On Greek Row: Diversity, Socially Responsible Leadership and Fraternity and Sorority Membership

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ON GREEK ROW: DIVERSITY, SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND FRATERNITY AND SORORITY MEMBERSHIP

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This study uses the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education to examine the relationship between diversity experiences and socially responsible leadership among college fraternity and sorority members. Results suggest that college diversity experiences are positively associated with socially responsible leadership for these student groups.

Issues of cultural insensitivity of students who participate in college fraternities and sororities continue to be a pervasive issue for the higher education community. There have been numerous incidents of fraternity and sorority members wearing attire based on racial stereotypes, vandalism of culturally diverse facilities and structures, and other accounts of the use of racial slurs and taunts toward fellow students from diverse backgrounds (Otani & Diamond, 2015. In 2015, a University of Maryland student was investigated for sending emails filled with racist slurs about people of Middle Eastern and Asian descent (Kingkade, 2015). The University of Missouri suspended a fraternity chapter in 2016 amid reports of sexist and racist behaviors by its members (Keller, 2016). Recent displays on cultural insensitivity by members of these student organizations persist on college campuses.

Scholarship on fraternity and sorority participation has shown adverse links between participation in these collegiate experiences and students' levels of intercultural competence (Pascarella, Edison, Whitt, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996). The recent incidents of racism by members of these organizations and the empirical scholarship have produced noteworthy quandaries for higher education leadership. Specifically, questions about how to manage these student organizations while promoting positive campus environments for all students is a critical objective for administrators at colleges and universities. Additionally, there exists uncertainty in the higher education community

regarding what experiences influence college outcomes among these students, such as cultural competence or proclivities toward social change among college students. Given the recent occurrences of racial and cultural insensitivity, higher education professionals might question what are the experiences that significantly impact attitudes and behaviors toward social justice among members of fraternities and sororities?

Research has increasingly attended to contemporary facets of student leadership, such as leadership framed through the Social Change Model, i.e. socially responsible leadership (Kezar, Alcuna Avilez, Drivalas, & Wheaton, 2017; HERI, 1996). Socially responsible leadership (SRLS) considers leadership with attention to equity, social change, civic responsibility and process rather than simply position. Further, socially responsible leadership can be a transformative experience and developed in college students (Dugan, 2008, 2015; Dugan & Komives, 2010).

There continues to be uncertainty about for whom are these benefits salient. The present examination is associated with a larger study that explores the impact of diversity experiences on socially responsible leadership among college students. Recent research has found that diversity experiences are positively linked to socially responsible leadership among college students (Parker & Pascarella, 2013). That research focused on the general student body. The present study centers on specific groups of students and examines whether the benefits of diversity experiences on students' leadership

skills extended to particular student groups on campus. The aim of the present study was to focus on the unique experiences of students who participate in fraternity and sorority organizations. The purpose of this examination was to explore the relationship between membership in these organizations, the diversity experiences they encounter and leadership outcomes. There are very few longitudinal studies that have attended to this issue, thus, this study is significant to higher education because of its longitudinal design.

Review of Literature

Threads of prior research have examined the impact of college experiences, such as participation in a fraternity or sorority, on various educational college outcomes, such as cognitive skills. Scholars have contended that participation in a fraternity as sorority may be positively linked to higher gains in student learning and retention (Bowman & Holmes, 2017; Pike, 2003). However, there exists mixed evidence regarding the benefits of fraternity and sorority membership on cognitive development as other research as shown potential negative effects of these experiences of cognitive related outcomes. Some research has demonstrated a negative relationship between affiliation with a fraternity or sorority and cognitive gains (Pascarella et al., 1996). Additionally, other studies have found little or no statistically significant associations between membership in a fraternity or sorority and cognitive college outcomes, such as critical thinking skills (Hevel, Martin, Weeden, & Pascarella, 2015).

Additional research studies have examined the association between fraternity and sorority membership on non-cognitive outcomes. Scholars have demonstrated a positive link between these experiences and social involvement and campus engagement (Pike 2000; Pike, 2003). Fraternity and sorority membership has also been associated with increased civic

related outcomes, such as community service or volunteerism (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002).

Prior research studies on students who join the fraternity/sorority community have also focused on binge drinking and risky behaviors. Researchers have revealed that students who join fraternities or sororities consume alcohol more often and in larger quantities when compared to their peers who are not members of these organizations (Barry, 2007; Borsari, Hustad, & Capone, 2009; Pace & McGrath, 2002; Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport, 1996; Ragsdale, Porter, Matthews, White, Gore-Felton, & McGarvey, 2012). Yet, the research that has investigated the impact of fraternity and sorority participation on educational and college outcomes is largely inconsistent comprising mixed evidence regarding the benefits of these college experiences.

Diversity, Leadership, and Fraternities/Sororities

The scholarship focusing on the matter of diversity, leadership and membership in a fraternity or sorority is complex. The prior literature on diversity is plentiful as well as student leadership. There remains a dearth of scholarship that has examined the interactional effects of diversity and leadership, particularly for members of fraternities and sororities.

Diversity. Prior literature has generally demonstrated that encounters with diversity are generally salient experiences for college students. Scholars have asserted that diversity experiences are positive indicators for a host of educational and college outcomes, such as critical thinking skills, intellectual growth and moral development (Astin, 1993; Loes, Pascarella, & Umbach, 2012; Parker & Pascarella, 2013). Thus, diversity experiences are important for the all-encompassing group of college students.

Examining diversity in fraternity and sorority contexts is significant for higher education as there is a dearth of research that has investigated

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this topic, particularly with longitudinal research designs. Of the prior research, the evidence is mixed and not conclusive about the effects of fraternity and sorority membership on diversity outcomes, such as intercultural competence. For instance, prior studies have shown there might exist a negative relationship between the affiliations in a fraternity or sorority and intercultural competence while other studies have revealed little or no significant relationship (Martin, Hevel, Asel, & Pascarella, 2011; Pascarella et al., 1996). Worthen (2014) found that being a member of the Greek systems illuminated a negative association with attitudes toward the LGBT community. In a longitudinal study, Martin, Parker, Pascarella, & Blechschmidt (2015) did not report a significant link between membership in these organizations and intercultural competence. These studies represent prior research that has shows the negative effects of membership in these organizations when considering diversity.

Leadership. Scholars have also examined the matter of student leadership development and growth. Prior research has centered on how college attendance has affected leadership development among students (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 2001; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For example, Cress et al. (2001) posited effectual interactions with faculty and peers promoted leadership development in college students. Other scholarship has focused on the development of leadership among students by means of curriculum and formal classroom experiences (Brungardt, 1997). There is also a body of research that has explored leadership development and growth that occur outside of the class, i.e. nonclassroom experiences such as involvement with extracurricular activities. For instance, Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella (2012) demonstrated that participation in a fraternity or sorority in college positively influences socially responsible leadership.

Diversity, leadership, and fraternities/sororities.

Scholars have increasingly focused on student leadership development- through contemporary lenses that account for equity and social justice. The prior overarching body of literature on leadership growth and development has largely highlighted positional or organizational leadership, but this type of leadership is noticeably different than student leadership. Within this larger context and particularly in higher education, scholars have focused on the distinctness of student leadership. Student leadership is centered on interpersonal factors; such as values, beliefs and attitudes (Astin & Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996). Researchers have asserted that student leadership involves social responsibility (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007). Emerging research has investigated the association between college experiences that might influence socially responsible leadership. Contemporary frames of student leadership, such as socially responsible leadership, consider process (rather than position) and equity minded student leadership (Kezar et al., 2017; HERI, 1996). Researchers are increasingly exploring the links between socially responsible leadership and collegiate experiences. For example, Parker and Pascarella (2013) demonstrated that diversity experiences are positively associated with socially responsible leadership in students.

Regarding members of fraternities and sororities, Dugan (2008) found positive associations of sorority membership on SRLS. Accounting for selection bias, other studies have shown positive relationships between fraternity and sorority affiliation after the first year (Martin et al., 2012) but inconsistent or non-significant relationships between membership and SRLS at the end of the college going experience (Hevel, Martin, & Pascarella, 2014). Regarding the various types of college fraternal organizations (e.g. Interfraternity Council [IFC]), Johnson, Johnson, & Dugan (2015) found modest differences between student members when considering socially responsible leadership. Yet, there is a dearth of literature that has examined

the antecedents or predictors that promote socially responsible leadership development.

Conceptual Perspectives and the Social Change Model

Scholars have maintained the importance of effective leadership, such as leaders who are change agents and effectual behaviors, or processes that promote collaborative leadership (HERI, 1996). However, scholars have also contended that an attention to values ought to be at the center of effectual leadership. One of the tenets of the social change model of leadership (HERI, 1996) is the assumption that leadership is value-based. Fundamentally, the model supports the notion that "approaches leadership as a purposeful, collaborative, and values based process that results in positive social change" (p. 1). The model underscores themes such as citizenship, social justice and equity, with an emphasis on collaboration and other values. Further, the goals of the model focus on greater attention to the development of leadership competence and self-knowledge (HERI, 1996).

Several theories and conceptual frameworks guide the present study. Socially responsible leadership, as framed through the *social change model of leadership* (HERI, 1996), is "a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change" (Komives & Wagner, 2009, p. xii). This theoretical lens views leadership that is shifting away from traditional views of leadership, such as management, to perspectives of leadership centered on social justice (Dugan, 2015; Komives & Dugan, 2010). The present study is primarily centered on the notion of student leadership through cognitive inclination and disposition toward social change.

Student leadership development and growth can be viewed through the frame of social change, and particularly the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI, 1996) Social Change Model. The social change model informs our understanding of leadership development that specifically pertains to educational contexts and students (HERI, 1996). The goals of the model are leadership competence (e.g. the capacity of individuals to mobilize themselves, and others, to serve and work collaboratively) and self-knowledge (HERI, 1996; Parker & Pascarella, 2013). The social change model links leadership with several values: commitment, citizenship, common purpose, controversy with civility, congruence and collaboration (Dugan, 2006; Dugan, 2015; HERI, 1996). The conceptual perspectives of leadership and social change guide this research study's attention to leadership growth that is focused on college students and, particularly, the notion of preparing students to be citizens in a global and diverse world.

Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) asserted that students encounter diversity through several means while in college. They have diversity experiences that are linked with the structural diversity of the institution. Students have diverse experiences associated with their interactions with peers. Students also have experiences of diversity that relate to formal classroom activities or the curriculum. These perspectives guided the identification and inclusion of the appropriate variables for the present study.

This study also employs the Astin (1993) input-environment-outcome (I-E-O) model. This is a conceptual framework informs our understanding of the relationship between precollege variables, collegiate experiences and college outcomes. In this study, the inputs represent precollege characteristics and influences, such as race, gender and academic ability. The environment is associated with the institutional experiences or characteristics that may have an effect on students, such as having a liberal arts education or participating in volunteer programs. Last, the outcome is the post-college knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that students have when they leave college. This study utilizes the I-E-O model to identify and analyze the relationship between diversity experiences, fraternal organizational membership and socially

responsibly leadership. Additionally, the I-E-O framework allowed the researchers to consider a host of potential covariates and control variables for inclusion in the research design, such as parental education, co-curricular activities and work experiences.

Although scholars have largely posited that college students benefit from diversity experiences, the question still remains *for whom*? This study is a component of a larger project that focuses the impact of diversity experiences on socially responsible leadership among college students. The present study utilizes longitudinal multi-institutional data to examine the diversity experiences of a particular student group, fraternity and sorority members. The purpose of this study is to supplement the recent research that has focused on link between diversity experiences and socially responsible leadership by investigating the effects of these experiences on leadership for members of fraternity and sororities. The research question that guides this study is: *are diversity experiences of students who participate in fraternities and sororities positively associated with socially responsible leadership during college?*

Methods

The present study utilized data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS). WNS is a multi-institutional longitudinal study with an aim to investigate the factors that influence liberal arts education outcomes (Center of Inquiry WNS, 2018). The longitudinal design of the WNS allowed the researchers employ a pretest-posttest research design. This included statistical controls for potential selection issues and confounding variables that may influence the dependent variable.

The student sample comprised individuals from 46 liberal arts colleges, regional and research universities (Center of Inquiry WNS, 2018). The institutions represented colleges and universities from varying geographic areas of the United States. This institutional sample included seven research universities, nine regional universities, and 30 liberal arts colleges Additionally, the institutions had varying institutional characteristics, such as size, control, selectivity and academic programs. WNS was funded by the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College. WNS centered on the impact of liberal arts experiences and liberal arts colleges were purposefully over-sampled. Participants in the study were first year full time students.

The sample included students who were members of a fraternity or sorority during their college career. Data was obtained, from the larger WNS dataset, based on students' answer to a single survey item: is respondent a member of a social fraternity or sorority? The final sample included 959 students after listwise deletion and considering participants who met the criteria for the study, i.e. a member of a fraternity or sorority.

The overall sample included three waves (or cohorts) of student participants. There were cohorts in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Participants were assessed three times during their college career. First, students were sampled at the beginning of their first year. Next, students took assessments at the end of their first year of college. The final assessment point was at the end of students' fourth year of college. Each of the three assessment points were approximately 90 minutes. Students who included in the 2006 cohort were provided with a $50 stipend. The other two cohorts did not receive a monetary stipend. Because of this distinction, the analysis included dummy variables to represent the participants in each cohort to account for any potential differences between the cohorts. Participants indicated their fraternity or sorority membership in the second and final assessments.

Variables

Dependent variables. The researchers utilized the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS)

(Dugan, 2006; Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2008; Tyree, 1998) to assess the dependent variable. This instrument measured student leadership development, within the context of the Social Change Model. The total scale is comprised of 68 items (8 subscales) that represented the SRLS leadership elements (Tyree, 1998), and had an internal consistency reliability of .85. Further researchers have maintained the validity of the SRLS measurement (see Dugan, 2015; Dugan & Komives, 2010).

The components (subscales) of the scale were (Dugan, 2006; Dugan et al., 2008; Tyree, 1998): *consciousness of self* (being aware of one's own values, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs that motivate one to take action, 9 items, α =0.82), *congruence* (thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty towards others, 7 items, α =0.86), *commitment* (intensity and duration in relation to a person, idea, or activity, 6 items, α =0.85), *collaboration* (working with others in a common effort, 8 items, α =0.82), *common purpose* (working with others within a shared set of aims and values, 9 items, α =0.85), *controversy with civility* (recognizing two fundamental realities of any group effort, 11 items, α =0.78), *citizenship*

(believing in a process whereby a person or group is responsibly connected to the environment and the community. Citizenship signifies more than membership; it implies active engagement in an effort to serve the community, 8 items, α =0.90), and *change* (adapting to continuously evolving environments and situations, while maintaining the primary functions of the group, 10 items, α =0.84).

Independent variables. The independent variables of interest represented various diversity experiences that college students might encounter in college. The author's utilized this scale to conceptualize this study through Gurin et al.'s (2002) theoretical perspectives. The variables represented experiences such as attending a lecture or debate on a current political or social issue or participating in diversity related workshops. Refer to Table 1 for a description of the diversity experiences items.

Control variables. A benefit of the Wabash National Study is the capacity to include a host of control variables to isolate any potential confounding influences. Control variables represented precollege and background characteristics, such as race, gender and high school academic ability. The researchers also

Table 1
Description of Diversity Experiences

Items of Diversity Experiences
This is a 6-item scale, which represents the extent to which the respondent had meaningful discussions with diverse peers and diversity related experiences. It has an alpha reliability of 0.692.

How often the respondent attended a debate or lecture on a current political/social issue during this academic year

How often the respondent had serious discussions with staff whose political, social, or religious opinions were different from own

Extent to which the respondent's institution emphasizes encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds

During current school year, how often has the respondent had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than respondent's own

During current school year, how often have the respondent had serious conversations with students who are very different from respondent in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values

How often the respondent participated in a racial or cultural awareness workshop during this academic year

included variables that represented institutional characteristics or collegiate experiences, such as working in college or major. Refer to Table 2 for a list of control variables and descriptive statistics.

Analysis

We employed regression analysis, ordinary least squares (OLS), for the analyses. Because our data was based on multiple random samples from over 40 participating institutions, we had to adjust for the nesting or clustering effect in our data (i.e., the tendency for students from each institution to behave more similarly to each other than they did to students at other institutions). This nesting or clustering effect leads to downwardly-biased standard errors and increases the probability of at Type-I error

Table 2

Description of Control Variables. SRLS - Seven "Critical Elements" of Leadership Development (Tyree et al., 1998). (Internal Consistency Reliability of .843)

Variable Name	Operational Definition	M	SD
Gender	1 = Male, 0 = Female	0.48	0.5
Black	1 = Black, 0 = non-Black	0.06	0.24
Asian	1 = Asian, 0 = non-Asian	0.05	0.22
Hispanic	1 = Hispanic, 0 = non-Hispanic	0.04	0.2
White	1 = White, 0 = non-White	0.84	0.36
Parent's Education	1 = bachelors degree or greater, 0 = less than a bachelors degree	0.48	0.5
Pre-College Academic Ability	ACT Score, SAT Equivalent. (Provided by each institution)	25.81	3.96
Pre-College/High School Involvement	How often the respondent participated in each of the activities in high school including: studying with friends, socializing with friends, participating in community service etc. 1 = Very often, 5 = Never	3.75	0.53
HS Political Views	Political views (1=far left-5=far right)	2.92	0.85
Attended a Liberal Arts College	1 = Attended a Liberal Arts College, 0 = Did not attend a Liberal Arts College	0.61	0.49
Co-Curricular Involvement	Number (#) of hours per week the respondent spends participating in co-curricular activities	3.81	1.76
College Political Views	Political Views (1=far left 5=far right)	2.9	0.83
Major (Humanities etc.)	1 = Majored in Humanities and/or Social Science 0 = Did not major in Humanities and/or Social Sciences	0.49	0.5
Major (STEM)	1 = Majored in STEM field 0 = Did not major in STEM field	0.31	0.47
Volunteerism	Importance of personally volunteering in the community (1=essential, 4=not important	2.98	0.86
Work	1 = worked on campus, 0=did not work	0.77	0.42
Diversity Experiences	9 item diversity experiences scale, 1= never 5=very often	0.02	0.63
SRLS (Pretest)	Scale of Leadership Development, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree	3.98	0.63
SRLS (Posttest)	Scale of Leadership Development, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree	4.19	0.43

(Raudenbush & Bryk, 2001). To correct for this, we employed the SVY option in the STATA statistical package, which adjusts standard errors for the nesting effect. Additionally, as a supplemental analysis, we employed a multilevel modeling analysis that subsequently produced similar results as the OLS regression. Factor analyses from the original and prior WNS studies (see Parker & Pascarella, 2013) demonstrate that the factors and loadings for the instruments are essentially similar, and thus the included scales are appropriate for this sample.

The analysis was carried out in two steps. In the first step we sought to estimate the association of diversity experiences on four-year growth in socially responsible leadership. In this first step we estimated two models. In the first model we regressed end-of-fourth-year socially responsible leadership on the diversity experiences variable and covariates that included the following variables: pre-college socially responsible leadership, standardized precollege academic ability, pre-college political views, race, gender, parental education, high school involvement, whether or not one was attending a liberal arts college, dummy variables representing a person's cohort year in the study, and a dummy variable indicating if the institution they attended had been in multiple cohorts in the study. In the second model we added a battery of college experience variables to the model 1 equation. These included: academic major field of study, co-curricular involvement, work responsibilities, volunteer involvement, and college political orientation.

In the second step of the analysis we sought to determine the presence of conditional effects. Specifically, was the link between diversity experiences and end-of-fourth-year socially responsible leadership moderated by gender, race, or per-college level of socially responsible leadership? To accomplish this we added a set of cross-product terms to the model 2 equation specified above. These cross-product terms multiplied the diversity experiences variable by race, gender, and pre-college socially responsible leadership level. Individually significant cross-product terms were only interpreted substantively if the entire set of cross-product terms was associated with a statistically significant increase in explained variance. Prior to our analysis, we standardized all continuous variables, including the diversity experiences and end-of-fourth-year socially responsible leadership. Thus, the coefficients we report in our regression results can be interpreted as effect sizes.

Results

The results for the general effects estimates of models 1 and 2 are summarized in Table 3. When all covariates except the other college experience variables were taken into account (model 1), a one standard deviation increase in engagement in diversity experiences was associated with a statistically significant ($p < .001$) increase of .199 of a standard deviation in end-of-fourth-year socially responsible leadership. The addition of other college experiences to the model reduced that estimate to an increase of .161 of a standard deviation in fourth-year socially responsible leadership — which was still significant at $p < .001$.

In the test for the presence of conditional effects the addition of the set of cross-product terms failed to be associated with a statistically reliable increase in explained variance. Consequently, we concluded that the general effects results shown in Table 2 held irrespective of gender, race, or pre-college level of socially responsible leadership. The absence of a significant conditional effect by gender suggests that engaging in diversity experiences during college may have the same enabling influence on growth in socially responsible leadership for both fraternity and sorority members.

Limitations

There are limitations associated with the

Table 3

Estimated Effects of Diversity Experiences on SRLS for Members of Fraternities or Sororities

Variables	Model I (n=959)	Model II (n=959)
Diversity Experiences	0.199***	0.161***
	(0.036)	(0.036)
Socially Responsible Leadership (Pretest)	0.315***	0.303***
	(0.047)	(0.044)
Pre-College Academic Ability	-0.005	-0.00
	(0.029)	(0.027)
Pre-College/High School Involvement	0.069**	0.031
	(0.023)	(0.022)
Pre-College Political Views	-0.054	-0.038
	(0.029)	(0.039)
Attended a Liberal Arts College	-0.141	-0.102
	(0.074)	(0.059)
Male	-0.233**	-0.110
	(0.068)	(0.073)
Black	-0.131	-0.166
	(0.147)	(0.139)
Asian	-0.032	-0.078
	(0.118)	(0.120)
Hispanic	0.086	0.063
	(0.111)	(0.099)
Parent's Education	-0.249***	-0.239***
	(0.062)	(0.065)
College Political Views		-0.054
		(0.041)
Co-Curricular Involvement		0.029
		(0.020)
Major (STEM)		-0.199
		(0.088)
Major (Humanities/Social Sciences)		-0.136
		(0.071)
Volunteerism		0.210***
		(0.025)
Work		-0.055
		(0.065)
2007 Cohort	-0.044	-0.060
	(0.066)	(0.056)
2008 Cohort	0.054	0.020
	(0.084)	(0.078)
Multiple Cohorts	0.042	0.122
	(0.081)	(0.089)
Constant	0.311**	0.355***
	(0.084)	(0.087)
R-squared	0.209	0.253

Standard errors in parentheses
*** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$

present study. The aim of the WNS was to investigate college experiences on liberal arts outcomes. As such, liberal arts colleges were oversampled. Thus, the sample is not representative of all institutions of higher education in the United States and the findings may not be generalizable to the population. Likewise, this study did not explore special interest, affinity or ethnic oriented fraternal organizations, such as the Black Greek Lettered Organizations (BGLOs), and thus is limited in its generalizability to the population of students who participate in these collegiate experiences. Additionally, this study focused solely on fraternity and sorority members as previous research has explored comparisons between non-members and members. The purpose of this study was to examine the particular student community.

The included cohorts are for 2006-2008 with participants' final years occurring from 2010-2012. One might argue that the data is dated. Contemporary multi-institutional longitudinal studies, like WNS, are needed to further investigate diversity and SRLS. The study included a 6-item scale that represented various diversity experiences, such as attending a diversity related workshop, lecture or debate. The researchers recognize that students encounter many different types of diversity experiences in college. There may be other diversity experiences that may be salient regarding socially responsible leadership, such as interactional diversity in the classroom.

Discussion

The present study supplements an expanding literature base that has examined the impact of diversity experiences on college student outcomes. Bowman (2010) asserted that "more research is needed not about whether racial diversity has an impact but about how, for whom, and under what conditions" (p. 23). The aim of this study was to supplement the research on the impact of diversity experiences

on socially responsibly leadership for particular student groups, namely students who participate in fraternities and sororities. Prior literature has shown the benefits of diversity on educational outcomes (Astin, 1993; Loes et al., 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The results of this study help inform our understanding of who benefits from diversity experiences. The findings indicate that diversity experiences matter for fraternity and sorority members. That is, there is a positive relationship between diversity experiences and socially responsible leadership among the members in the study.

The findings of this study suggest that students who join fraternities and sororities benefit for diversity experiences. This finding supports copius prior research that has demonstrated the positive link between diversity experiences and college outcomes, such as cognitive, civic and psychosocial outcomes (Bowman, 2010/2011; Denson & Chang, 2009; Parker & Trolian, 2015; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 2005; Umbach & Kuh, 2006). Specifically, students benefit from these experiences when considering student leadership and how they approach leadership through a social change perspective.

Unlike some prior research that has shown mixed results pertaining to membership in a fraternity or sorority and socially responsible leadership after four years, this study provides additional evidence of the positive association when considering specific experiences, e.g. diversity experiences (Martin et al., 2012). Further, Parker and Pascarella (2013) demonstrated a positive association between diversity experiences of the general student body and socially responsible leadership. The findings of this study provide supplementary support of their conclusions and also shows that the benefit of those diversity experiences extends to students who participate in fraternities and sororities. The findings are also important for fraternities and sororities considering the current climate for diversity. As student leaders, the SRLS framework serves as a guide for members

of fraternities and sororities to be civically and culturally minded citizens.

Considerations and Implications for Practice

There are implications associated with the findings of this study. The findings of this study illuminate the saliency of diversity experiences on socially responsible leadership for students in fraternities and sororities. Linking these students to those experiences is important for higher education and student affairs professionals. Some of the experiences operationalized in the study are programmatic or structural, such as the frequency in which students attend a debate or lecture on a political or social issue, while other experiences focus on social interactions, such as how often students have serious conversations with peers about religious, political opinions or values.

Higher education and student affairs professionals who work with student leaders should create programs that promote these experiences while also cultivating spaces that foster critical dialogues between students. For instance, contemporary research has demonstrated the benefits of particular types of student-faculty interactions (e.g. out of class discussions about social issues) on college outcomes, such as attitudes about diversity (Parker & Trolian, 2017). Fraternity and sorority professionals may develop nonclassroom programs which integrate faculty in a meaningful way, such as fireside chats or town hall meetings.

It is worth noting that the fraternity/sorority community at colleges and universities in the U.S. are mostly based on selective membership. A limitation of this study is that the diversity experiences, as operationalized in the study, did not account for the influence of having interactions specifically with diverse peers. Higher education professionals ought to consider how to better advise and supervise social organizations that have selective membership processes. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between students who

participate in fraternities and sororities and their interactions with diverse peers. These studies should also consider the interactions with diverse peers who are also affiliated with the fraternity/sorority community as well as those who are not affiliated with any organization.

The present study demonstrates that interactions with diverse peers may prompt higher levels of leadership that is rooted in social change. Encouraging student members who participate in fraternities and sororities to maximize their opportunities to interact with diverse peers should be a priority for higher education professionals. Ostensibly, a simply approach to this undertaking is to facilitate productive social experiences and programs that focus on salient interactions between students. Perhaps, another initiative is to create constructive programs that underscore the value of interactions with diverse peers. Higher education should consider programs that go beyond the traditional formulaic and unoriginal activities that are prevalent in student affairs, such as mandated trainings and workshops. For example, one example might be book discussions. Facilitating critical dialogues centered on book readings may encourage effectual diversity interactions, in social settings, that positively affect students.

Conclusion

Research that examines diversity and socially responsible leadership is vital for the higher education community. How are we preparing students who participate in this particular organizations to be effectual global citizens is significant for the field. The Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors has a strategic framework that illuminates critical areas of research for higher education (AFA, 2018). This current student attends to several of those themes including: longitudinal analysis, preparing fraternity/sorority for the post-graduate world and leadership development

focused on long standing issues. The results of the present study supplements our understanding of what collegiate experiences might positively impact end of college outcomes, such as socially responsible leadership, that promote growth in students.

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