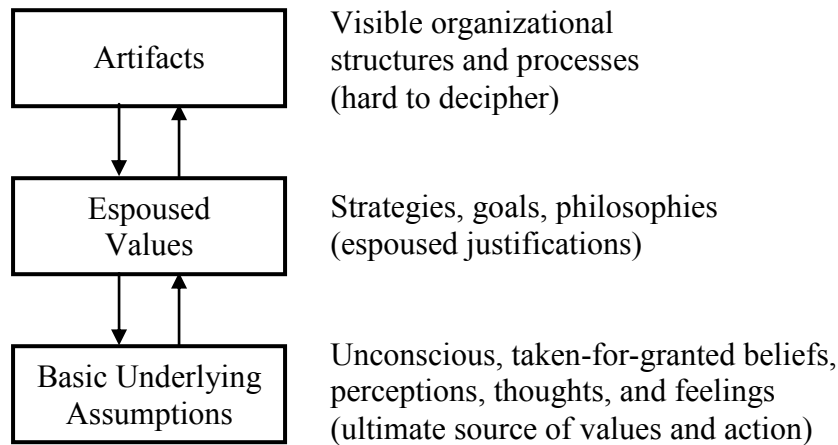


Figure 2. Levels of culture. Adapted from *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.) (p. 17), by E.H. Schein, 1992, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Research Design

To capture participant experience and observable data, a mixed methods research approach was utilized; however, qualitative data proved to be the primary source collected. Qualitative research enhanced the richness of data provided by participants by exploring participant views and experiences (Creswell, 2009; Plano Clark & Creswell,

2010). Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) suggest that the best way to learn about people's experience is to "ask them about it, and then listen carefully to what they say" (p. 23). The research utilized a purposive sampling of the Latino fraternal organizations at the university. The data included an initial and post survey, a written, personal history, a semi-structured individual interview, focus groups, and an intentional collaborative project.

The NALFO chapter presidents were contacted by email; a meeting was scheduled to address the chapter membership to introduce the researcher and the study in an effort to solicit voluntary participants (Appendix B). The voluntary nature of their participation and confidentiality was stressed. The potential participants were informed that they may withdraw at any point during the study. All members were provided with the researchers contact information should they wish to participate.

Once participants self identified, an informed consent letter was provided to each participant (Appendix C). A link to an anonymous electronic survey was sent by email to participants to obtain benchmark information; it was not necessary to know specific participant responses, rather the experiences. Within the same email, they were provided guidelines for a personal statement. Using an online scheduling tool, the first focus group was scheduled. During the focus group, the participants engaged in discussion for a baseline perspective of identity and organizational culture, as well as the planning of the intentional collaborative project.

The discussions "correct[ed], broaden[ed], and deepen[ed] the researcher's understanding of the participants' subjective experience" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 9). Focus groups were used to gain understanding of participant experiences (Creswell,

2009; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010) in their home lives, as college students and fraternal organization members, and to assess their perception of the status of their collaborative relationship with other Latino fraternal organizations. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) suggest that the best way to learn about people's experience is to ask them and listen to their story (p. 23). Thus, focus groups were conducted at the inception and conclusion of the study. The meetings were audio-recorded, with the permission of the participants, and later professionally transcribed for analysis.

The intent of the first meeting was for the participants to learn more about themselves and each other, outside of organizational boundaries. The researcher anticipated that participants would explore and discover similarities and differences that would bring the group together without conflict.

Participant observations were also utilized throughout the study, especially during the intentional collaborative project completed by participants. This process allowed the researcher to gather and record information about the participants for the duration of the study (Creswell, 2009; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). The primary purpose for observation was to make note of any verbal and non-verbal cues in regard to interpersonal relationships and sense of connectedness within the community of practice. This community can become the students' ally, their partner in pursuit of a college degree, in achieving connectedness, and in empowerment (Hernandez, 2000); a lab "for learning to communicate, empathize, argue, and reflect" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 392), which is a fundamental purpose of joining such an organization. In this instance, the NALFO council and its members are the ally.

The study sought to explore participant experiences as a community of practice through its organizational culture and examining the factors that contribute to and/or inhibit increased communication to build collaborative relationships between NALFO organizations at the university. The participants worked strategically toward a common vision with the group project, consequently establishing a more cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration by collaborating purposefully. The researcher observed this process from the planning stage to successful completion. The concept of a community of practice has the potential to serve as an effective means for facilitating sustained leadership in individual organizations, as a collective, and potentially, for the overarching governing council.

Setting

The study took place at the most populated campus of the university. The institution is the largest in the country with a population of over 72,000 students, offering over 290 majors and over 1,100 student organizations for which to be a part (Arizona State University, n.d., 2011). The study focused on members of Latino fraternal organizations. It is important to note that not all members of Latino fraternal organizations are, in fact, of Latino heritage. NALFO organizations do not discriminate on the basis of racial or ethnic makeup; anyone may join a chapter (Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, 2009).

Participants

For this study, the researcher chose a purposeful, homogenous sampling to gain the most insight on members of the group to be studied (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010).

Sample. The voluntary participants were members of the existing NALFO organizations at the university. The membership of the Latino fraternal organizations at the university are small in comparison to the mainstream organizations – 57 total organizations in five governing councils, including 22 Interfraternity Council organizations, 13 National Panhellenic Conference sororities, 11 Multicultural Greek Council organizations, 6 National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations, and 5 National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (ASU Fraternity & Sorority Life, personal communication, November 15, 2012). Participants included one male and five female traditional aged college students who were active members of their organizations at the time of the study. Participants ranged in length of membership in their respective organization and in level of activity in terms of leadership positions. For the purpose of this study, only members of Latino fraternal organizations were included.

Recruitment. Upon approval of the Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), visits to council and chapter meetings were scheduled with the chapter presidents via email (Appendix B), with the exception of one organization that responded to email correspondence after the requested deadline as the chapter email was not read and then stated that no members were able to participate. Only members of the organizations attend chapter meetings; this ensured that the students that were addressed were part of the sample group. In fall 2012, the sample was comprised of 60 potential participants who held active membership (paid and in compliance). The sororities included: (a) the largest chapter in the council, 28 members (0% participation); (b) a chapter of 13 members (23% participation); and (c) a chapter of 8 members (25% participation). The fraternities included: (a) a chapter of 8 members (13% participation); and (b) a chapter of

3 members (0% participation). Of the potential participants, six students (10%) agreed to participate in the study.

Role of the Researcher. For several years, the researcher has served as the staff advisor to one of the Latina sororities and one Latino fraternities on the campus, works closely with their membership, and witnessed several transitions in leadership within the chapters. No significant interaction with the other three NALFO organizations had been experienced. Conversely, the researcher believed the collaborative relationships between organizations could benefit from intentional engagement and common ground leadership development beyond the standard university and/or organizational requirements.

The researcher served as a mentor throughout the duration of the study, but allowed for interdependent relationships to be established amongst participants. Based on initial survey data, the researcher maintained contact with participants by email, a preferred method of communication, second to in-person contact. The researcher also served as a facilitator during focus groups and observed the group project.

The researcher shares a similar background to many of the participants in that she is Latina, speaks both English and Spanish languages, and general socioeconomic upbringing as the student participants, including being a member of a Latino fraternal organization. The researcher had an established rapport with some members of NALFO organizations because of their participation in the pilot study conducted in the spring 2012 semester and as an advisor to two of the Latino fraternal organizations on campus. Based on post survey responses, it was evident that trust and fellowship was established between the participants and the researcher and enhanced effective development of mentorship during the research study.

Data Collection

This study utilized a mixed methods approach that included quantitative and qualitative data to enhance the strength of the data collected (Creswell, 2009). By virtue of the nature of this study, qualitative data was the primary source of data collection. In addition, survey and demographic information were also collected to establish a reference point to measure and understand participant perceptions of fraternal organization membership, as well as expectation and experience of community of practice.

Initial and Post Survey. Once participants were identified and informed consent was obtained, an anonymous electronically administered survey (Appendix D) was sent via email using survey software, Questionpro, to obtain benchmark information including participant fraternal experience and perception of the existing organizational climate of Latino fraternal organizations at the university. To ensure anonymity of survey responses, participants were asked to include a subject code to pair the initial and post survey data. They were instructed to input a code based on a 4- digit/letter code using the following formula: 1. First letter of birth city/town, 2. First letter of first name, 3. Two-digit birthday (e.g., 24 or 04 for single digits).

The post survey and final data collection (Appendix F) was also administered electronically using the same Questionpro software. Participants included the same 4- digit/letter code from the initial survey.

Document Collection. In the first communication, each participant received a link to the initial survey and a prompt for the personal statement to include information about their upbringing, family history, educational background, what made him/her decide to attend college, and what made him/her choose to join a Latino fraternal

organization. Participants were instructed to make an effort to keep all personal identifying information out of the statement. The statements were referenced during the initial focus group to support the notion of similar identity (individual and organizational) development.

Any information pertinent to the study, including organizational public information, such as grade reports, historical information, and purpose statements were also collected as an additional reference.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were used to bring all participants together to garner a shared understanding of the phenomenon (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). An online scheduling software, Doodle, was used to poll participants for scheduling both focus groups. After all initial survey and personal statement data were collected, participants convened in a meeting room at the university and engaged in the first focus group. This was the first opportunity for all participants to meet as a collective; five of the six participants attended (83%), Natalia was unable to attend. All of the participants were familiar with each other by virtue of membership in NALFO; relationships and closer friendships exist between some members more than others. An opening activity was performed to alleviate any nervous feelings or apprehension that may have existed because of the few interactions experienced outside of select NALFO events. The activity surrounded the themes found in their personal statements. They felt more at ease seeing how much they had in common and interested to learn more about their differences. Participants were encouraged to speak freely as they shared discourse on perceptions of fraternal organizations, their own experiences, group dynamics and relationships. To draw more participant responses, discussion points began with broad topics followed by

more specific. The second focus group was held following the group project for an hour; five of the six participants attended (83%), Gabriela was unable to attend.

Both focus group sessions were audio-recorded, with the permission of the participants, and professionally transcribed to ensure no information was lost. The researcher guided the conversations based on participant dialogue.

Semi-structured interview. Individual interviews were scheduled with each participant, in person and via email, following the first focus group. The semi-structured interviews (Appendix E) were conducted at the convenience of the participant and included six questions; some follow up questions were also asked based on participant response. The questions were formulated to gain insight on the participant's perspective of the existing organizational culture of fraternal organizations at the university, including strengths and challenges, and the identity development of the overarching fraternal council.

Each interview was audio-recorded with the permission of the participant and professionally transcribed for accurate and detailed information. Each interview was slated for a thirty minute time period, but varied depending on participant discourse.

Group Project. The concept of the group project was conveyed at the first focus group. They were encouraged to discuss and decide on a project that they could plan within the parameters of the timeframe of the study. The project was selected by participants at the first focus group. They chose to work on an existing council event that was not appropriately planned for such an impending date. They immediately began the planning phase. This provided an opportunity for the researcher to observe participant collaboration. The process the participants underwent during project selection was also

observed. Actualization of the project was not the objective of the study, rather the process and development of the community of practice was. Fortunately, the project was successfully planned and executed.

Data Analysis

The study employed a mixed methods approach; however, qualitative data was more heavily utilized. The researcher audio-recorded and took notes during the semi-structured interviews. Based on the researcher's time consuming experience with transcription during the pilot study, she chose to have the audio files sent for professional transcription. The original, unedited versions of participant personal statements were read several times to gain awareness of similarities and differences. The focus groups were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed.

All documents were read multiple times to identify and organize themes across each data set (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Interview data was verified by the participants for accuracy, a process Plano Clark and Creswell (2010) call member checking. The data were examined for emerging themes and categories using axial coding by hand. This process involved the use of various markings and colored tabs. Hand-analysis is often preferred by researchers when smaller data sets exist (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). For confidentiality purposes, each participant was assigned a pseudonym and self selected a code using a formula provided by the researcher for the electronic surveys.

The researcher asked persons outside of the project, but familiar with the topic of the study, to review the study, a process known as a peer review (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). She also employed the use of triangulation to “corroborat[e] evidence

about a finding from different individuals or types of data (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010, p. 287). The researcher asked NALFO members who did not participate in the study about the relationships, communication, and collaboration of NALFO members.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of the study was the small number of participants (N=6). Although each participant proved to be active in his/her respective organization, as an individual, his/her perceptions cannot be generalized as perceptions for their entire chapter or the entire NALFO community. While the data gathered was useful in identifying themes across organizations, a larger number of participants could likely yield slightly different outcomes.

Another notable limitation was the timeframe of the study. The study commenced a month after the fall 2012 semester began, which is a busy time for fraternal and other student organization recruitment. The participants were each undergraduate students and their academic performance took precedence. This fact could have also affected the number of participants who agreed to take part in the study as the NALFO organizations generally have fewer active members. Time availability may have been limited as many student leaders balance course load, employment, and student leadership activity.

In addition, there was not a large degree of quantitative measures in the study. The richness of the qualitative data could be enhanced by quantitative data (Creswell, 2009; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010); consequently, it [qualitative data] became the dominant data set. The initial and post electronic surveys on fraternal experience were posited for benchmark and outcome measures. The individual interviews and focus groups were framed to gain an overall baseline perspective and to gauge individual

participant perspective in order to surmise a feasible model for student organization collaborative relationships.

Finally, the researcher is also a member of a Latina sorority, though, not one that is represented at the university. The researcher also serves as the staff advisor to one Latina sorority and one Latino fraternity on the campus; she was also acquainted with each participant prior to the study. It is probable that some members may have perceived this fact as a bias in the researcher's perception of organizational climate. The organizational climate that exists among the Latino fraternal organizations could have also potentially obscured any data presented by the participants to the researcher.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Through the course of the study, participant accounts informed the research questions and uncovered some shared perceptions relating to communication, collaboration, and developing and sustaining relationships among Latino fraternal organization members at the university. Creating a community of practice among and within student organizations could enable students to become more active participants, make meaning, and construct identity (Wenger, 1998).

The first section of this chapter provides an introduction to the participants based primarily on their personal statements and an account of all data collected. Pseudonyms have been used for each participant to ensure confidentiality. Results follow the participant introductions and data inventory. The findings are presented using the theoretical models that guided this study.

Introduction of Participants

While Latino fraternal organizations have commonalities that attract potential members, each person has a distinct story, a background that influenced who they are as individuals. The personal statement submitted by each participant was an opportunity to tell the story that shaped their sense of identity. These students have crossed boundaries several times throughout their lives while coming from working-class families to excelling in college to joining a collectivist membership organization in an individualistic culture to pursuing careers in areas underrepresented by Latinos. The following are succinct representations of the participants based on their personal statements and a brief commentary by the researcher.

Amethyst

Amethyst was born in Mexico City and brought to the United States at the age of six. Her parents separated causing a financial hardship to her family forcing her mother to work two jobs to support her and her sister. She grew up in a small apartment with 15 members of her extended family. Initially, she did not attend high achieving schools; although she did excel academically, she rebelled behaviorally.

Her mother expected much from her and moved her to a private Christian school, which she says “saved my life.” She “always had a passion for science” and attributes “PBS documentaries, *Nova* and science” to helping her choose a different path than her peers. She thanks God everyday for giving her “the opportunity to become a strong, educated Latina.” Amethyst is a first-generation student whose mother may appear to never be satisfied with her achievements; she always expects the best. Amethyst is very intelligent and maintains humility; she earned three associate degrees prior to receiving her high school diploma. To be able to meet her mother’s expectations in college, Amethyst spends a lot of time studying and is also involved in student organizations, as well as research projects with her program of study. It is difficult for her family to understand the rigor and commitment of her pursuing a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) field – a field highly underrepresented by Latinas. She is motivated by skepticism stating she “will not let anyone or anything stop” her.

Joining a sorority was not in her plan, but once she saw what her organization stood for, her plan changed. She knew it was right for her as she valued the same things as the organization and the members were just like her, “fighting the odds to become educated Latinas.”

In her words of pride and resiliency:

I want to give others the opportunity I have been so lucky to have. In the end, Latinos are the smallest minority in the STEM fields. Minority women are even rarer in the sciences. I know that through my experiences, my organization, and my involvement with ASU, I am able to do this. In the end, Greek life organizations all serve the same purpose. We are all fighting the odds, breaking stereotypes, and trying to create leaders for tomorrow. I am so proud of calling myself a Latina. I am proud of being a beautiful woman in the sciences. I am proud of who I am and am becoming. But most importantly, I am thankful that I have been given this opportunity.

Amethyst is very outspoken and expressive in her dialogue. She does well academically; she is a senior majoring in biological sciences (genetics, cell, and development biology) with a minor in Asian languages (Japanese). Along with her academic responsibilities and student activity, she works two jobs to maintain her independence.

Anthony

Anthony, the only male participant, comes from a large, close Mexican family that has always had an influence on his educational, social, and professional aspirations. He is the second youngest of seven children and although his parents eventually divorced, he never lacked for a sibling to turn to for advice. Education and knowledge helped bridge any age divide with his siblings; his curiosity for learning always led to him asking about the homework his siblings were doing. His family has always supported education. As he stated, “school has always come easy and I found myself always looking for the next challenge.” He preferred math over reading or writing.

Anthony became more actively involved with sports and school clubs in addition to his academics in high school. This involvement compelled him to begin meeting new people and reaching outside of his comfort zone as he was accustomed to. Aside from

teamwork, he learned “dedication, discipline, commitment, and perseverance” from his activity. His friendships in his honor classes were a key motivator to progress through school.

Taking on the challenge of higher education was a “completely new realm” for him and one he knew nothing of. To this point, he knew how to be a student, but never had a model of what it meant to be a college student. It was important for him to create connections with those from the “same community” and those seeking to overcome some of the same obstacles as first-generation college students. He encountered Greek life at the start of his first year. He never had the intention of “going Greek” because he didn’t know anything about it, except for mainstream fraternal organizations portrayed on television and the movies as “frat boys” and “sorority chicks” partying. After spending some time with some Interfraternity organizations he decided it was not for him. He was later approached by a different organization that had “Latino values” and he decided to pursue the organization after attending their events and saw their shared values.

Now a senior, majoring in Spanish (Linguistics) with a minor in Italian, he is still actively involved in his fraternity and other student organizations. Anthony is involved with organizations and causes that he is passionate about. His involvement makes him recognizable by university administration and staff as one of the more prominent student leaders among fraternal organizations at the university.

Gabriela

Gabriela was born in Phoenix, but raised mostly in Mexico; she is the youngest of four siblings. She completed high school in Arizona and decided to stay in-state to attend college. Her parents did not complete high school, therefore encouraged her to do well in

school. She and her twin sister felt a responsibility to pursue college since neither her parents nor her older brothers were able to. She was not necessarily encouraged by her parents as they knew it was expensive and did not have the means to pay tuition. Gabriela was also encouraged and mentored by her teachers who were able to guide her in the process of going to and paying for college. Although it was an unknown subject to her, she stayed motivated “because this is a lifetime opportunity.” She participated in a summer internship in a STEM field at the university, prior to her freshman year. She gained self-confidence whilst in one of her courses it was discussed how students drop out of college. She “had a mindset that that will not happen to me and that I am going to graduate from college.”

Her family remained very supportive of her and her sister as they left for college and trusted that they would do well. Her dad also keeps her motivated as he is very proud that she decided to major in civil engineering; something he would have loved to do. She is currently a senior and still actively involved with her sorority. Getting involved in college was strange for her since she was not active in high school; she thought she would just focus on her challenging academics, though she knew she needed some type of leadership experience. A friend from high school became involved in a multicultural fraternity and introduced her to the sororities. She didn’t know multicultural organizations existed. She attended an informational session for an organization and “fell in love with the opportunities of leadership.” She chose her organization because “the girls seemed pretty friendly and down-to-earth.” She attributes her organization with helping her “become a well rounded person,” it has helped her “stay motivated to stay in college,” and has turned into her “support system at ASU.”

Gabriela is a senior, majoring in civil engineering. She has a quiet demeanor, carefully choosing her words when speaking. She has a sister that also attends the university; together, they found their home away from home with student organizations, especially the sorority.

Monique

Monique, the youngest of the participants, was born at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Denver, Colorado. She moved around several times as her dad was in the Air Force and settled most recently in a predominately Anglo community in California with her father. She is the youngest daughter of her Black father and Irish mother; she has an older brother. Although separated, her parents maintain a positive relationship from across the country (her mother lives on the east coast). Both her parents are college educated with plans to return and further their education. As such, they were always supportive of her and her brother's education and "set the example and the bar very high."

She was very active in sports – playing volleyball, basketball, and even golf. Monique focused on the friendships she formed; her friends "weren't very diverse and were mostly white." She struggled to find a group of friends that she "really fit with." It wasn't until college that she found this group, with her sorority. As an out-of-state student, she felt overwhelmed at a large institution with so many things to participate in. She was introduced to the sorority by a friend from a different student organization. Race and/or ethnicity were not a major factor in her choice of organization. She joined a predominately Latina sorority. She found that members shared the same goals in life and she thought, "finally, a group I fit in with!" The sorority became her support system and

network, as she gained summer employment by way of another member. She enjoys making a difference in the community through the service they participate in. Monique also plans to further her education and eventually move to the east coast to work with programs that aim to “help high school students strive for a college education.”

Monique is a junior, majoring in psychology and is an honor student. She is very observant and quiet initially, until she feels comfortable to contribute to a group discussion. She became more vocal and her cheerful personality emerged through the course of this study.

Natalia

Natalia was born in California and raised in Arizona. She is the eldest of two daughters. She was always a good student, but admits to having behavioral issues at home. She grew up in a two-parent household, where her dad worked in the morning and her mother worked in the evening. Her dad was the disciplinarian, yet also the parent who had most of the ‘coming of age’ discussions with her. She was not encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and although she was very social at school, she was very isolated outside of school. As many teenagers do, once Natalia possessed a car, she felt she was free and began rebelling against her parents and their rules. All the while, she maintained good grades.

She acknowledges the sacrifices her parents made to provide for her and her sister. Her mother did not finish high school in order to help raise her own siblings. Her dad completed high school and wanted to go on to college, but did not have parental support. Natalia knew the importance of an education because her parents instilled it in her. She was given an opportunity that her parents never had. Her academic achievements

helped her earn scholarships to attend college. Her parents are extremely proud of her and often “boast to other family members and co-workers” about her accomplishments.

She thought about joining a Pan-Hellenic (predominately Caucasian) sorority before she “found out about multicultural organizations.” She was “ecstatic and amazed that Latino founded organizations existed and saw how much better of a fit they would be” for her. She saw how much of a “family” they were and that was definitely something she needed at a large university, four hours away from any of her family. She was very active in community service during junior and high school, so finding an outlet for that interest was important. She joined her sorority because of what it stands for and the importance placed on academic excellence and community service.

Natalia appears quiet at first, but she is a keen observer. She enjoys actively participating in student organizations. She has also taken on leadership positions within her sorority and is not afraid to speak up for things she believes in. She is a senior, majoring in psychology and hopes to become a child psychologist.

Rosa

Rosa has lived in Arizona her entire life. She is the youngest daughter of her California born mother and Mexican born father. Having few close relatives nearby, she and her older sister are “very close and do almost everything together.” She stated, “Growing up, my family was very fortunate to rely solely on my father’s income without my mother needing to work,” although she remained active in the community volunteering in local schools and teaching Spanish. Her parents made sure she and her sister were involved in a variety of activities such as “art, dance, reading club, gymnastics, or community service.”

Rosa attended a prestigious Catholic school before transitioning to a public school in second grade. She stated the transition was “effortless academically due to the curriculum, but socially awkward.” While her peers in private school were more financially secure than she was, Rosa’s family was more financially stable than her peers in public school. She never quite felt accepted at either school, but continued to achieve academically. She learned that education was of great importance while she was building a “thicker exterior and knowledge of diverse backgrounds.”

She quickly saw the different path she chose, as her original class of 1,400 students was down to only 500 at graduation. She graduated with honors in the top 5% of her class and was awarded a merit scholarship to attend [name of university omitted]. Not attending college was not an option in her household. Education was extremely important to her family and she was brought up believing higher education was the only way to be successful in life; her mother earned a master’s degree and her father is dedicated to hard work.

Going to college was the easy part, but surviving at the university was a very different experience. She only knew few acquaintances from high school and she did not live on campus as many students do. She lacked a “supportive group who shared the same background, major or interests” as she did. She never imagined she’d join a sorority as she only knew of sororities as “the stereotypical drunk girls who disrespected their own bodies” typically associated with mainstream organizations. She became intrigued once she learned about Latina based sororities on campus. She described her experience:

Each sorority had their own distinct attributes, but in the end shared the same goal of making a positive impact in the community. Prior to making my decision on joining a sorority, for once I finally felt I had the strongest connection with a

group of people, fraternities included, who came from the same background and who shared the same academic goals I did. I became instantly drawn into a world of ambitious Latino leaders that I never knew existed on campus and who have now transformed my life for the better.

Rosa is a senior, majoring in art (printmaking). Her soft-spoken affect and warm smile make her an approachable person by her peers. She is opinionated, but expresses herself in a positive, nonjudgmental manner.

Summary of Participants

Table 1 summarizes participant demographic information including names (pseudonyms), heritage, educational class, major, and status. As noted, most participants (83%) were female, four (67%) were first-generation students pursuing a college degree, and most (83%) were of Mexican heritage.

While several of the participants were in leadership roles within their fraternal organization as well as the council, their titles/roles were not included for confidentiality purposes given the small sample size.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Student	Heritage	Class	Major	Educational Status
Amethyst	Mexican	Senior	Biological Sciences	First-generation
Anthony	Mexican	Senior	Spanish (Linguistics)	First-generation
Gabriela	Mexican	Senior	Civil Engineering	First-generation
Monique	Biracial	Junior	Psychology	Non-first-generation
Natalia	Mexican	Senior	Psychology	First-generation
Rosa	Mexican	Senior	Art (Printmaking)	Non-first-generation

Table 2 provides an overview of the themes presented in participant personal statements pertaining to educational path, family background, organization choice, and reason(s) for joining a fraternal organization. This information was used in an introductory exercise prior to the first focus group.

Table 2

Themes in Participant Personal Statements

Theme	Theme related element
Family Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All participants opened statement with their role in their family (e.g., daughter, son, eldest, youngest) - Four of six are first-generation college students - Four of six are from single parent households (i.e., divorce, separation) - Family supportive of academic excellence - Families may not understand time commitment to school and organizations
Perception of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education equals opportunity and success - Parents instilled importance of education - Many needed guidance in applying to college - Education could lead to breaking stereotypes
Peer Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants took different path than junior/high school peers - Did not find <i>fit</i> with peers
Reason for Joining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support system away from home - Shared values and beliefs - Active in community service - Support academic excellence

Table 3 displays an account of all data collected throughout the study. Upon selection and completion of informed consent, participants were emailed a link to the

initial survey and asked to write a personal statement. Using an online scheduling tool, date selection began for the first focus group to be held after completion of the initial survey and personal statement.

Account of Data Collection

Table 3

Account of Data Collection

Instrument	Occurrence/PP	Time	Yield
Initial-survey	1	16 min each (avg)	6 completed
Personal Statement	1		16 pages total
Focus Group (pre-project)	1	80 minutes	40 pages total
Interviews	1	138 minutes	57 pages total
Project	1	300 minutes	5 participants
Focus Group (post project)	1	55 minutes	22 pages total
Post-survey	1	10 min each (avg)	6 completed

Note: PP = per participant. Yield = total number of pages professionally transcribed and/or number of participants that completed data point

Initial Survey. Each participant was emailed a link to the initial survey. The survey did not require use of personal identification, but asked that participants create a 4 digit/letter code using the following formula: 1. first letter of birth city/town, 2. first letter of first name, and 3. 2-digit birth day (e.g. 24 or 04 for single digits). This same code was used for the post-survey. The survey questions were developed to determine level of participant involvement and understanding of NALFO based on their own fraternal

experience and perceptions. The survey questions focused on communication, collaboration, and relationship building.

Understanding NALFO. Participants were asked if they ever visited the national NALFO website. Five of the six (83%) participants responded affirmatively. Five of the six (83%) participants also responded as having attended a NALFO meeting on campus within the last year. A participant declared a time conflict and not being the chapter representative as reason for not attending. All participants have attended a NALFO sponsored event (not a meeting); the Greek Open House and NALFO'hood Night were the highest rated for attendance.

Document Collection. Participants were provided instruction to complete a personal statement to include information about their upbringing, family history, educational background, and reasons why they chose to pursue membership in a Latino fraternal organization. Participants were provided one week to complete the task. They were instructed to refrain from including any personal identifiable information, but were informed that the researcher would insert pseudonyms as needed. Participant statements were reviewed solely by the researcher. The themes from the statements were used for an exercise during the first focus group.

Focus Groups. The first focus group was conducted after each participant completed the initial survey and personal statement. At the inception of the focus group, a short exercise was conducted to help the participants feel more comfortable with each other. All of the participants were familiar with each other, but do not necessarily work closely on a regular basis. The second focus group was held in reflection of the group project. Participant dispositions were visibly different from the first focus group. There

was a sense of camaraderie among the group and participants felt comfortable to speak more freely.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

The researcher set out to explore the identity development and organizational culture of the NALFO council by using a community of practice approach. Communities of practice are a part of daily life for many, but are not necessarily formal entities (Wenger, 1998). The experience of a group is not new, but use of the term community of practice may be. For example, communities could include parent's associations, church groups, book clubs, secretaries at a large company, mothers who regularly take their children to a local park. To establish a coherent community, however, Wenger (1998) states there are three dimensions to the practice: (a) *mutual agreement* (members actively engage in and make meaning together), (b) *joint enterprise* (collective response to situation, taking ownership, and having accountability), and (c) *shared repertoire* (resources, including concepts and routines, that give meaning to a community of practice) (Wenger, 1998).

NALFO, by definition, is considered a community of practice. NALFO is a collective council of individual Latino fraternal organization chapters. The individual chapters are also communities with their own organizational culture. The researcher employed use of Schein's (1992, 2010) theory of organizational culture for an in depth description of NALFO's unique culture by describing artifacts, or visible structures and processes; espoused values, or goals and philosophies; and basic underlying assumptions, or unconscious beliefs, perceptions and thoughts that ultimately drive an organization's values.

Wenger's (1998) dimensions of communities of practice and Schein's (1992, 2010) levels of organizational culture are complementary and provided a construct to facilitate the reporting of the findings.

Shared Repertoire and Artifacts

Wenger's (1998) shared repertoire and Schein's (1992, 2010) artifacts are described as surface levels of the community or culture. These are seemingly unfamiliar cultural aspects easily observed by anyone regardless of membership status. The artifacts could include, for example, the colors a fraternal organization uses. People can see the colors, but not know the significance of them or why an organization chose the specific colors. The membership of an organization makes meaning of the colors as an artifact of being in a fraternal organization.

Schein (1992) includes "all the phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels" (p. 17). Wenger (1998) describes the repertoire of a community as "routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice" (p. 83).

Schein (1992) indicates that observers can describe what they see or feel, but cannot decipher what the things mean to a group based on just observation (p. 17). Individuals may often pass judgment based on a first impression or something they have seen. Some participants admitted passing judgment on fraternal organizations based on what they saw in the media. It was not until they learned of Latino fraternal organizations that their perception of such organizations changed and they considered becoming members.

Pride in Artifacts

Artifacts have extreme significance for the history and identity of fraternal organizations; this is especially true for multicultural based organizations. For NALFO members, their organizational Greek letters, colors, symbols, hand-signs, and traditions are often reflective of Latino culture (Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, 2009). Participants were asked to describe their organizational artifacts and what they mean to them personally.

Monique, the youngest participant, described her experience with such artifacts as:

I remember the first time I wore my letters the day after I crossed. The feeling is almost indescribable. Walking across campus I felt infinite, people kept looking at me wondering where I just appeared from. To me, the signs and calls to our organization are sacred to us. If I caught someone else throwing our sign or doing our call I don't know what I would do. In my mind, I've earned the right to wear or say those things, not them. I like buying para and wearing the colors of my organization because it lets everyone know that even if I may not wear my letters 24/7, wearing the colors of my org, I still represent them even when I'm just going about my everyday business. I can't imagine even wearing other orgs colors on a regular basis because I feel those colors represent them and by even wearing them, it's wrong somehow.

Monique's unmistakable pride in her membership is showcased in her use of artifacts.

Rosa added her emotionally charged statement:

I feel very proud. A sense of pride comes from being unique. Everyone's goal is to stand out, be unique, and be the best. Having a similar hand symbol, nickname, or call with another org could possibly cause confusion, especially while recruiting new members. As a girl, I love having new clothing regardless. It goes back to that saying "you represent your organization". When you become identified with your organization and begin networking/meeting new people it feels great to be wearing your letters representing your org. Seeing an organization have similar artifacts can be seen as copying, which can carry animosity or begin to create a negative reputation.

To Rosa, clearly defined and unique organizational artifacts would lessen any antagonism.

Natalia, the newest member to fraternal organization life of the participants, described her views as:

The first word that comes to mind is of course “proud.” I earned my letters and I know that people recognize that when I wear them, well at least multi-cultural organizations. I know that PAN and IFC don’t necessarily go through what multi-cultural orgs go through to earn their letters. The hand sign to me is not that big of a deal, but when we do our call, we are making sure that our presence is known. I know that my org has gotten recognition for our call and there are Greek people who admire it and some Greeks who like to imitate it to poke fun at us. I don’t personally have a lot of para/clothing reflecting my org. If I do buy it, it’s to serve a purpose such as recruiting.

It is evident that Natalia is a proud member of her organization and does not feel she has to display any artifacts to reflect that fact.

Anthony recalled his reasons for joining his fraternity – the hard work to “earn” the right to use and display such artifacts in his response. He compared the artifacts to *trophies* that he can wear – prized possessions, as most of what he owns were given to him as gifts from his brothers or from national events he attended. It all has meaning “beyond the usual ‘yea, I wanna rock my letters today’ that some people have when they wear their letters.” He continued:

My letters, colors, symbols hand-sign and call are all reminders of what it was that I was looking for as an organization and now how proud I am to have earned them. As for my hand sign, I am a little disappointed at times when I see other organizations have the same sign. I am not very surprised at all given the long history of our organizations and the fact that there are only so many things a person can do with their hands. But I am also referring to things from pop culture that now imitates our hand sign and give it a COMPLETELY DIFFERENT meaning or reference.

“There is nothing better,” he exclaimed, when he spoke about doing their call; it “just incites all of your pride for your organization.”

“It allows me to display to other students what organization I belong to,” proclaimed Amethyst. She considers the artifacts “like a brand,” one that only members of her sorority can wear and use. “I feel great when I wear my letters because I earned them,” she commented. Earning the right to wear the organization’s letters is a shared belief among the participants. It “reminds [her] of all that [she] went through, all the benefits [she’s] had, and all that [her] organization encompasses.” “When I do my call, throw my sign, or wear my letters,” she stated, it gives her such a sense of pride.

Gabriela’s interest in her organization came from feedback she received from a friend, not necessarily for use of the artifacts commonly used by fraternal organizations. “When I wear my letters it makes me feel proud and different,” she declared. While Gabriela wears artifacts proudly, for her, the character of the members was more important to her. All she knew about were the negative stereotypes that are associated with sororities. She heard that the members were “pretty down to earth and pretty genuine.” It was essential for her to find an organization that she was able to “identify/relate to the other girls.”

Shared Practices (Cross-council)

In response to pride in artifacts, some participants compared their own organizations to other NALFO organizations. As such, participants were asked to describe the characteristics of artifacts and shared repertoire amongst all fraternal organizations at the university. The following accounts may include participant perceptions of fraternal organizations other than their own.

Monique explained her view of shared repertoire among the fraternal organizations:

I think that in some councils, the only things we have in common with them are the letters we wear on our chest, even then, I feel that PAN or IFC don't appreciate them the same way we do. You can even catch them wearing other orgs letters - to us that is blasphemous. I feel with MGC and NPHC we have more in common, we all have high community service requirements, we all take pride in our academics and when we don't, there are consequences. I feel within councils like NALFO we earn our letters, not buy them. We, for the most part, are in it to serve as a facilitator in our goals, not as a social outlet.

Monique finds commonality with the multicultural organizations. She used the terms “us” and “we” as a collective to show camaraderie amongst the multicultural organizations in contrast to the mainstream fraternal organizations.

The comparison between mainstream and multicultural based fraternal organizations was a common theme among the participants as noted in the following narrative. “We’re Greek, we all focus on scholarship and service, and we are diverse in membership,” Rosa observed in her brief account of shared practices. She went on to be more specific while illustrating the shared practices of the multicultural organizations, using the term “we” just as Monique did:

We perform (step, stroll, and salute). It's a part of our culture nationally. Our members have been properly initiated/crossed into the organization. We don't consider interests or associated individuals as our organization members. We only use our official colors for our [Greek] letters. We know all of our active members. Our members are members for life, wealth doesn't determine membership. We support other organizations. We make an effort to greet other organizations.

Rosa pointed out several customs primarily attributed to culturally-based fraternal organizations. Natalia also used “we” to relate with the cultural organizations:

I do not know much in regards to NPHC, IFC, and PAN, but I do know that NALFO and MGC share a lot of common things. One thing we share is a similar process, many of these orgs have probates, and we stand for similar things like

community service and academics. We use a lot of the same vocabulary (neo, sands, captain, anchor, “BE OWT”, prophete, etc.). I know that our chapter does not hold probates, although some of our other chapters do.

Natalia’s depiction was distinct in that she described an actual account to explain her view of mainstream organizations:

I had a roommate who was in PAN and the amount of differences between them and my org amazed me. The fact that they got to wear letters before they crossed was crazy. Also, the fact that they were allowed to call members sisters before they themselves became a member was beyond me. They wear other orgs letters and I remember her trying to touch mine, which I was taught is disrespectful and had to explain to her that is something we are not allowed to do. I know PAN and IFC don’t really stroll and although some of them throw “signs,” it differs from NALFO’s and MGC’s. PAN doesn’t keep things as secretive as we do and they do not know all of their sisters like how I know all of mine.

Natalia’s example expressed similarities in artifacts between mainstream and culturally-based fraternal organizations, but made placed emphasis on the distinctions.

Anthony acknowledged that he could go “on and on” about the shared practices among fraternal organizations at the university, but started by saying that they “are all at a surface level.” He clarified what he meant by stating, “[w]e all do paperwork for universities, national boards, internally, etc. We all recruit and induct members. We all wear letters in public, do chants/calls, have events on campus, etc. Beyond that is where I would say the divisions come.” These “divisions” as Anthony puts it, are characteristics that distinguish each fraternal council. He explains:

If you spend enough time with members from the different councils, you learn the “language” that goes on in each one and you learn to “translate” in a sense to your own terminology. There are more similarities in this for the three cultural councils like there are more similarities for the two main councils. Where NPHC has a large history of tradition, NALFO is relatively young and establishing its foundation. I cannot say exactly what MGC does or tell their foundation, I can only comment on the differences. NALFO is the only council that does not induct first semester freshmen into any organization. This is the largest difference among all councils and NALFO. NALFO, MGC and NPHC share a value for their

cultures (pretty obvious) whereas PAN and IFC don't. Now there are some exceptions (the faith based organizations) but for the most part, they do not really take as much pride in cultures as we do. Another aspect that is shared more within NALFO, MGC, and NPHC is how we define our brother/sisterhoods. They are more than just an undergraduate experience and they are not defined by money. Our intake process is what makes us who we are and what keep us so close to our members. It is also commonly noticed as "quality over quantity" that takes play in our induction of members.

Anthony's description illustrates his fraternal experience, within his own council and working with other councils.

Just as her fellow members, Amethyst expressed her opinion of the similarities among the cultural organizations and difference between them and mainstream fraternal organizations. She said that they all follow a model and "originated from the very first Greek orgs in some way or another," but "each org has their own flavor/stereotype." She described this:

When it comes to ethnic multicultural Greeks we differ from Pan and IFC. We have calls, chants, and have our own linguo. For example: "Be Owt" which originated from the Ques [Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.] or terms such as Anchor, Tail, and Ace [signifies place in class – front, middle, or back]. Our numbers are shared amongst those organizations that have "lines" where even some NALFO organizations, IFC or Pan, and other councils don't have. Some Pan sororities do have hand signs but I have yet to see and IFC member throw up a sign. Each organization has their own word/s to describe their line sisters, brothers or pledge classes. Each org has a name to identify their newly initiated members i.e., Neos. NPHC, NALFO, MGC: we stroll, step, salute, or have some sort of way we showcase ourselves, but IFC and Pan don't. NPHC, NALFO, MGC, PAN, IFC: we all pay \$ [membership dues].

As Amethyst pointed out, many of the differences emanate from cultural practices and organizational norms.

Gabriela feels that "MGC and NALFO are kind of related to each other because all the orgs sort of have the same purpose or pillars and also the orgs are multicultural."

Gabriela is not too familiar with the other councils' practices, but thinks that they "do not

have the same goals in common” and feels the “segregation when [they] have to participate in the Greek Olympics.”

Most of the participants responded using an “us” and “them” criterion when describing the shared repertoire of fraternal organizations at the university. According to Fried (2012), culture “emerges in any group that shares a set of common experiences” (p. 63) and participants acknowledged that a fraternal culture exists at the university, yet the separation of councils is evident.

During the first focus group, participants shared their perception of fraternal life on campus. Most were unaware that multicultural organizations existed, especially at ASU. Gabriela added that “when you come to ASU you don’t really know about these organizations unless somebody introduces you to them.” Rosa mentioned experiencing the loud chants of PAN and IFC organizations during Rush Week and not seeing anyone that looks like you “when you already feel like a minority on a huge campus” did not make fraternal life appealing.

Joint Enterprise and Espoused Values

Joint enterprise is the second characteristic of practice in Wenger’s (1998) dimensions of communities of practice. A community’s interactions and negotiations produce shared practices through joint action. Similarly to transformational leadership, Schein’s (1992, 2010) espoused values derive from a members’ (leader) original view of a correct or valid approach to a task that influences other members (followers) acceptance of the approach as true, thus aligning the objectives of the individual, the leader, the group and the overall organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Sarros, Cooper, & Santora, 2008; Schein, 1992, 2010). The espoused values are validated by

consistent reliability of application and shared social experience, but may or may not guide actual behavior of the members, manifesting behavior that what is *said* is not necessarily what is *done* (Schein, 1992, 2010). Also, joint enterprise and espoused values do not necessarily suggest undivided opinion, but that the values were defined through a collaborative effort to be effective for the community of practice as a whole (Schein, 1992; Wenger, 1998).

Identity

The characteristics of NALFO's identity as an entity were not easily defined by the participants. Having more fraternal experience, Anthony contended that when he joined "people didn't know what it was" and "people didn't care to try and find out either." Amethyst stated that "[they're] working towards defining NALFO and what it is and kinda just bringing that idea that [they're] all here for the same reason." "I think that mentality is slowly disappearing...people are starting to be more willing and starting to ask more questions," Anthony added. Gabriela admitted that she "didn't know what NALFO was" until her sister was interested in running for a position on the board. She attended a meeting and thought everyone was "pretty friendly." She is not currently very involved with the council. Natalia added that when she became a member, she "had already been introduced to what NALFO was, but it wasn't a very good explanation" so she "had to find out for myself." Amethyst believes that newer members "really don't know what NALFO is and what NALFO really is there for and how it benefits them." But, she added that "we can all identify ourselves within one another. We all have similar stories, like we're here in college." Anthony added:

We all come from the same background; we all share the same identity. The only thing that separates us is where we felt more comfortable in the letters that the other person wears across their chest. That's all it is, the way I see it.

The identity on a national level is “still being worked on” as Anthony explained his thoughts:

The NALFO councils have existed for going on a little over—what would it be, 14 years now—on the national level since the council was organized, and then the local level—we're almost at ten years here as well. I think what the identity and the intent was, was the last remnants of a larger movement in the early '90s and things like that when everybody wanted to be united and work together and have all these great goals in mind. I think that was the goal behind the creation of the council, but nobody ever really caught on to an identity, or maybe it wasn't transitioned properly to the younger generations coming through. But the whole idea behind it was so that people that are working with the same purpose and goals can work together in order to achieve those things. That would be the loose identity how that's done and where it can be done, both on the local and national level. I think that's what's still up for debate and for—to be worked toward.

For NALFO members to make meaning or create an identity, they must first understand its purpose and the benefits of having a functioning council at the collegiate level.

Cultural Implications. One cannot ignore the cultural implications in the identity of the community of practice. Natalia and Monique referred to the cultural aspect of NALFO's identity. Natalia went on to say, “I think what stands out the most for NALFO is that we're all Latinos, we all have similar goals, even though they—when we put'em out there, they're slightly—they sound slightly different.” Monique's biracial identity does not impede her activity. She asserted that she feels “it [NALFO] takes strong hold on the Latino side of it, even though I'm not. I feel like that they [Latinos] take a lot of pride in that.” When asked if she ever feels uncomfortable because of the cultural differences, she replied, “[s]ometimes, not all the time. I feel like it makes me feel more multicultural, like I'm—like I can fit in.” Monique believes that:

The personalities are like—I don't really feel like I fit in to like black people or white people, but then I knew some people who were already sisters, so I was like, well, I can like fit in with them. Sometimes it's awkward for me cuz they're all speaking Spanish. . . but I mean I like the diversity it brings to my life. I'm learning Spanish kind of a little bit, and then if I don't get something I'll just be like, what did they say?," and they'll tell me.

Monique's biracial background has not affected her fraternal experience in a Latina sorority. She has remained open-minded and has taken each encounter as a learning experience.

In terms of being in Latino based organizations, Gabriela chimed in stating:

Even though it was Latino-based we're multicultural, but I think I wouldn't have joined a white sorority or fraternity because the multicultural ones, they give you a sense of community, like makes you feel like you're not the only Hispanic or minority on campus.

Gabriela views Latino based and multicultural organizations as comparable in how membership provides one with a feeling of unity with others.

"We don't have that presence for say like the Divine Nine does have and I think that that would be really cool if we could have that. Who is NALFO? What is NALFO's purpose?" Amethyst noted emphatically. She continued, "I think we're in a good spot where we can make it what we want and make NALFO's culture known and define what is that culture and who we are." According to Wenger (1998), "[o]ur identities are constituted not only by what we are, but also by what we are not" (p. 164). The contrast offered by the participants between mainstream and multicultural based fraternal organizations is, in fact, a means of identifying themselves.

Developing Relationships (Pre-project)

In the initial anonymous survey, participants described NALFO relationships in various ways. Two of six participants stated that "communication is good" and "pretty

open.” Two others stated “there is much work to be done” and “communicating is what needs the most work,” but “has improved from previous years.” Another participant added that “in past years it was not good, but I definitely have seen improvement.”

Participants were also asked about the strengths and challenges in developing community within NALFO. Interestingly, half of the participants responded with communication as a strength for NALFO, issuing statements such as, “It is fairly easy to communicate across chapters” and “communicating with other councils/organizations and receiving information and updates [relatively easy to do].” While participants stated that communication across chapters was relatively easy, it does not imply that it actually occurs. Another participant added that there is “open communication and organization between chapters.” One participant stated that members “interact with each other during NALFO sponsored events,” conceivably suggesting that they do not necessarily interact otherwise. Size and shared practices were also named as strengths as they “know almost everyone in each organization” and it “allow[s] a common place for organizations to work together.”

Chickering and Reisser (1993) assert that development is fostered when students are a part of a community. For the best possible experience, Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggest that the community include the following characteristics: (a) encourages interaction and ongoing relationships; (b) offers opportunities for collaboration and engaging in shared meaningful activities; (c) small enough so that no one feels superior; (d) includes people from diverse backgrounds; and (e) serves as a reference group with responsibilities and expectations to follow (p. 398).

NALFO participants offered statements that insinuate the aforementioned criteria, but they appeared to exist at different levels and in different contexts, not necessarily as a collective. This criteria is a model that groups can use to evaluate their status as a community.

The challenges surrounded the mutual engagement of members. In contrast to the strengths, a participant named “communication and interest” as the most challenging aspect. One participant stated that “preexisting discrimination/opinions” are detrimental to developing community. Lack of participation and engagement and failure to meet “constitutional minimum requirements” were also noted for impeding community among NALFO members.

Using a five point Likert scale ranging from not at all to extremely, participants were invited to share how their fraternal experience has enhanced their ability to establish close friendships within their respective chapters. The majority (83.33%) responded with extremely; while only one participant responded with somewhat. Alternatively, for establishing close friendships with members of other NALFO organizations, half responded somewhat and the other half with very much. That information supported the individual organizations serving as a relationship of support, but did not have the same result for NALFO relationships as a whole. Additionally, questions regarding communication and collaboration were also included. Each question requested ranking their responses by experience within their respective chapter and with members of other NALFO organizations. As shown in Table 4, participants responded rating each item based on their own fraternal experience.

Table 4

Frequency of Responses for Participant Fraternal Experience

Indicator	Not at All	Very Little	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremely
Establish close friendships with					
Chapter members	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	83.33%
Other NALFO members	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Communicate for business with					
Chapter members ^a	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%
Other NALFO members	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	66.67%
Communicate at leisure with					
Chapter members	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%
Other NALFO members	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Collaborate (programming) with					
NALFO Sororities	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	50.00%
NALFO Fraternities	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	16.67%	50.00%
Other Fraternal organizations	16.67%	0.00%	16.67%	50.00%	16.67%

Note: ^aOne participant did not respond to this question.

Developing cross-organizational relationships between NALFO chapter members proved to be one of the more challenging facets of the participants’ fraternal experience.

Opinions regarding the level of unity and cooperative relationships varied among the participants during interviews and focus groups. Anthony stated:

It is a little disheartening and unfortunate because those similarities and things that unite us are what we should be using to help move our organizations individually forward, but as well as the council as a larger community on the whole.

The perception of the relationships between NALFO members was divided – half stated it was generally a “positive relationship,” the other half declared it as a “work in progress.” A participant added that in his/her opinion, “there’s still tensions” between certain organizations. Gabriela believes members and organizations “interact with each

other” and “have respect for each other.” Natalia has become more engaged within the council and stated that the council is “trying to improve itself in that there is more of a closeness and a greater focus on all of us interacting.” In her experience, she has “gotten closer to a lot of the members because of the NALFO meetings” that she attends.

On the other hand, the participants with more years of membership have a more skeptical view of the relationships. Rosa reflected on her experience when she first “crossed,” she stated “everything just seemed so separated....no one really interacted with any other org.” She did acknowledge that the relationships now are “getting there [improving].” Amethyst responded, almost cynically, “I think for the most part here, everybody tries to stay cool with each other or least keep it professional and try to work together.” Anthony offered an optimistic observation by stating:

The positives are that we are starting to come together as a large organization as opposed to just everybody doing their own thing. People are starting to realize a little bit more the importance of the unity and the opportunity of having a larger group to work through.

Anthony’s account insinuated movement in a positive direction for the council.

Business and Personal. Some of the participants mentioned lingering animosity from previous years and “members that [were] withholding the progress” have graduated. These members were “really affecting” the impediment of growth. “I think the unity is coming a lot more....the idea is there now,” exclaimed Anthony. Most of the participants believe that focus placed on developing relationships and event collaboration will create the momentum for organizational cultural transformation, but are unsure how to yield tangible results.

The boundary between business and personal is blurred; when members cannot separate the two, it can lead to conflict. Participants mentioned that members have made assumptions (hearsay) that, as a result, have tainted some interpersonal and inter-organizational relationships. This often leads to the lack of support because “they were talking bad about them....we’re not gonna go to their events.” Such incidents often “make things a lot bigger than what they should be.” Often referred to as “high school drama” by the participants, this includes personal relationships. “She knew I was dating him and I’m in this org and she’s in that org,” a participant offered as an example. Dating within fraternal organizations, in the opinion of some participants, should be approached with caution. A participant replied “I never did it, then I did it, and then I’m like, oh, gosh, what did I do?” Judgments are made, magnified, and passed on to an organization, rather than addressing an individual.

Events and Collaboration. More recently, the council chair introduced *Spirit Points* (Appendix G) to “encourage and reward the involvement of organizations within the council” by awarding points to organizations for their participation (NALFO, 2012). The council as a whole saw the decrease in collaboration and support for NALFO events, thus implemented Spirit Points to aid in promoting and advancing NALFO presence on campus. Points are awarded for collaborative and “Clave” (key) single events, NALFO Week events, and attendance; the points are tallied and awards are provided to the organization with the most points at the end of a semester. An effort to increase support and collaboration was the impetus for establishment of the point system. Its purpose is to encourage accountability and cultivate opportunities for collaboration while “being recognized for positive efforts and not for negative” (NALFO 2012). The awards

disseminated to date to the organizations with the highest points at the end of a semester have been the purchase of recruitment t-shirts and event flyers by the council.

Participants, over time, have seen improvement in organizational communication and activity and believe the spirit points “has helped.”

“I felt like we used to collaborate a lot more within organization, like in the past years, and I feel like we really are slacking on that this year a lot” suggested a participant. She added that “the root of the problem” lies in membership not thinking “why don’t we collaborate with this organization?” The spirit points were created “to try to bring the organizations closer together by encouraging participation in other org’s events, but also encouraging collaboration with the other organization as well,” but that message may be lost in “the way it’s being presented” Anthony stated. “We try to support each other because of the spirit points,” Gabriela commented, and it helps “to get to know the other members too.”

According to some participants, leadership development, member engagement, and getting to know other NALFO members have been central foci of the council board. As a result, the spirit points emerged, a NALFO 101 event was held for new members (those who became members in fall 2011 and spring 2012), and a modified version of the traditional NALFO’hood event was sponsored.

Historically, the NALFO’hood event, held on campus, was pegged as a time to introduce new NALFO members to its existing membership to cultivate friendly relationships. “Each organization sticks to their own organizations, and it defeats the purpose of NALFO’hood night,” critiqued Amethyst. She continued, “I don’t think it’s effective and I don’t think it serves the purpose that it – maybe the original creators had

for it.” This year, the council hosted a barbeque at a local park instead. Although she was unable to attend the majority of the event, from the feedback she received, she believed it to be “the biggest hit [they’ve] had.” “I think how we had it this last time was really great, and was really fun and interactive,” said Rosa. One of the great activities, she explained, involved participants finding other members that crossed in the same semester as them and sitting with them during the meal. “People got all excited, ‘oh, you’re in my semester too,’” Rosa said with enthusiasm. They made a new connection and initiated camaraderie during that activity.

The first NALFO 101 event was held just before the start of the fall 2012 semester. The idea was to introduce new members to NALFO, university policies and procedures, and develop relationships among them to encourage camaraderie. Amethyst mentioned that some attendees said they “never had that NALFO pride instilled” before. Natalia was a participant at the event and thought it “was really cool” and she “saw that everyone was really getting to know each other.” She went on to say this provided a comfortable environment for intentional conversation “instead of them having to go on their own and try to meet each other.” Rosa also had a positive impression of the event:

I think it really worked because a lot of those new members, like now you can see them like talking to each other more, which is a lot better because I’m more than positive they wouldn’t have ever spoke to each other if it weren’t for that, and mixing up in the groups.

The event “was huge,” commented Amethyst, the individuals that attended “still talk.” The event proved to be successful for the council and they plan to host it before every fall semester and possibly host another team building event at the beginning of the spring semester.

Performing community service is a significant activity for Latino fraternal organizations. Some participants named the traditional Thanksgiving Day service as an effective means to increase solidarity. “I really like the Thanksgiving [service]; I remember the first year that I did it they had us help each other,” Gabriela said. She went on to describe the teamwork that went into preparing baskets of food for families in need. Groups of students from all NALFO organizations would be designated to deliver the baskets to different areas. It helped to “break out of our own groups,” Monique said.

Developing relationships is one of the primary reasons people join fraternal organizations (Gregory, 2003). NALFO members at ASU have the distinction of being referred to as Latino Greeks by virtue of being members of the national umbrella council. As a relatively small council at the university, members have an opportunity to develop strong relationships across the five organizations. Differences in opinions may exist, as in many communities; however, focusing on a specific task or goal may enable members to cross boundaries to develop camaraderie and collaborate with other organizations. Participants were asked to work together purposefully, as members of NALFO, not necessarily labeled as members of their individual organization. The purpose of this project was for the researcher to observe the communication and the process NALFO members underwent as they worked collaboratively.

Group Project Observation

Planning for the project began at the first focus group. Participants agreed to work on a NALFO event that was set to occur, yet had not been adequately planned. The unorganized condition of events has become a pattern that the council is working at moving away from. The event, a semi-formal dance, had a winter theme and was open to

the entire university community. The remainder of the focus group was centered on planning the event.

The researcher observed the participants to view the group dynamics in the planning; only interjecting to ask questions. Initially, participants chose to meet at the NALFO meeting, until Anthony mentioned meeting outside of that time frame as the event was quickly approaching. The participants would occasionally get off topic and the researcher needed to step in with a comment or question to steer them back on task.

Rosa was on the committee for the event, so she mentioned items that needed attention. Monique, who was not originally involved in the planning, was very vocal and asked a lot of questions. Rosa and Monique are not members of the same sorority. Anthony added that he arranged the music for the event. Rosa provided an explanation of the floor plan and plans for a photo booth. Amethyst, also on the original committee, interjected with some information as well. There was a period of time where they [Rosa and Amethyst] dominated the conversation. They had the most information about the event, but it made it challenging for other participants to offer an opinion. It appeared that they were hesitant to offer any suggestion and, in favor of maintaining accord, they went along with the plans. The participants present during the planning phase do not generally collaborate for events, so the researcher assumed that some participants preferred to remain amicable. They went on to discuss marketing and ticket sales for the event.

The female participants made plans to meet to shop for decorations. Gabriela had a previous engagement and was unable to meet with them. They discussed carpooling to remain together. Monique and Amethyst shared a laughing moment that created familiarity between them. When discussing the carpool, Amethyst used the moniker she

has for her vehicle, which happened to be the name of Monique's dog. The students went on to complete planning the shopping trip and how they would arrange the decorations. They encountered another commonality when they exchanged telephone numbers; they discussed California, as Monique's telephone number has a California area code and Amethyst has lived there. Gabriela and Anthony did not contribute much to the conversation; they remained fairly quiet.

On the day of the event, five of the six participants were present for set-up. Natalia, who was unable to attend the first focus group, was able to assist with set-up on the day of the event. Again, the researcher observed the group's interaction. Initially, it appeared a bit divided – with members only interacting with members of their own chapters. Two members were inflating balloons, while two others were placing tablecloths on all of the tables. Anthony was arranging furniture in the room. The researcher began helping to inflate balloons to see if it would change the dynamic.

Eventually, all of the female participants present began inflating balloons and it proved to be an almost barrier breaking task, appearing as though they were just college friends, as the balloons were difficult to inflate and the participants shared laughs over it. They began to socialize and interact more with each other. Setting up the photo booth was also a noteworthy moment. Monique's height was helpful for the task. The participants gathered, shared ideas, and all had input on the overall design of the backdrop.

Toward the end of set-up as the event start time approached, the participants retracted to speaking to members of their own organization. Another member of a NALFO organization came to support as the participants set-up. This, however,

completely changed the dynamic and created an uneven number of students; three members of one organization and two of another. There was a bit of awkward silence.

The turnout for the event was not as they hoped, but it was obvious that those who attended enjoyed themselves. There were students in attendance not affiliated with fraternal organizations. They used the photo booth and interacted with each other, but initially none of the patrons were dancing. Some members of a NALFO sorority approached a table of non-affiliated students and excitedly said “c’mon let’s dance!” It did not appear, to the researcher, that the sorority members were acquainted with them. Participatory dances [e.g., Cha Cha slide and the Wobble], also facilitated interaction as everyone danced together. As the event went on, the siloed nature characteristic to NALFO persisted. There was not much interaction between organizations.

While members of three NALFO organizations were present, two organizations were missing from the event; the same two organizations that chose not to participate in this study. Their absence was disappointing to the participants, but unfortunately, not surprising to them based on comments participants made to each other at the entrance. At the end of the event, members of different organizations helped to clean up. They chatted among each other about how they were disappointed with the attendance, but were glad that everyone enjoyed themselves. The participants did not appear to mind that the researcher was near and heard their comments; they were aware that she was observing.

Discussion about the event ensued at the final focus group, with five of six participants; Gabriela was unable to attend the event and the last focus group. When asked how the shopping experience was, Rosa exclaimed, “so much fun!” “It really was....we just went everywhere; we were joking around in the car,” Monique added. “I

thought it was gonna be kinda awkward, but it wasn't," Monique said because they "started texting earlier in the day." Communication prior to the task was instrumental in making the experience a positive one. "I didn't expect it to be a bad experience....I was hoping it to be a good experience and it was," Rosa commented.

When asked what, if anything, would have they done differently, Monique chimed in stating, "I think more advertising....I was kinda disappointed there wasn't more people there." Rosa expounded, "it was kinda disappointing just because the date's been set for a whole semester....I mean, I know at the meeting, we asked for feedback from different orgs, and a lot of them said yes for promoting it." She went on to say "I mean, it wasn't just [Rosa's] event, or the committee's event....it was all NALFO, so how come the rest of the orgs didn't promote it?" "It's the same story played out....with this specific event, like she said, there wasn't enough accountability," Anthony added. "It's up to everybody that's a part of NALFO to be accountable and responsible for it," he continued. The committee defined council participation by promoting the event, selling tickets, and attending if able. "Going back to the promotion, yeah, there could've been some more things done, but at the same time, that one event was announced at the beginning of the year and been repeated every single meeting," Anthony declared. He went on to say he thinks "it's kind of a small testament to what happens at meetings and how much people pay attention."

Participants were asked how messaging from NALFO meetings filters to the chapters. "When we read the NALFO report in our meeting, people were really excited....[t]hen when it came time to actually buy them [tickets] from us, no one really

did,” Natalia mentioned. Anthony was unsure where “the connection [was] lost,” but it was.

Their own participation was questioned; if they were not a part of the committee or the study, would they have attended? “I think if I wasn’t involved in planning and stuff, I would’ve been like, ‘well, if no one else is really going, then I’m not gonna go cuz I’m not gonna know anybody,’” Monique admitted. She went on, “[b]ein’ on the other side, you’re there waiting, hoping people show up, so I really have a different appreciation for all of the events like this.” The joint participation on this project “sparked something that we need to collaborate with the orgs more,” Monique continued. “I don’t think there’s enough of an interdependence on it as a whole, as a council, or even organization,” Anthony said. From a council standpoint, he said:

Unless it’s mandatory, you’re not gonna get the participation that you’re seeing from the other organizations. At the same time, that’s the double-edged sword that you’re playing with all year round, is if it’s mandatory, people are not gonna like that it’s mandatory. If it’s not mandatory, they’re not gonna show up, so—

The shared organizational goals do not always bring members together. “Not as much as it should....not as much as you would think,” Anthony added.

Developing Relationships (Post-project)

Participant experience during the planning and implementing of the NALFO event shifted some of their perceptions of the organization as a collective. Using a five point Likert scale ranging from not at all to extremely, participants were invited to share if and how their experience in this study has enhanced the likelihood of developing relationships, increasing communication, and working to cultivate collaboration. Half of the participants indicated that they had the opportunity to converse with a NALFO

member that they may not have previously. Most of the participants (66.67%) established a new friendship with another NALFO member and noted that an increase in communication for business is more likely after their participation in the study. Half of respondents suggested an increase in leisure communication with other NALFO members, as well as the likelihood of collaboration with other NALFO organizations.

Additionally, the majority of the participants (66.67%) rated their communication as very good throughout the study; good and excellent were each selected by one participant as well. Interestingly, four participants (66.67%) stated they were extremely more likely to attend NALFO meeting to stay updated with events and information; two participants indicated somewhat. Half of the participants were extremely likely to encourage their chapter members to attend NALFO meeting and events; the other half indicated very much likely. The positive responses indicated the likelihood of increased communication and collaborative relationships among Latino fraternal organization members because of their participation in this research study. As a result, an increased probability that a sustainable community of practice could develop over time would be anticipated. As shown in Table 5, participants responded based on their experience throughout the study. The positive experiences are noted, but results show that participants are not necessarily overwhelmingly connected within the community.

Table 5

Frequency of Responses for Participant Fraternal Experience – Post Project

Indicator	Not at All	Very Little	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremely
Converse with another NALFO member that you may not have previously	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	50.00%
Establish friendships with other NALFO members	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%
Increase communication for business purposes with other NALFO members	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%
Increase leisure communication with other NALFO members	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	50.00%
Be more open to collaboration with other NALFO organizations	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	50.00%

In the anonymous post survey, participants were asked at what point during the study most interaction occurred with other NALFO members. Two participants indicated most interaction occurred during the focus groups. One participant commented that the first focus group was the onset for further conversation and interaction outside of the study; the participant stated that some of the participants met up and played volleyball during a weekend. The majority of responses identified the planning and set-up for the NALFO event (group project) was the most leisure interaction experienced. The post survey was administered after the annual NALFO Thanksgiving service. Two participants remarked that their participation in the study led to more interaction between them at the Thanksgiving service as well.

The participants were also asked how the community of practice approach could benefit NALFO’s relationship and organizational culture. “It can encourage members to

participate more, since they get to know each other,” replied one participant. In addition, another participant responded that “more will get accomplished if we work together because it will be less of a workload on everyone and more people would be involved.” It would provide “so many more resources that the council could use in programming events, getting feedback from those events, participating in other campus functions” to give NALFO a more prominent and united presence on campus in addition to “promot[ing] our mission as a whole.” Accountability, or the lack thereof, was brought up during the last focus group. A community of practice approach would “put personal responsibility into the organization, making involvement more personal and emotional; emotional investment is what makes or breaks the events,” in the participant’s opinion.

Participants were able to see how a community of practice could help in engaging their members, but implementation was viewed as a challenge by the participants. Participants offered some approaches NALFO could employ to encourage, influence, and increase collaboration among organizations. “Each org needs to make NALFO one of our priorities, not just see it as a council, but see it as a pride to participate in.” This could begin by “engaging meeting delegates that way they can encourage their members and lead by example.” More participation would be likely if they could get more “people to go to meetings so they can see for themselves what is going on.” A participant exclaimed:

If more members can come and be actively involved in the conversations at general body meetings, this would help on all fronts. It is true that smaller groups can be more effective as a working group, but with NALFO there are too many opinions and ideas that are going unheard. Some ways all these things can be increased is by having more of the leadership communicate with the executive board so that they can buy into what NALFO is doing themselves.

This participant's comment suggested that change could be initiated with the engagement of chapter leadership and followed by chapter members.

Another participant added "instilling the idea of why NALFO is important to them" should be a priority. "NALFO is imperative to the five remaining organization; not many new members really understand why they need NALFO. Knowing why we need it and how it benefits each organization is key. Creating the urgency amongst members can influence collaboration." Using the program implemented by NALFO was noted as well. "I think that the Clave point incentive is a good way of starting, after that comes personal responsibility."

Looking ahead, participants mentioned what they were most looking forward to in working with NALFO. Future collaboration was the most noted. "I really look forward to organizations collaborating to make events even bigger and more successful," exclaimed a participant. "Promoting NALFO's well being and why it is essential to us Latinos," said another participant. "Encourag[ing] my organization to participate in NALFO and attend the events hosted as NALFO," added a participant. One of the most critical statements offered by a participant was "I am most looking forward to transitioning this experience to the next generation of members in order to help NALFO move forward."

Participants had the opportunity to reflect on their participation experience and what they enjoyed the most. A student stated, "I enjoyed the group study since I got to see how other orgs view NALFO and how strong they feel about it." Another added that the opportunity to "mingle with other members of other sororities" was enjoyable. She added:

I think often times we overlook the fact that we are all just girls at the same point in our lives and that we, deep down, have so much in common it's crazy. It was really great to get to know some other girls as well as I did outside of the school environment.

This sentiment was shared by another participant who stated, "working with members I had never worked with before; it broke the barrier between 'us/them.'" Finally, a participant added that "interacting with other members and spreading my NALFO passion" was most rewarding.

During the final focus group, participants were able to openly discuss the culture of NALFO at ASU. The atmosphere was significantly different from the first focus group. At the time of the focus group, the participants were past the planning and implementation of the group project and were more comfortable with each other. "Leading by example" was a common theme presented by them stating that it is "personal responsibility" for members to be involved with NALFO, but they and other members need to set the example for others to follow. If other members experience the effects of a community of practice, it could initiate continuous growth and momentum toward a sustainable community of camaraderie and collaboration.

Organizational Management

NALFO's management has been through several transitions over the years. The council was formed at ASU in 2003 after leaving the Multicultural Greek Council to have a council that better met the needs of Latino fraternal organizations. Not all of the participants were fully aware of NALFO's history at the university as they were fairly new to fraternal life and some do not hold leadership positions. The consensus among participants was that they "are growing" and the council "is a work in progress."

NALFO's identity on the national and local level needs definition. Anthony mentioned the lack of an identity as detrimental to the local council because members did not seem to care to know what NALFO is or why it exists. He took it upon himself to learn about NALFO and hoped to spread the information with NALFO's membership to create a sense of community. "We need our nationals to be set and good and then that'll help us. I feel like they are somewhat, they're stable, but it's not where it needs to be," added Amethyst. Rosa stated that the board of her sorority attends meetings and the national entity "come across that they're most of the time unorganized," but that she has never personally attended any meetings so it "could have been like just their opinion, we don't know how it really is."

Leadership transition appeared to be one of the core reasons that the council's organizational culture has been in disarray. Participants realize that change would not be quick and easy, and that to some people "change is dangerous" as Amethyst noted. In some of their experience, there has been no consistency in leadership. "Consistency and actually being able to change things cause I feel like the leadership keeps changing and then that person in charge changed everything," Amethyst added. A more formalized officer transition for the NALFO board would be beneficial. In her position, Amethyst stated that "[student's name] didn't tell me anything. He's just like 'oh, I'm [position name], here you go', that's it." She confirmed that the board made a change in transitions:

I know we've changed it to where we transition earlier so that they can actually shadow or actually learn what the position entails before they even just are thrown in, which happens a lot, not just within NALFO, but I know within other organizations as well.

Anthony experienced a similar transition. When he took over, the message he received was basically “okay, here are the meeting days, create the agenda, good luck.” He over exaggerated a bit, but stated he received no information from the previous term or about projects in progress. He used that as an opportunity to create a structure that he believed would be beneficial to the council and its members. “It gave me an idea of how to lead” he added.

The majority of the current NALFO board will graduate shortly and some participants are concerned with how the transition will affect the organization’s culture and structure. Anthony stated:

The biggest things are planning out things earlier in advance so that it gives people an opportunity to talk to one another, to attend each other’s events using little incentives here and there to get people to attend each other’s events and also try and program higher quality events. I think the proper structure, a lot of the adjustments can be and should be made among the organizations, and that’s what we’ve been looking at is different ways we can do that, different models from here and there – other campuses, other organizations.

The entire board may be new which offers an opportunity to pilot a formalized transition program.

The transition from board to board, from year to year, proved to be the most challenging aspect of leadership, not only on the NALFO board, but also chapter leadership. The NALFO organizations could benefit from leadership development training that should include information from the NALFO 101 program that was initiated prior to the fall 2012 semester. The NALFO board could greatly benefit from a formalized process to transition new board members. Together, NALFO leadership could work toward defining NALFO at ASU.

Mutual Engagement and Basic Underlying Assumptions

What defines a community and makes it extremely difficult to change are the mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998) and basic underlying assumptions (Schein 1992, 2010) of the community. As such, these assumptions can be taken for granted by the group. If a group's actions and beliefs are accepted as truth, any opposing behavior would be considered improbable (Schein, 1992). The assumptions allow the group to function. Membership in a community also necessitates mutual engagement in the practice, not mere existence or proximity (Wenger, 1998, p. 74).

Sustaining a community of practice and transforming mutual engagement entails time and work on part of the membership (Wenger, 1998). Schein's (1992) basic assumptions define "what to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of situations" (p. 22). The relationships built through mutual engagement can become very close because of the engaged practice. Relative to this study, the individual members who take the time to be engaged and interact often generally develop relationships, but it does not translate to entire chapters across the council.

Wenger (1998) renders that:

In real life, mutual relations among participants are complex mixtures of power and dependence, pleasure and pain, expertise and helplessness, success and failure, amassment and deprivation, alliance and competition, ease and struggle, authority and collegiality, resistance and compliance, anger and tenderness, attraction and repugnance, fun and boredom, trust and suspicion, friendship and hatred. Communities of practice have it all. (p. 77)

Perception (Internal and External)

The largest internal challenge that participants indicated was getting members to make meaning of NALFO and engage in activities. Monique offered this observation:

I think we're all determined, but I feel like it's determination within our organization. We all need to put it into NALFO. Even at the [event], barely anyone was there, even from our own council; I was kind of disappointed.

She continued, "I think everyone just focuses on themselves – first themselves, then their org, and then their council after like academics and everything." This statement was quite opposite in comparison to statements made at the beginning of the study, statements of a close community. This could indicate the initial hesitancy of participants to reveal their true feelings in the presence of other NALFO members and/or the researcher.

All participants agreed that many members do not understand the purpose of or seek to be active with the council. Allegiance to one's respective chapter takes precedence over involvement in a different level of student engagement.

Some participants believe that the lack of identity translates to a lack of knowledge about the council by members. Making a presence on campus is important to members; however, they must first come to a common definition of their organizational culture at the university. How can members have pride in and be engaged in an entity that is not clearly defined? Part of the process of acclimating to the environment entails being able to "develop and maintain a set of internal relationships among its members," (Schein, 1992, p. 70). To define the identity of and instill pride in the council, relationships must be developed to begin the process. No one has "really known what it was that NALFO stood for, what we're all part of the same council for, other than that it

got passed down to us because we joined this organization and it just ended there,” Anthony stated.

What would be the buy-in? What would entice members to engage in NALFO activity? “That right there is the million-dollar question,” exclaimed Anthony. He went on to say that members do not realize all that they can be a part of, all that is at stake that they can make change in. The council board members have attempted different initiatives to “find out what might get people enthusiastic about NALFO, but we’re starting from nothing,” Amethyst added. Rosa interjected with an organizational perception that the largest organization in NALFO on campus is the one “who [doesn’t] really care much about NALFO, so it still makes us seem smaller.” “I don’t think people really, really see it because they don’t care to,” Amethyst continued. Regarding involvement, Monique stated that bonding with members occurs naturally with activity, but “when doing community service, most people see it as a chore with NALFO.” “I think people have to take that personal responsibility and have that interest in being involved and that’ll help in the long run for a sense of family,” she commented.

Amethyst compared individual support systems to NALFO as a support system. She goes on to say that many “Latinos are successful because they have a support system and later realize that it is actually because of that support that they were able to be successful,” that is the level of awareness that NALFO needs – to view NALFO as a support system. Natalia noted that the support of NALFO differs from that of their respective organization. They join their organizations for support, but for sororities it is for sisterhood and for fraternities, the brotherhood. “Within NALFO, we can have a bigger family because of all the other organizations, so it’s not just your sister that you

have,” she added. Distinct opportunities and support exist to members within their organizations and extending to NALFO organizations. She added that perhaps “that’s the mentality some of us have—okay, well I already have my sisters, why do I have to reach out to everyone else?”

Externally, participants largely feel that NALFO is disregarded and ignored by the university community. “I feel like NALFO has unity, but I do believe that other councils see us different, like, ‘oh, they’re nothing, we shouldn’t be worried about them, like we shouldn’t pay attention to them’” exclaimed Gabriela. “They don’t know what we’re doing so that’s like – as long as we know what we’re doing I’m fine with it because we know about our own successes and that’s all that matters,” a participant added.

Statements of this nature appear to serve as defense mechanisms to members.

Monique shared a personal experience when faced with a friend’s perception of NALFO:

Well, my roommate, he’s in a NIC fraternity [IFC affiliate fraternity] and I think whenever I’m like, ‘well, I have a NALFO thing,’ or like sorority in general he’ll just be like, ‘oh, like a minority thing?’ And he was like, ‘it’s not a real sorority; it’s not a real fraternity,’ so I mean at first I was just like, ‘you don’t understand what we do,’ like defending everything about it. We are so involved. He doesn’t do anything with his fraternity. I’m just like, ‘you don’t understand all this,’ blah blah, but I mean I guess if I’m just like, ‘whatever.’ If they don’t have an open mind then they’re not gonna—so sometimes it’s just easier not to defend at all.

Fried (2012) asserts that those in the dominant culture (e.g., white, heterosexual, able bodied) “are generally the ones facing the greatest challenge to learn to see with new lenses” (p. 38). People of color are accustomed to “seeing the contrasts between themselves and members of the dominant culture because they cross the border between cultures daily” (Fried, 2012, p. 38). Some NALFO members at the university have

become accustomed to having to defend their organizations and practices. Some members are more vocal than others about the importance of knowing about NALFO and having the university community recognize and understand their organizations. NALFO, however, must first understand their own community before they can expect others to recognize the organization.

As a means to validate participant statements, the researcher asked random non-participant NALFO members some of the same questions the participants were asked surrounding relationships, collaboration, and perception. Table 6 provides a comparison of statements made by NALFO participants and non-participants. The researcher spoke with non-participants individually, most often in a campus library.

Table 6

Statement Comparison of Participant and Non-participant Members

Topic	Statements from Study Participants	Statements from Non-participant Members
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication needs the most work • Line between business and personal is blurred • Tensions still exist between organizations • Judgment made and passed on to chapter, rather than individual • Have seen improvement • Assumptions and hearsay have tainted relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal interactions are positive • Difficult to separate business from personal • Negative stigmas are removed when certain members leave or graduate • There are friendly greetings, but no concrete interpersonal relationships • Feels that relationships could be stronger • Some members have resolved issues and opened the door for more open communication
Events and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NALFO 101 was a success; members still speak to each other • Thanksgiving service helped to break out of own groups • Members try to remain professional and try to work together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NALFO 101 was positive; participants were interested in learning more about the council • Would like more events so members could get to know each other • Members don't support NALFO events as much as they do non-NALFO events. • Small chapter size may play a role in lack of support for each other
Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members do not have a sense of pride for NALFO • NALFO is overlooked by the university 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members do not see benefits of NALFO so they do not get involved • Organizations try to gain exposure so that the university community is aware of them

Competition, Pride, and Conflict. Delving deeper into the relationships among members, the researcher inquired about the competition between fraternal organizations during the first focus group. Not all participants readily agreed that competition is what exists. The researcher defined competition as inter-organizational discord or controversy with respect to events or recruitment at the university. Once defined, a participant added:

In that case, I don't know if I would call that competition, just me personally. I think that would go along the lines of pride . . . we're doing this, we're gonna make it great, but the way I see it and the way I try and talk to my brothers is if we really want to be competitive and we really—if it's about having the best event, the best event isn't gonna be just with us, cuz there's other organizations that know better situations to have better success. I think with that like I said, I think it would be more pride than competition.

Amethyst and Natalia agreed that, when it comes to events, they “try to keep in mind how good the event is going to be” and they “wanna put on an event and say we did it all by ourselves.” Although, she does not believe they insinuate that “this event's gonna be better than their event,” Amethyst interjects. Natalia is a proponent of collaboration, but understands that people will often say “no, we're fine; we're capable of doing it on our own, when in reality, it would be a lot easier—to have someone else.”

In terms of recruitment, Monique stated that she believes there are still some tense feelings between same-sex organizations. “I think maybe it has to do with competing for the same—like we all have the same goals, like the same values, so trying to recruit members, it's like—well, it's kinda the same thing,” she added. Rosa believes it's more pride than competition. “People are gonna have their own way of stereotyping each organization anyway, but I mean some of the drama goes way back when organizations were founded,” Rosa explained. She corrected her previous statement with “I wouldn't call them stereotypes, it's just like they're just like different styles.”

Natalia believed that time was the primary obstacle for members to be able to support each other and the council. “Most of the time, we all have our own things, and so we can’t always attend other people’s things,” Natalia added. NALFO organizations at the university generally have smaller chapter memberships; therefore, the number of members able to support is minimized. Consequently, the seemingly lack of support can result in conflicted feelings and perceptions.

Often times, conflict was a result of some miscommunication between individuals or inter-organizationally. Contending between stages of identity, gender power struggles, and/or vying for the top position amongst other multicultural fraternal organizations could also be contributing factors. “There were several instances in the past where that did lead to conflict and it did make things a lot more difficult with the way the council as a whole was operating,” a participant commented. Participants were also members of other communities of practice – student organizations, their employers – with their own set of shared values. Schein (1992) stated conflict can also “result from the fact that each of us belongs to many groups so that what we bring to any given group is influenced by the assumptions that are appropriate to our other groups” (p. 11). Much of the conflict can likely be alleviated with a defined entity, formalized structure, and increased communication.

Divergent Perspectives

At various times throughout the study, participants made comments about stereotypes (internal and external perceptions), made comparisons between NALFO and other fraternal councils at the university, and the university’s perception of NALFO. The researcher thought it would be valuable to include some of the conflicting and

challenging assertions participants confronted as they attempted to make meaning of their experiences within NALFO.

As indicated earlier, the majority of participants were unaware that multicultural fraternal organizations existed before they joined. They, most often, reverted to the way fraternal organizations were depicted in the media, which often reflected mainstream fraternal organizations and involved heavy alcohol consumption and parties. This stereotype, or blanketed depiction of fraternal organizations, continues to be a stigma encountered by NALFO during recruitment.

Gabriela shared information from a university fall welcome event, a large recruitment event at the beginning of a fall semester. During the event, individuals would introduce the organizations they represent to the audience of primarily incoming freshman. One of her sorority sisters said that she overheard members of other councils saying, “Oh, they’re just a bunch of Mexicans going to meetings.” The researcher asked how she felt hearing such a comment. She responded saying, “I felt mad and upset. I mean like, some people are really ignorant. We’re not just a bunch of Mexicans – that just sounds so negative.”

When offering an explanation or responding to questions, participants frequently made comparisons between NALFO and other fraternal councils. Most often, the comments were made using the other councils as a reference point. When discussing NALFO’s identity, Amethyst made reference to the “Divine Nine,” the coined collective terminology for the historically African American fraternal organizations. “Everybody knows who they are. They have like this national presence, international too. I feel like NALFO doesn’t have that nationally and here....I think it would be really cool if we

could have that,” Amethyst added. She used the Divine Nine as a reference, but understands “they’ve been around for a long time.”

Discussion surrounding events also implicated reference to other councils. When talking about the NALFO’hood barbecue, Rosa stated, “We have always seen MGC have their own barbeque, and of course, they have so many more members, but we’ve always wanted to do something like that.” During the final focus group, when discussing supporting other organizations, Amethyst commented, “then you have to take other councils into consideration, too. There’s MGC and NPHC and they have their own stuff going on.” Interestingly, when considering events or supporting other organizations, the mainstream fraternal councils were never mentioned.

Participants also felt as though the council was overlooked by the university community. Monique offered an example from her speech course where she presented on the benefits of joining a multicultural fraternal organization. Her instructor asked, “What is Greek Life?” and it surprised Monique that she had no idea. When referring to university administration, comments like “I don’t think they see us” and “I think we’re too small” were made. Amethyst recalled an event her sorority held, which was attended by two staff members of Fraternity and Sorority Life. The staff made positive comments to the sorority members. She went on to say:

They’d never seen anything like that and they were kind of like “Whoa, what was this?” It was kind of nice. I felt like it was not just a victory for us, but it was a victory for NALFO because we are a part of NALFO. I would feel that through us, they would also see well maybe the other orgs have these kinds of activities and it kind of starts a domino effect where it’s bigger.

Rosa added that they had their tabling stuff (e.g., banner, pictures, artifacts) and the staff made positive comments as well including, “Oh my gosh, that’s so cute,” and “You really

need to take a picture of that.” Tabling is a customary practice of multicultural organizations. Rosa thought to herself, “Everyone has tabling things.” She added, “I think maybe they don’t even realize all the other components that come along with our organizations, cuz tabling is a big part of it.”

Anthony, passionately added, “I think it’s all overlooked, simply for the fact that they don’t know.” He went on to state his opinion:

It’s kind of the same thing they were talking about earlier, generalizing a whole group because of one or a group of people...I’m going go ahead and say it. If you were to ask any of the higher ups and stuff like that, “What do you know about NALFO?” “Oh, they’re Greek.” That’s gonna be their response. They’re not going to know what it is that we do. They’re not going to know that we only have five organizations. They’re not going to know any of the small details. All they need to know...is that, oh, it’s another Greek organization. I won’t get into my personal opinions about that, but it’s just being overlooked.

He went on to say that he understands that everything should be a compromise; it should not be a one-sided expectation. Anthony was aware of the discussions in administration over the last couple years about why NALFO exists when a Multicultural Greek Council already exists. “It’s just, again, another opportunity to clump everything together, which is only gonna create more problems, but that’s because they don’t know,” he added.

Participants were passionate in their statements and did not feel validated by the university and, at times, their own peers. Not all participants had similar experiences as some were more active within the fraternal community and some were members longer than others.

Summary

Through analysis of interview and focus group transcriptions and observation notes, five themes transpired. Identity development was named as especially essential for

the council. Defining NALFO in terms of its function, as a collective resource, and as a valid entity on campus, was considered a work in progress by some participants.

Developing and strengthening relationships among NALFO members was mentioned as needing the much attention. Participants acknowledge that while some members have developed friendships outside of their respective organizations, it did not happen often.

All participants consistently recognized signature events as helping to establish a tighter community: the newly established NALFO 101 event for new members, NALFO'hood events, and annual Thanksgiving Service. Internal and external perception was interpreted by the lack of participation and personal investment of members in NALFO overall. Participants attributed the disengagement to the lack of a defined identity.

Leadership development, formalized officer transition, and defined structure were the most noted need for organization of the council.

While the participants understood that any change would not occur rapidly, they also concluded that any shift could only occur if and when individual members are motivated to take action. "When students realize that construction of reality is a process they [will need to] engage in daily, they [then] become capable of crossing, creating, moving, or eradicating borders" (Fried, 2012, p. 92).

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Discussion

At the inception of the dissertation process, the researcher sought to explore group dynamics and organizational culture of the Latino fraternal organizations at Arizona State University. The pilot study (spring 2012) included only sorority members, at which time the researcher concluded that it would be beneficial to include fraternity members to gain a more accurate picture of the organizations as a collective. The purpose of the study was to explore the identity development and organizational culture of the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations council (NALFO) by implementing a community of practice approach at a large, public university in southwestern United States. The objective was to construct a sustainable camaraderie among the existing Latino fraternal organizations at the university to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, consequently transforming organizational culture. The second chapter provided a review of identity development and leadership theories, Latino cultural implications, a historical perspective of fraternal organizations, and fraternal community data of the subject university. Chapter three explained the methodology employed by the researcher for data collection. Community and organizational culture theories framed the perspective of the culture of NALFO at ASU. The findings of the study were presented in chapter four, illustrating the need for NALFO to develop an identity to cultivate relationships, enhance positive perception, and create a systematic organization of the council.

This chapter will discuss the findings that emerged from the research questions that guided this study. The transpired themes will be discussed within the context of the existing literature to ascertain implications for practice and recommendations for future research. The discussion will be presented in the context of the theoretical models (Figures 1 and 2) that framed the study:

- Shared Repertoire and Artifacts
 - Pride in artifacts
 - Shared practices
- Joint Enterprise and Espoused Values
 - Identity
 - Developing relationships
 - Organizational management
- Mutual Engagement and Basic Underlying Assumptions
 - Perception (organizational and divergent)

Shared Repertoire and Artifacts

Describing the culture of NALFO at a most fundamental level includes use of artifacts. Schein (1992) describes this level as the most visible in organization structure. This can also describe an overall fraternal culture, not just one shared by NALFO. Use of and pride in artifacts are important elements of culture for NALFO, but do not describe the underlying organizational culture. The artifacts can, however, add to perception of and attitude toward organizational culture. Rosa described it as, “pride comes from being

unique” and “seeing an organization have similar artifacts can be seen as copying, which can carry animosity or begin to create a negative reputation.”

Use of artifacts has great significance for fraternal organizations and participants demonstrated this in their commentary. Monique shared that she didn’t know what she’d do if she “caught someone else throwing our sign or doing our call” and she couldn’t “imagine even wearing other orgs colors on a regular basis because I feel those colors represent them.” Anthony exclaimed, “I’m a little disappointed at times when I see other organizations have the same [hand] sign.” The concept of respecting an organization’s artifacts and use of the artifacts is a common consideration for fraternal organizations which accompanies fraternal culture. If the respect is disregarded, conflict can arise, primarily by physical exchanges of facial expressions and gestures of disapproval, a concept that Sue & Sue (2008) refer to as kinesics.

Most of the participants responded using an “us” and “them” criterion when describing the shared repertoire of fraternal organizations at the university. According to Fried (2012), culture “emerges in any group that shares a set of common experiences” (p. 63) and participants acknowledged that an overall fraternal culture exists at the university. Although a general fraternal culture exists, participants made reference to the differences in organizations by council. One participant stated she thinks the only things they have in common are “the letters we wear on our chest” and that “we earn our letters, not buy them.” Their perception of difference (us and them) may have developed from a “dominant American paradigm” (mainstream organizations) that students base the way they “learn or shape what they learn” and that has continuously referred to them as *other* (Fried, 2012).

The experiences participants shared are likened to those of the participants in Magaña's (2012) study on the experiences of students in Latino fraternities and sororities at an institution in the Pacific Northwest. Magaña's (2012) participants faced similar challenges of validation among peers, the fraternal community, and the university. They struggled to acquire the support of the university fraternity and sorority life staff and they also found that their customs, traditions, and culture made it difficult to connect with Interfraternity and Panhellenic organizations.

Joint Enterprise and Espoused Values

Creating a coherent community derives from collective processes and values that incorporate relationships, accountability, and negotiated meaning. Kimborough (2002), Ross (2000), and Torbenson & Parks (2009) assert that the emergence of multicultural fraternal organizations provided a subculture on college campuses for students of color and served as a means of survival and acceptance. While each member has a personal reason for joining their respective organization, the organizations, in general, serve to foster relationships, develop leadership, and build community (Gregory, 2003). Wenger (1998) contends that this joint enterprise does not imply that every member believes or agrees with everything, but that the community negotiates meaning and creates its reality.

Participants could not easily define NALFO's identity; it has become almost a foreign entity to its own members. They become familiar with their specific sorority or fraternity, but not with the umbrella council that supports their existence. The national association, ideally, would like its organizations to "develop positive, supportive relationships" and "establish a positive and productive campus presence" (NALFO, 2010).

Ethnic identity development theories are often broad and inadequate in describing the population being studied. Such models are often in the form of stages or phases that a population are presumed to follow. Phinney's (1990) three stage model begins with acceptance, moves through a forced identity search, and concludes with a clear and confident sense of identity. Participants' statements do not support an acceptance or clear sense of identity based on their fraternal experiences, but do acknowledge a sense of likeness. Amethyst and Anthony commented, respectively, "we all have similar stories" and "the whole idea behind it was so that people that are working with the same purpose and goals can work together in order to achieve those things."

Ruiz's (1990) five stage identity development model, from a clinical perspective, is based on underlying assumptions and progressive awareness and growth. While NALFO does not necessarily progress through each stage of Ruiz's model, there are some points that could be considered. In the first stage, causal, the ethnic heritage is negated or ignored causing failure to identify with the Latino culture. No participant made any statement negating their Latino culture; however, one could consider this stage in broad terms. The participants felt that NALFO was slighted by the university community and, often times, their council peers. Although NALFO is proud of its Latino roots, their statements could infer that being recognized as a "fraternal organization," rather than a "Latino fraternal organization" could increase validation for the council by the university.

The researcher does not foresee a desire to change their unique designation as Latino fraternal organizations, but more of an affirmation of their Latino culture. The intervention of Ruiz's (1990) causal stage includes cessation of negative messages and

encouraging participation in positive ethnic activities. As a means to affirm their existence, NALFO could and should sponsor and promote more cultural activities, celebrating their culture and inviting the university community to share in the experience. Monique's experience in Latino fraternal organizations, as a biracial student, has been positive. Although she "sometimes" feels uncomfortable, "it makes [her] feel more multicultural" and that she can "fit in." Establishing relationships and sense of belonging are largely reasons for joining fraternal organizations.

Developing relationships and common bond experiences are common to students seeking membership in fraternal organizations (Gregory, 2003). Relationships are not straightforward and are often met with differences in opinion and ideals. The relationship between NALFO members plays a significant role in defining identity. In the initial survey participants expressed differences of opinion in regard to communication of members. Two participants stated that "communication is good" and "pretty open." Yet, two others declared that "there is much work to be done" and "communicating is what needs the most work." Interestingly, participants offered conflicting statements when responding to NALFO's strengths as a community. Some offered communication as a strength and stated that "it is fairly easy to communicate across chapters." Another participant added that members interact especially during NALFO sponsored events. During the last focus group, Anthony pointed out the arduous process of gaining participation from members with, "if it's mandatory, people are not gonna like that it's mandatory. If it's not mandatory, they're not gonna show up." A community of practice, by definition, cannot exist if members do not communicate and are not engaged.

Existing literature describes the Latino culture as collectivist, placing greater value on the larger community, rather than on the individual. This concept of familismo can deter Latinos from pursuing higher education (to take care of family responsibilities), but can also serve as motivation to persist (support of campus family) (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Torres, 2004). Latino and other ethnic fraternal organizations were founded on this premise – to form smaller communities as a means to support college persistence for students of color. Guardia’s (2006) study of the identity development of fraternal members at a Hispanic serving institution revealed familismo as a prominent theme among the participants. Just as in Guardia’s (2006) findings, the participants in this study noted their families as strong supporters of their educational endeavors.

Hill and Torres (2010) suggest that relationships are placed in high regard in the Latino community. Empathy, trust, and respect are among the characteristics especially important to relationships for Latinos (Hill & Torres, 2010). To date, and based on participant experiences, the actions of NALFO members at ASU do not necessarily support these ideals. Such relationships require communication, willing interaction, and genuine interest.

Van Linden & Fertman (1998) assert that communication is a learned skill that can begin with leadership development and can help break down barriers between people. Clearly, NALFO members are not communicating at a level to foster relationships and identity development, but they may also not be familiar with adequate resources (e.g., faculty and departments) on campus to address their leadership needs. While these students are actively involved in their chapters, “...they are often unaware of the

availability of opportunities and resources because they do not know what questions to ask” (Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011, p. 13). Communication is essential to create mutual engagement and learning experiences to minimize elusive language and apathy. Fried (2012) suggests that “learning is most powerful and transformative when it involves interpersonal communication” (p. 15). Relationships arise from engagement in a community, not merely being a member of the community (Wenger, 1998).

The group project was decided upon by the participants during the first focus group. During the planning discussion, three of the five participants were more familiar with the event. The two that were not were less vocal and appeared hesitant to offer feedback. Chickering and Reisser (1993) assert that when a student identifies with a new group, the group influences behavior. The participants as a collective formed a subgroup of NALFO and for purposes of the study the group project was an integral piece. Perhaps Monique and Gabriela recognized the importance of the project for the subgroup and just “tried to fit in” as Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggest. Being engaged in an activity and working together toward a common goal made the project almost effortless. Keeping on task, not necessarily linked to fraternal activity, facilitated conversation and interaction among the participants. Sponsoring events and activities is fundamental to NALFO organizations; however, co-sponsoring with another NALFO organization is not typical. As students move through creating identity and building relationships, collaboration will become an essential norm to the council.

Mutual Engagement and Basic Underlying Assumptions

Sustaining a community of practice and transforming organizational culture requires an investment of time, resources, and mutual communication. A defined

structure and communication of the model to constituents will aid in developing an exemplar council. The model will help NALFO members recognize the expectation, aspects of special importance, and their responsibilities. Gaining commitment from membership was declared as the most difficult obstacle. The lack of commitment translated to poor participation and communication. While members are invested in their respective organizations, they do not have a vested interest in the collective organization for Latino fraternal organizations. Participants agreed that members do not understand the purpose of or seek to be active with the council.

Creating a positive internal perception of NALFO would require group training and leadership development, including topics of mutual respect, interdependence, and acceptance of differences. The NALFO 101 event sponsored for new members of fall 2011 and spring 2012 was well received. Members indicated an increased understanding of NALFO and its purpose. Relationships were introduced and participants witnessed the development of relationships after the event. The event was a pivotal moment for NALFO. After years of attempts to create community, the NALFO 101 event initiated the process for new members. The council would like to continue hosting the event to embed communication, community, and collaboration into NALFO culture.

Participants largely expressed feeling disregarded and ignored by the university community. Their fraternal experience has been muddled by sentiments of difference and feeling as though they are less than the other (mainstream organizations). Their fraternal peers in Interfraternity and Panhellenic organizations, often times, do not even know they exist. They lack validation. Monique and Gabriela shared personal experiences where they were made to feel invalidated, undervalued, and defensive. Monique stated

“sometimes it’s just easier not to defend at all” when recalling her encounter with a friend in an Interfraternity organization. Often times, it appears that the university, staff, and fraternal members operate in a dominant culture mind-frame of power and prejudice. A positive outlook would be moving from a closed system of thinking about people in predefined categories and moving toward a collective body of innumerable resources and multiple schools of thought to create an innovative, inclusive community (Fried, 2012). Wenger (1998) asserts that communities of practice are “complex mixtures of power and dependence...resistance and compliance...trust and suspicion” (p. 77).

Creating validating teams comprised of university staff and organization advisors providing an authentic supportive community could enhance the overall development of a fraternal community. Respectful communication and policies and procedures created for a community without disregarding the needs of every group would also move a fraternal community in a positive direction.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to explore the identity development and organizational culture of a student organization, the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations council (NALFO) by implementing a community of practice approach. Thus, constructing a sustainable camaraderie among the existing Latino fraternal organizations at the university to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, consequently transforming organizational culture.

NALFO, by definition, is considered a community of practice. NALFO is a collective council of individual Latino fraternal organization chapters. The individual

chapters are also communities with their own organizational culture. The researcher employed use of Schein's (1992, 2010) theory of organizational culture for an in depth description of NALFO's unique culture and Wenger's (1998) dimensions of communities of practice. Wenger (1998) and Schein's (1992, 2010) theories are complementary and provided a construct to facilitate the reporting of the findings in chapter four.

Six members of NALFO at ASU participated in the study. Five participants were of Mexican heritage, one was mulatto. There were five female participants and one male representing three of the five existing NALFO organizations at ASU.

This study was guided by the following questions which will now be addressed.

1. What factors contribute to and/or inhibit increased communication and collaboration among Latino fraternal organizations at the university?

Participants identified shared practices, shared Latino culture, and small chapter size as factors that contributed to increased communication. Events that led to increased communication were NALFO 101, NALFO'hood, Thanksgiving Day Service, Cesar Chavez Day of Service, and NALFO banquet. Comparatively, some participants perceived chapter size as large and difficult to facilitate communication. Some participants included NALFO events as a means of increased communication, but noted that the mandatory nature and assigning of points for participation made it detrimental to positive communication. There is a lack of participation from NALFO members; if not engaged, there is no communication occurring. Also, the inability of some NALFO members to separate business and personal information was an inhibitive factor.

2. How will a community of practice influence prospective collaborative relationships and leadership of Latino fraternal organizations at the university?

Prior to the collaborative project, not all of the participants had ever collaborated or even communicated with each other. They were each familiar with each other because of the council, but may not have had an opportunity to speak with everyone.

The first focus group initiated communication and collaboration because it was required for them to complete the task. Once they began planning and implementation of the project, a shift in their original dynamic occurred. The participants spoke to each other more, at leisure and for business.

Participation in the study increased communication outside of the study. Some participants met up to play volleyball together and the communication led to possible social activities between chapters.

3. How will participants experience influence the likelihood of sustainability of the community of practice?

Each participant reported a positive experience throughout the study. Members accepted responsibility for the event and took it personally when the event did not turn out as they anticipated. They also saw the absence of accountability amongst their NALFO peers. They were actively engaged and were able to express their feelings about it together, not separately with their respective chapter members.

Participants commented that a community of practice could “encourage members to participate more since they get to know each other” and “it puts personal responsibility in the organization, making involvement more personal and emotional.” Their experience, in a sense, revitalized their individual commitment to

NALFO and look forward to “encourage[ing] [their] organization to participate in NALFO,” “to organizations collaborating to make events even bigger and more fun,” and “looking forward to transitioning this experience to the next generation of members in order to help NALFO move forward.”

Implications for Practice

This study served to inform the researcher and her community of practice of student service practitioners. This study examined students who are members of the fastest growing population in the country. Fortunately, these students benefit from attending the largest institution in the country and one that is a leader in innovation. Many universities have design aspirations that guide the development and construct of the institutional culture. The researcher will use archetype aspirations to contextualize how practitioners can draw on such areas when working with students.

Place. A university often places emphasis on its location, diverse environment, and in learning from local communities. Looking beyond business capital, the local communities could largely be where students call home. This could serve as an advantageous partnership where the university can gain access and learn more about the local communities and students can gain awareness of their communities in a different scope. The partnership can provide not only a sense of community among students, but can create an increased sense of belonging within a large university setting.

Transform Society. Universities channel their talent and resources to engage in social change. One of the platforms of fraternal organizations is service and philanthropy. A university could use this to form a significant partnership, drawing on one of its natural resources, its students. Fraternal organizations provide countless hours of service to

several well deserving organizations and charities. In an effort to move away from a competitive model of “Greek Week of Service,” fraternal organizations could partner with a university to provide service on a larger scale in areas of interest to the fraternal organizations. Service and community engagement can be experienced by the students providing service and the communities being served.

Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is most often associated with business capital. Entrepreneurship inspires action. These groups could benefit from turning ideas into responsibilities. A university can encourage and provide resources for members of various councils to become the architects of fraternal life at the university and engage all councils to create a healthy fraternal community to meet the needs of each council. The students could benefit from purposeful leadership development and tangible skills.

Research. Universities often address global challenges. Change often begins in one’s community. In reference to this study, a partnership between Latino students and the university can prove beneficial as they are the fastest growing population in the United States. The impact of the population shift will have multiple implications, not only in a scientific context, but also in a social and behavioral context. This can also extend to other student groups and individuals in multiple disciplines.

Student Success. Universities assert commitment to the success of each student. Fraternal organizations are also posited to facilitate student success. The fraternal community may often feel disconnected from a university. Greater emphasis can be placed on being an inclusive university that is committed to student success.

Fuse Intellectual Disciplines. Many universities assert boundary crossing and intellectual interaction across disciplines encouraging student learning. At a large

university, such dynamic activities may often go unnoticed by the student population. The students in this study, in particular, place emphasis on their academics. Purposeful engagement and application of classroom learning, in conjunction with experiential learning and interpersonal communication, can provide for an exceptional learning experience while fostering individual and group development.

Be Socially Embedded. Universities often strive to strengthen and contribute to the needs of their surrounding communities. Again, fraternal organizations are likely to be the largest collective of students who are already providing service. Enhanced outreach to these students can create a more purposeful community. This can evoke communication within the fraternal community, and in turn, a coalesced and purposeful communication is emitted to the external community.

Engage Globally. Universities engage with people and issues locally, nationally, and internationally. They often have an exceptional position in producing some of the most innovative and culturally aware leaders of the future. Latino communities commonly make a life near family, attributing to the concept of familismo. While this is certainly important to the group of students in this study, it is probable that exposure to a global context can increase motivation to become more aware of and engaged in the world around them.

Students have a responsibility in their position as students, as student leaders, and as mentors to take advantage of the countless resources and projects available to them. A university, equally, has a responsibility to develop students and ensure that the design aspirations are posited for every student, not just a small subset of its larger student population. Using the design aspirations of a university when working with students and

forming partnerships or engaging students in various projects would demonstrate an investment by the university to its students (not just external entities) and create a sense of belonging for the students.

Fraternal Communities. It is important for universities, when working with fraternal organizations, to understand that one size does not fit all. Gregory (2003) exclaims, “It would be a great error to take all of these organizations...and lump them together” (p. 10). There is a difference in treating organizations equally and treating them equitably. There are common challenges and issues faced by all fraternal organizations, but there are also reasons supporting the existence of the various groups. For example, matters that may be of particular interest or urgency to the historically African American organizations may not pertain to the Latino fraternal organizations.

Initiatives that target particular populations can include modifications that consider the intricacies of each organization and council to meet the needs of all involved. Staff could also benefit from training on best practices for working with student organizations and fraternal councils. Evaluating the professional staff’s degrees of awareness of organizational culture would be essential for establishing and implementing strategies for working with these students. Ongoing assessment would be essential to monitor learning and organizational culture in communities of practice and to identify areas for improvement.

While an assigned individual working with specific groups is positive for continuity and mentorship, staff should also be aware of the multiple practices that exist within the entire fraternal community they serve. Although they may not encounter each student organization in their daily functions, it is important for staff to understand the

experiences and customs of the organizations and councils on their campus. Similarly, fraternal members would benefit from learning about their community and not just their specific organization and council. By embedding an inclusive model into the fraternal culture at the university, over time, can result in less need for continuous diversity training as it would be an intrinsic component of the fraternal community.

Moving toward a model of an inclusive, collective fraternal culture rather than siloed groups would be critical to develop and sustain healthy fraternal communities. It is imperative that university staff acknowledge the role that culture plays in Latino, Multicultural, and African American student and fraternal organizations, as well as the dominant perspective of mainstream organizations. The dominant American paradigm cannot continue to be the lens used to interpret accuracies, truth, and acceptance if a healthy community is the intended outcome.

Fried (2012) describes the intersection of power and culture as:

In situations where one culture exists within another or must engage with another regularly, power differences between the two must be taken into account to develop a comprehensive understanding of the situational dynamics. Power can be defined as the ability to advance one's goals and achieve one's ends in a particular social, political, economic, or cultural context. The group that has the most power in any context determines or heavily influences definitions of value, truth, good, justice, and other elements that affect social relationships. (p. 86)

Evaluation and assessment are essential for reconstructing practices to better suit the needs of the overall community, the needs of all organizations.

Students pursuing membership in multicultural fraternal organizations are often first-generation college students as well. As noted in this study, four of six participants were first-generation college students. While access to higher education for underrepresented students has increased, retaining these students to degree completion is

often challenging for colleges and universities (Jehangir, Williams & Jeske, 2012). For Latino/a students, the integration of their sense of self from a collectivist cultural background with the individualistic culture found in higher education can be complicated. Rendón (1994) found that historically marginalized students need culturally validating experiences to alleviate the stressors of existing in an unfamiliar environment. Fraternal organizations as communities of practice serve as validating agents and helps members to be successful in scholarship, leadership, and philanthropy. Staff and advisors to these organizations are instrumental in validating student experiences and increasing the likelihood of student success, individually and as a collective. Universities may consider approaching multicultural organizations with strategies applying not only Astin's (1984) involvement theory, but also Rendón's (1994) validation theory and observing implications for first-generation students.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the identity development and organizational culture of a student organization engaged in a community of practice. The researcher chose to examine the experiences of members of NALFO, a council for Latino fraternal organizations, as a collective. This can launch future research with multiple groups.

The action research conducted by the researcher at Arizona State University cannot be generalized as it studied a particular group of students at a specific point in time. Future research with groups could include a longitudinal study to examine the processes and pivotal moments experienced by multiple cohorts of members. For example, this could include a longitudinal qualitative study of NALFO 101, its role in

developing relationships and community and its impact on several cohorts of new NALFO members at the university. Also, employing validation efforts to explore if and to what degree specific strategies enhance student development and identity development. If validation can enhance the transition of first-generation students to a college environment, perhaps it may enhance the transition of individual fraternal chapters to a collective fraternal community.

Participants made statements placing emphasis on their Latino culture, however, their function as a student organization does not rely on their status as Latinos. Monique, like other members not of Latino heritage, chose to seek membership in a Latino fraternal organization for other reasons. Qualitative research exploring the experiences of non-Latino students who are members of Latino fraternal organizations could offer an insight on the role of culture in a Latino fraternal organization. Hughey (2009) contends that there is minimal research on fraternal cross-racial membership, but that it is a phenomenon that is increasingly transpiring.

Throughout the research study, the participants often compared their experiences to the likeness of Multicultural and African American fraternal organizations. Qualitative research methods including interviews and focus groups would likely yield rich data to explore student experience. Studying historically marginalized groups could also assist in assessing need and ways to support academic and organizational success. Exploring the fraternal organizations catering to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender communities, as well as Asian American, and Native American fraternities and sororities would offer diverse data relating to current college and university students. Do these groups encounter similar challenges or have a similar perception of fraternal communities? What

methods do they employ to encourage communication and community? What are their needs and challenges?

Comparatively, a qualitative study of Interfraternity and Panhellenic organizational culture would be extremely beneficial to understand the mainstream perspective. Does a dominant paradigm perspective exist? The literature includes primarily quantitative studies that do not offer in-depth stories, but rather generalizations of an extremely large community. Most often, the studies purport the stereotypes frequently associated with fraternal organizations – alcohol related themes and promiscuous behavior.

Finally, an interesting study would be the exploration of characteristics and competencies essential for student affairs professionals who work specifically with student organizations. The population of college and university campuses across the country is changing, diversity is growing, therefore, needs are changing. A component of being a leader in innovation entails being able to anticipate needs, conceive plausible, proactive responses, and assess effectiveness with continuous evaluation. Academia has a reputation of operating in archaic means and in a business as usual manner; the “fundamental assumptions of most of our modern universities are profoundly out of date” (Fried, 2012, p. 5). As Fried (2012) contends, “this society needs to generate knowledge that addresses current problems, to apply that knowledge to problems, and to use the results of the solutions to create subsequent solutions in an endless loop” (p. 5).

On a larger scale, an institution can assess the effectiveness of various departments in respect to meeting the needs of today’s students. More diversity on a campus does not necessarily mean these groups interact. Fenske, Rund, and Contento (2000) suggest that

“interaction between and among diverse groups may result in increased tensions” (p. 573). They also acknowledge that in some cases “campus programs, staffing, and organizational structures are out of sync with the expanding multicultural campus” (p. 573).

Conclusion and Reflective Statement

If you asked the researcher, as a sophomore in college, about pursuing doctoral study in the future, she would have likely immediately dismissed the thought as she never imagined attending college at all. The experiences she encountered in the course of her life as a daughter, sister, woman, Latina, Latino fraternal member and alumna, graduate student, and student services professional all empowered her to want more, to do more.

Upon entering her doctoral program, she knew immediately the subject she desired to study – Latino fraternal organizations. Narrowing down exactly what she wanted to study within the broad context took a bit more time. When she became a member of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. in fall 2000, the population of students of color was fairly small at her university in the northeast. The students of color, almost naturally, formed their own community of support and camaraderie. Student organizations collaborated on events, socialized often, and supported university events together. The small fraternal community consisted of three Panhellenic sororities, three Interfraternity organizations, two historically African American organizations, and her Latina sorority. Although the “difference” was felt between the organizations, the environment was not one of haste. The Panhellenic and Interfraternity organizations welcomed her sorority and the researcher recalls some members asking her questions about the organization, rather than making gross generalizations. While the encounters

with students were open and communicative, the same could not be said for the relationship with university staff. The experiences participants in this study had in regard to defending their organizations or not feeling validated, resonated with the researcher.

At the onset of her doctoral journey, only a year after arriving at Arizona State University, the researcher began making more significant connections with fraternal members, primarily those in the Latino, multicultural, and African American organizations. She encountered the Panhellenic and Interfraternity members most often in the course of her position as an academic advisor. The researcher observed the existing silos, of not only the multicultural fraternal organizations, but also in the mainstream organizations. As a Latino fraternal alumna, the researcher felt compelled to explore the experiences of the NALFO membership.

The pilot study was conducted with three participants, one member from each of the NALFO sororities. The researcher initially thought to study the siloed groups from a gender and cultural perspective. The data from the pilot study revealed more of a leadership development need, rather than gender communication. The experience of data collection and analysis was a bit overwhelming and, as she knows it now, just a fraction of what was to come.

An initial assumption made by the researcher was that perhaps the experiences of NALFO members at ASU were regional, or cultural, as the vast majority of the Latino population in Arizona is Mexican. She thought that although she is Latina, she is not Mexican, and what could arise were Mexican cultural norms that she was unaware of. The researcher considered the regional aspect, also as it pertains to Latino fraternal organizations. There are organizations that are established primarily on the west coast

that are not established on the east coast, and vice versa. She personally never encountered three of the Latina sororities that exist at ASU because they were not established on the east coast. Another assumption was that the experiences were generational. “These things did not happen in my time as an undergraduate.” As noted earlier, the ever-changing demographic at colleges and universities requires change on multiple levels in order to meet the needs of students. This research study launched the exploration of the Latino fraternal organizations at ASU, not only for the researcher, but for the students and university staff.

While the researcher was able to address her research questions surrounding communication, collaboration, and community, the responses served as the onset of more questions and exploration. The researcher could not foresee how the intentional group project would unfold or what the participants would make of the experience, based on the planning session held during the first focus group. There was a significant shift in their commentary during the last focus group. It was evident that the participants accepted responsibility for the event and their perception of communication, community, and accountability changed. Based on the post survey, the participants found value in the experience and hoped to encourage members of their organizations to become more involved in NALFO as a community. The data collected show that each chapter functions as a defined community of practice, but NALFO as a community of practice will require further development. These experiences contribute to the fundamental value of fraternal organizations and serve to enhance the academic experience of members inside and outside of the classroom.

Magaña's (2012) study on the experiences of students in Latino/Latina fraternities and sororities corroborated some of the participants' experiences at ASU. Both samples experienced feeling supported by their fraternity brothers or sorority sisters, both experienced challenges of recognition and understanding by the university community, and both experienced a sense of "difference" with their Interfraternity and Panhellenic peers, yet a camaraderie with the Multicultural and African American organizations. Magaña's (2012) findings counteract the researcher's original assumption that the experiences could be regional, as his study took place in the Pacific Northwest.

The researcher wrote much of this document over time while sitting amongst ASU students in one of the campus libraries. She had ample opportunity to observe the interpersonal dynamics of fraternal organization members in an academic setting, which for some students, can quickly turn into a social setting. She became an unobtrusive observer and began writing notes about her observations, including reflective statements. Members of the fraternal community often wear artifacts displaying their affiliation, so it was relatively easy to identify these students. Over several different occasions, the notes became repetitive. Generally, sorority members greet fraternity members before greeting a sorority member of a different organization. Fraternity members do not appear to have the same hesitation; they were more likely to greet other fraternity and sorority members. The researcher witnessed an example of behavior undermining a communicative community when a Multicultural fraternity member and a Multicultural sorority member were at a table talking. Three NALFO sorority members walked up to the table and began speaking with the fraternity member, but at no point, said any word to the sorority member.

It is very important to note that there was absolutely no interaction between mainstream fraternal members and multicultural fraternal members. Mainstream sororities and fraternities appear to have the same siloed experience within their fraternal culture, possibly to a higher degree. The researcher did not observe any interaction between mainstream sorority or fraternity members of different organizations (e.g., no member of ABC sorority ever spoke to a member of XYZ sorority), but the researcher did not study these groups. This could serve as an area for further research.

The researcher anticipated a larger number of participants during the recruitment stage, hoping that more NALFO members could contribute to the conversation about their community. The researcher realizes this was a first step in working to build community within NALFO and moving toward a more inclusive fraternal community overall at the university. There is still much to be accomplished. Some participants expressed their excitement to describe their experience and encourage their brothers and sisters to become more actively involved.

It is the researchers hope that this study will encourage members of fraternal organizations in general, but more specifically NALFO members, to become more engaged participants and for universities to acknowledge the distinct cultures of their fraternal communities. Because Latino fraternal organizations may be facing challenges at their respective institutions, similar to those found in this study and that of Magaña (2012), it is important that members revisit the foundation of their organization and that of fraternal organizations for historically oppressed groups. It is almost as if history is repeating itself. Members must become more familiar with, or relearn, why and how the organizations began, why their founders saw the need to establish their organizations, and

understand that it was for reasons far beyond the use of artifacts. This is a significant piece of their participation in their communities, their responsibility. It also provides a framework to make meaning of their experiences. Wenger (1998) describes a concept of rethinking learning to understand and support it as:

- For *individuals*, it means that learning is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. [NALFO members]
- For *communities*, it means that learning is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members. [NALFO chapters]
- For *organizations*, it means that learning is an issue of sustaining the interconnected communities of practice through which an organization knows what it knows and thus becomes effective and valuable as an organization. [NALFO council] (p. 7)

It is the researchers hope that today's members be able to cross organizational boundaries, increase communication and collaboration, and become more active participants, rather than just members of their organizations. The researcher anticipates an increase in members' ability to articulate their needs and advocate for their community and that universities become more open to recognizing and supporting their needs. Finally, it is also important that today's membership understand their role and responsibility in contributing to the overall health of the fraternal community and that they become transformational leaders to the membership of tomorrow.

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

To: Mistalene Calleroz White
SSV

From: Mark Roosa, Chair 
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 09/26/2012

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 09/26/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1209008250A001

Study Title: Leadership, Hermandad (Sister/Brotherhood), and Identity Development: Crossing Boundaries to T
Organizational Culture Among Latino Fraternal Organizations

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT LETTER

October 1, 2012

Dear Latino Greek member:

My name is Anna-Maria Heredia; I am an Academic Advisor with University College on campus. I am currently pursuing a Doctor of Education degree in Higher & Postsecondary Education under the direction of Dr. Mistalene Calleroz White and Dr. James Rund in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University (ASU). I am also a member of the Latino Greek community.

I am conducting an action research study to explore the identity development and organizational culture of the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO) at ASU using a Community of Practice (CoP) approach. The intent of the CoP will be to construct a sustainable camaraderie among the Latino fraternal organizations to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, thus transforming the current organizational culture.

The objective will be for participants to collaborate in a group project of their choice (other than a community service). The process that the participants undergo will be observed and documented.

Study Outline: 4-6 week project between October 11, 2012 and November 20, 2012

- Anonymous electronic survey (initial and post survey; code chosen by participant)
- Written personal history statement (2-3 pages)
- Two focus group meetings (1.5 hours each)
- Individual interview (30 minutes; scheduled with participant)
- Planning meetings/group activities (as determined by participants; observed by researcher)

I would greatly appreciate your voluntary participation in this research. Participants will have a *chance* to win up to \$110. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty or consequence. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts in your participation in this research.

If you would like to participate and/or have any questions, please contact me at am.heredia@asu.edu or 480.965.9103 by Wednesday, October 10th (include your open availability, as well as for fall break). All information will be kept confidential.

Sincerely,

Anna-Maria Heredia
Doctoral Candidate
Higher & Postsecondary Education
Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

October 15, 2012

Dear Participant:

My name is Anna-Maria Heredia; I am a graduate student under the direction of Drs. James Rund and Mistalene Calleroz White in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University (ASU). I am conducting an action research study to explore the identity development and organizational culture of the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO) at ASU using a Community of Practice (CoP) approach. The intent of the CoP will be to construct a sustainable camaraderie among the Latino fraternal organizations to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, thus transforming the current organizational culture.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve completing an electronic survey at the inception and conclusion of the study, writing a personal statement, focus groups, individual interviews, and a collective project. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participation at any time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

As a participant, you will be part of a team working toward building collaborative relationships between the Latino Greek-letter organizations at the university and constructing a model for effective student organization collaboration. There are minimal foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses during focus groups and individual interviews will remain confidential by the researcher and all names will be assigned a numeric code or pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. All data will be kept in a secure location. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for focus groups to the extent that other participants may discuss what was said; however, all participants will be highly encouraged to maintain confidentiality at all times. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations or publications, but your name and identity will not be used.

I would like to audiotape interviews/focus groups. You will not be recorded, unless you give permission. If you give permission to be taped, you have the right to ask for the recording to be stopped. The recordings will be used for transcription purposes and will be destroyed upon completion and successful dissertation defense on or before May 2013.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: am.heredia@asu.edu / 480.965.9103 or james.rund@asu.edu / misty@au.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional

Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at 480.965.6788.

By signing below you are agreeing to participate to in the research study.

Print

Signature

Date

By signing below, you are agreeing to be taped.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

INITIAL ELECTONIC SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thank you for your interest in my research. The purpose of this study will be to explore the identity development of a student organization (NALFO) by using a Community of Practice (CoP) approach. The intent of the CoP will be to construct a sustainable camaraderie among the Latino fraternal organizations to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, thus transforming the current organizational culture. The implementation of an intentional and purposeful CoP may result in determining a best practices model for supporting collaboration and leadership development of not only Latino fraternal organization members, but also other student organizations at the university.

In this initial survey you will be asked questions about your sorority/fraternity experience as well as demographic information. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

** After completing the survey you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$10 Gift Card. Participation in the drawing is voluntary. If you would like to enter the drawing, please provide your email address in the space provided at the end of the survey - so you may be contacted if you win. Your contact information will be stored separately from your survey responses.

If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, please contact Anna-Maria Heredia at 480.965.9103 or by email at am.heredia@asu.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and support. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the **Continue** button below.

For confidentiality, please choose a 4-letter/digit code using the following formula:

1. First letter of birth city/town
2. First letter of your first name
3. 2-digit birth date (e.g. 24, 30; please use a zero before single digits – 02, 04)

***This same code will be used for the post survey at the conclusion of the study.*

SORORITY/FRATERNITY EXPERIENCE

Have you ever visited the NALFO website – www.nalfo.org?

Yes No

What do you believe is the purpose of NALFO (on a national level)?

How does NALFO at ASU meet (or not) your perceived purpose of NALFO?

Within the last year, have you attended a NALFO meeting at ASU?

Yes No

If you have never attended a meeting, why not? (Select all that apply)

- Time conflict
- My voice isn't heard, so why bother?
- Leadership differences
- I am not the chapter representative
- Simply not interested
- Other

Have you ever attended a NALFO sponsored event (not a meeting)?

Yes No

If so, which NALFO events have you attended? (Select all that apply)?

- Greek Open House
- Thanksgiving Service
- Cesar Chavez Day of Service
- NALFOhood Night
- NALFO Banquet
- None
- Other

GREEK RELATIONS

How has your Greek Life experience enhanced your ability to:

	not at all	very little	somewhat	very much	extremely
Establish close friendships <i>within</i> your chapter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establish close friendships with <i>other</i> NALFO members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate for <u>business purposes</u> with members of <i>your</i> chapter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Communicate for business purposes with *other* NALFO members

Communicate at your leisure with members of *your* chapter

Communicate at your leisure with *other* NALFO members

Collaborate (programming) with NALFO sororities

Collaborate (programming) with NALFO fraternities

Collaborate (programming) with other Greek (non-NALFO) organizations

To your knowledge, has *your* chapter collaborated with *another* NALFO chapter in sponsoring an event in the past two (2) years? Please include event and semester(s)/year(s) sponsored if possible.

How do you most often interact with Greek members for event planning? (Select ALL that apply)

- In-person
- Email
- Text messaging
- Voice call
- Social Media (eg. Facebook, Twitter)
- Orgsync
- Other

Which method(s) of communication is/are most successful for completing tasks with Greek members? Why do you think so?

How would you describe NALFO's current relationship (organizational culture) as a collective at ASU? (in terms of communication, teamwork, etc.) *

What are NALFO's strengths in building community across chapters at ASU?

What would you consider to be the most challenging aspects for building community within NALFO at ASU?

Is there anything you'd like to add?

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

What is your age?

- 18-19
- 20-21
- 22-23
- 24 or older

How do you identify?

- Female
- Male
- Other

What best describes your ethnic group or nationality?

- Latino or Hispanic (please specify country of origin in next question)
- African American or Black
- Native American
- Asian American
- Caucasian
- Multiracial
- Other

If Latino or Hispanic, what is your country of origin?

What is your current academic standing? (at time of survey)

- Freshman (0-24 credits earned)

- Sophomore (25-55 credits earned)
- Junior (56-86 credits earned)
- Senior (87 or more credits earned)

What is your cumulative grade point average?

- Less than 2.5
- 2.51 to 2.99
- 3.0 to 3.49
- 3.5 to 4.0

What is your Greek organization membership?

- Sorority
- Fraternity

Are you now or were you previously a chapter officer?

Yes No

If you have held office, what motivated you to do so?

Thank you for completing this survey! Please share your email address to enter the drawing for the \$10 Gift Card.

**Your email address will be kept separate from your survey responses and will only be used to notify you if you win.

Email Address:

APPENDIX E

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Date of Interview: _____

Participant Initials: _____ Participant pseudonym: _____

1. How would you describe the relationship(s) between NALFO members/organizations? Positives and challenges.

Follow up – What do you think led to this? When?
2. How would you describe NALFO's identity? What it is and what it isn't.
- The understanding of who you are and what you believe in.
3. What strengths can NALFO continue and expand on to build community?
4. What would you say are the main topics/issues not confronted or debated that contribute to the current organizational culture?
5. Can you provide examples of any particular events/activities/programs that could facilitate interpersonal and inter-group relationships?
6. Would you like to include any additional comments/experiences?

APPENDIX F

POST ELECTRONIC SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thank you for your participation in my research. The purpose of this study was to explore the identity development of a student organization (NALFO) by using a Community of Practice (CoP) approach. The intent of the CoP was to construct a sustainable camaraderie among the Latino fraternal organizations to influence leadership development, work toward a common vision, and a cohesive and systematic approach to collaboration, thus transforming the current organizational culture.

In this post survey you will be asked questions about your experience throughout this study. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

** After completing the survey you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$10 Gift Card. Participation in the drawing is voluntary. If you would like to enter the drawing, please provide your email address in the space provided at the end of the survey - so you may be contacted if you win. Your contact information will be stored separately from your survey responses.

If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, please contact Anna-Maria Heredia at 480.965.9103 or by email at am.heredia@asu.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and support. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the **Continue** button below.

For confidentiality, please choose a 4-letter/digit code using the following formula:

1. First letter of birth city/town
2. First letter of your first name
3. 2-digit birth date (e.g. 24, 30; please use a zero before single digits – 02, 04)

***This is the same code you used for the initial survey.*

After your participation in this study, how likely are you to attend NALFO meetings to keep up with events and information?

- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Extremely

After your participation in this study, how likely are you to encourage your chapter members to attend NALFO meetings and events?

- Not at all
- Very little

- Somewhat
- Very much
- Extremely

How has your experience in this study enhanced your ability to:

	Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	Very much	Extremely
Converse with another NALFO member that you may not have previously	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establish friendships with <i>other</i> NALFO members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase communication for business purposes with <i>other</i> NALFO members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase leisure communication with <i>other</i> NALFO members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be more open to collaboration with <i>other</i> NALFO organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How would you rate the communication between participants during this study?

- Poor
- Marginal
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

At what point during the study did you interact most (leisure conversation) with other NALFO members? Why do you think so?

How could communication between participants have been improved?

How do you think the Community of Practice (group working together toward a common goal) approach can benefit NALFO's relationship (organizational culture)?

What are some ways NALFO organizations & members can encourage, influence, and increase collaboration between each other?

After your participation in this study, what are you most looking forward to in working with NALFO?

What aspect of your participation in this study did you enjoy the most? Why?

What aspect of your participation in this study did you enjoy the least? Why?

Thank you for completing this survey! Please share your email address to enter the drawing for the \$10 Gift Card.

***Your email address will be kept separate from your survey responses and will only be used to notify you if you win.*

APPENDIX G

NALFO SPIRIT POINTS DOCUMENT



NALFO Spirit Points

Purpose

The purpose of the NALFO Spirit Points is to encourage and reward the involvement of organizations within the council as well as the efforts put forth by them to support one another, whether by programming quality events, collaborating with each other to achieve a quality event and/or supporting another organizations event by the amount of participants/attendees from that organization. The main focus is to show that organizations are being held accountable for their participation in the council, however only being recognized for positive efforts and not for negative or no support. Highlighting positive efforts made by organizations while also creating opportunities to better develop support of all chapters to one another.

Events

The point systems will vary between collaborations, single events and the NALFO Week. Collaborations consist of a programmed event between one or more NALFO organizations, and NALFO hosted events will solely be decided by organizations participation.

Point Systems

NALFO Week:

The NALFO Week point scoring will be as follows:

Co-Sponsored Events: between organizations will be on a 5 point scale for hosting organizations (1-5, 1= minimal effort put in creating event; 2= some effort was put into event; 3 effort was put forth toward event and hosting chapter's attendance was satisfactory; 4= successful event was planned and participation was satisfactory from hosting organization; 5= successful event was programmed as well as exceptional participation from hosting organization(s)).

For chapters that did not host the event, scoring will be on a 3 point scale based on participation. (1-3, 1= minimal participation (at least one member in attendance); 2= at least half of the chapter in attendance; 3= the majority of the chapter is in attendance.)

NALFO hosted events: will be based purely on participation/attendance of organizations on a 3 point scale (1-3, 1=minimal participation (at least one member attended event); 2= At least half of the organizations participated/attended event; 3= the majority of the organization's participated/attended the event)

Collaborative Events

Collaborative events: shall be defined as a programmed event between 2 or more NALFO organizations **not** during the *NALFO Week*. The point scoring shall be the same as from "Co-Sponsored Events". The only difference shall be that each "hosting chapter" will receive one (1) bonus point for each organization they collaborate with. Each "Hosting Chapter" shall receive two (2) bonus points per NALFO chapter involved in the collaboration.

Clave Events

Single Events: shall be hosted and programmed by the "Hosting Chapter". Each organization will be allowed to select two (2) "**Clave**" events per semester on which they would like to earn extra points toward the NALFO Spirit Points. For each "**Clave**" event, the hosting chapter shall come up with a list of four (4) chapter goals that they have for the event. These must be tangible goals that can be measured on a pass/fail scale. (I.e. specific attendance goal, fundraising goal, Event started/stopped on time, # of other greek orgs in attendance/# of non greek attendance, etc...) The point scoring for each "**Clave**" event shall be on a 3 point scale (1-3; 1=Event was hosted with minimal attendance of hosting chapter; 2= event was hosted with the majority of attendance of hosting chapter; 3= majority attendance for the event was met by the hosting chapter **and** the hosting chapter achieved **3 out of the 4** self assigned goals.) One (1) bonus point may also be earned if the organization achieves all 4 goals.

These events shall not be mandatory toward the rest of the council, however, at each "**Clave**" event, NALFO chapters may receive extra points based of the scoring system of the **NALFO Hosted Events** scale.

Alumni Bonus

For any and all scored events, there shall be an alumni bonus. The support of our alumni is one of the most important factors in the strength and stability of our chapters, thus

having them attend our events should be just as important. For this reason there shall be a bonus for having our chapter alumni at events. The point breakdown will be as follows. One (1) bonus point shall be awarded per “*Clave*” or collaborative event where an alumnus is present and two (2) points for each NALFO Week Event where an alumnus is present.

Scoring of events

NALFO Executive Board

The NALFO executive board shall be the governing and judging body of the scoring events and each point system. For NALFO Week, the scoring of **Co-Sponsored Events** shall be done by the NALFO executive board during each Executive board meeting. “*Clave*” events shall also be scored by the executive board. Because of this, there must then be at least 2 executive board members in attendance for each designated “*Clave*” event. It is ok for executive board members to count as general population, chapter population and executive NALFO member at their own chapter’s event. This should encourage other NALFO executive members to attend so as to help score the event fairly. In the event that there are no NALFO executive board members at the “*Clave*” event, the hosting chapter shall automatically receive a perfect score of three (3) for that event. This will serve as a “check” to hold executive board members accountable to their council and its events.

Awards

Single/Series Event(s)

As the governing body of the council and this point system, the NALFO executive board shall have the ability to select **ANY or a series** of single, collaborative or NALFO hosted events for scoring. This decision can be made at any point the executive board would like to do so, and the chapters shall only be informed of these possible awards prior to the events only if the executive board elects to do so.

The composite score of the single (or series) of events shall provide one or multiple winners eligible for an award to be decided upon by the executive board. These awards shall be within the bounds of the council, Fraternity and Sorority Life and Arizona State University. Examples of single/series event awards can be that NALFO will purchase flyers for the winning chapter(s) for an upcoming event that they have planned. NALFO Week shall always be one of the “series” of events to be scored by the Executive Board and which a winner will receive an award.

Semester

A running total of all the scoring shall be kept in place for the council each semester. At the end of each semester, the chapter with the highest score shall receive a larger award worthy of the winning chapter who has showed the most “NALFO Spirit”. The winning chapter “NALFO Spirit” award shall be new chapter recruitment shirts bought by the NALFO Council. Based on the cost and/or need of new recruitment shirts, the NALFO Executive Board may elect to give a different award agreed upon between them and the winning chapter. This “alternate” award must also be within the reasonable bounds of the council, Fraternity and Sorority Life and Arizona State University.

Tie-Breakers

In the event of any tie within scoring, the executive board of NALFO may put the decision to a tie-breaker. The tie-breaker shall consist of a vote between the remaining organizations who are not involved in the tie. The winner shall be determined by whoever has the “simple majority” vote. If a majority is not reached or there is a need for a second tie-breaker, the **Activities Chair** shall have the final vote on who has won the tie-breaker. If there is no current Activities Chair, the final vote shall be made by the NALFO Chair.