

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE DRINKING
PATTERNS OF NEGRO MALE FRATERNITY
AND NON-FRATERNITY COLLEGE
STUDENTS

By

CURLEW O'SULLIVAN THOMAS

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and Normal College

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Thesis Approved:

Benny McKinney

Thesis Adviser

Robert J. Feltus

Benjamin L. Lorman

D. Durham

Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

The use of alcoholic beverages is a prominent feature of American life, as approximately two out of three adults in the United States drink.¹ All 50 states permit the use and sale of alcoholic beverages within certain limits. Drinking, like all other forms of behavior, is learned. An individual in the processes of growth and development learns whether he should drink or not drink as well as when, how much and how often he should drink. One does not invent the idea of drinking, but learns it from friends and parents who provide the learning structure for the initiation of this behavior. All available research literature on alcoholic beverages, especially the New York and Wisconsin studies, verifies the fact that one's first exposure to alcohol occurs most often in the home and in the presence of parents and relatives.²

¹Rex MacDaniel, "Reference Group Influence on Drinking Behavior of High School Students," (unpublished Masters Thesis, State College, Mississippi, 1965), p. 1.

²George L. Maddox, "Teenage Drinking in the United States," David Pittman and Charles Snyder, Society, Culture, and Drinking Patterns, New York: John Wiley, 1962, p. 233.

Bacon and Straus, in their study, Drinking in College, found that the majority of students learn to drink before they enter college.³ Despite the fact that most drinking standards are learned at home, those drinking expectations may be accepted, modified, or even completely rejected by the individual. An individual's decision to drink or not drink, how much, and how often is not the product of random choices by an individual. Decisions relating to drinking, under what conditions and how much are strongly influenced not only by parents but also by the groups to which he belongs or to which he aspires to be a member.⁴ Thus, because different groups hold different ideas about drinking, each individual behavior will be influenced by the type of drinking practices prescribed or proscribed by the groups with whom he identifies or in which he anticipates being a member.

College students represent an important group to be studied, both because of age and the fact that drinking attitudes are in a state of change. Bacon and Straus, for example, attribute college drinking to the absence of a rite de passage in our culture.⁵ The absence of a rite de passage

³Robert Straus and Selden D. Bacon, Drinking in College, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953, pp. 205-207.

⁴John L. Haer, "Drinking Patterns and the Influence of Friends and Family," in Raymond C. McCarthy, Drinking and Intoxication, Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1959, p. 259.

⁵Straus and Bacon, pp. 60-61.

coupled with many cultural inconsistencies encourage college students to gravitate toward the use of alcohol. Alcohol use thus symbolizes the arrival of adulthood and maturity. Thus, the study of drinking patterns of college students also provides an excellent opportunity to study the role which the college plays in socializing new entrants into new styles of life of which drinking is an example.⁶

Drinking in college is not restricted to a particular segment of the college community. All social classes, racial, ethnic and religious groups drink to some extent. The Negro college students are not an exception to the rule, they are a part of the college, they are influenced by a group and by the college environment. They have needs which must be satisfied. They are exposed to both drinking and non-drinking expectations. However, variations of drinking behavior and the nature and type of drinking norms do occur within the campus culture. This is especially true for college students.

The major objective of this thesis is to examine on a comparative basis the drinking patterns of male Negro fraternity and non-fraternity college students. This objective was arrived at, because a comparative study on drinking of sub-groups within the Negro community has not been done before.

⁶Joseph R. Gusfield, "The Structural Context of College Drinking," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 22, 1961, p. 428.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature pertaining to alcohol usage is almost completely devoid of information on Negro drinking patterns. Evidences of how each sub-group within the Negro community drinks relative to other sub-groups are even more incomplete. Traditional studies on drinking have made only occasional references to the drinking patterns of Negroes. Most studies which have made reference to this aspect of Negro behavior have used Negro samples as part of a general group or community study, and not as a distinctive sub-group. Such studies as Drinking in College¹ and "Drinking in Iowa"² have included Negro respondents to describe the drinking patterns of a particular group or segment within a community. Studies of this kind, however, fail to give comparative information on sub-group drinking within the Negro community.

Studies by Lewis³ and Frazier⁴ which used exclusively

¹Straus and Bacon, p. 47.

²Harold A. Mulford, "Drinking in Iowa, II," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 21, pp. 26-39.

³Hylan Lewis, Black Ways of Kent, Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1955.

⁴E. Franklin Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1952.

Negro samples, give some indication of how certain sub-groups within the Negro community drink. While the Lewis and Frazier studies are beginnings in depicting drinking patterns of Negro sub-groups, they are, however, incomplete. They fail to give comparative data for sub-groups within the Negro community. For example, Lewis focuses his study upon drinking of lower-class Negroes, while Frazier examines the drinking behavior of middle-class respondents. These limited studies do not provide adequate data for describing drinking habits and behavior of various segments of the Negro population.

While the aforementioned studies of Bacon and Straus, and Lewis and Frazier examined the Negro drinking patterns within the spectrum of a selected group, studies like those of Globetti,⁵ McReynolds,⁶ and others have tried to give a comparative analysis of Negro and white drinking patterns. Most comparative studies of Negro and white drinking which were done in the twenties and early fifties are heavily slanted with findings indicating Negro usage of alcohol beverages. The reliability of these data are doubtful as most of the Negro respondents in these studies were institutionalized alcoholics and represented atypical Negro drinking patterns. The researchers failed to consider the

⁵Gerald Globetti, quoted in David J. Pittman, Alcoholism, New York: Harper and Row, 1967, p. 86.

⁶M. McReynolds, quoted in David J. Pittman, p. 89.

fact that the categorical risk of being Negro makes it more likely that Negro alcoholics will be vulnerable to institutionalization than their white counterparts. Thus Negro vulnerability to institutionalization will result in a distorted picture, whenever Negro and white alcoholics are compared.

Studies on industrial workers in the white collar—blue collar dichotomy, have also come up with some interesting findings. Harrison M. Trice's⁷ article on drinking patterns of industrial workers has revealed that there is a wide difference between the drinking habits of blue collar workers and those of white collar workers. Although Trice has not made a comparative study of Negro and white industrial workers, there is reason to believe that the findings are more applicable to drinking patterns of Negroes, since they are disproportionately represented in blue collar jobs.

While earlier studies (those of the twenties and fifties) indicate that Negroes have higher incidences of drinking, more recent studies have provided information which seriously question these findings. Globetti's comparative study of drinking behavior among Negro and white students, for example, reveals, "that there is no significant difference between the two races in the usage of alcoholic beverage, both groups drink and abstain in a like

⁷Harrison M. Trice, "Drinking Among Industrial Workers," ILR Research, (Spring, 1958), pp. 10-13.

proportion."⁸ Thus, there is similarity in white and Negro drinking patterns.

This finding is supported, in a more comprehensive study of drinking behavior of white and Negro students in two Mississippi communities.⁹ The role of alcohol within the white and Negro student's sub-cultures was found to be essentially the same. A study of adults in these same two Mississippi communities also reveals that there is no significant difference with regard to the use of alcohol by Negro and white respondents.

This review of related literature indicates that there is a marked absence of reliable information on the drinking patterns of Negro sub-groups. The situation was even more serious until 1964 when Maddox and Borinski examined the drinking patterns of Negro college students.¹⁰ This study, however, is subject to the same criticisms as Lewis' and Frazier's work. In a sense, this study was an extension of Frazier's earlier work and was designed "to pursue further the middle-class Negro's perceptions of the function of alcohol" and to see how deeply the Protestant Ethic is ingrained.

Thus, although the Maddox and Borinski study was based

⁸Gerald Globetti, quoted in Rex MacDaniel, p. 31.

⁹ MacDaniel, p. 31.

¹⁰G. Maddox and E. Borinski, "Drinking Behavior of Negro Collegian: A Study of Selected Men," Quarterly Journal of Studies in Alcohol, Vol. 25, 1964, pp. 651-668.

on Negro samples, it was neither comparative in design nor intent. A comparative study on drinking patterns of sub-groups within the Negro community has not been carried out. The primary objective of the research reported in this thesis is to fill this gap by making a comparative study of two Negro sub-groups within the college community, that is fraternity and non-fraternity members.

In order to do the study, the following hypotheses will be tested empirically from a sample of Negro college students:

1. Fraternity members have a frequency of alcohol consumption which is significantly different from that of non-fraternity members.
2. Fraternity members' reasons for drinking are significantly different from those of non-fraternity members.
3. Non-fraternity members' numbers of complications resulting from the uses of alcohol are significantly different from those of fraternity members.
4. Drinking patterns of fraternity members with high grade indexes (3.00-4.00) are different from those of non-fraternity members with similar averages.
5. Drinking patterns of fraternity members with low grade indexes (0-2.99) are different from those of non-fraternity members with similar averages.
6. There is significantly less variation in the quantity and frequency of drinking of fraternity as opposed to non-fraternity members.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Data for this study have been obtained by means of a 35-item questionnaire (Appendix A). Items which constitute the questionnaire are devised so that the frequency and quantity of alcohol consumption can be easily determined. The following are examples of the items used to determine frequency of drinking and quantity of drinking:

Frequency of Drinking

1. Would you say that during the past six months you drank:

None

Once a week

Three days a week

Four or more days a week.

Quantity of Drinking

1. Would you say you
 - (i) drink once each month or less and consume only a small amount
 - (ii) drink less than three beers or two drinks a month
 - (iii) drink more than three beers or more than two drinks a month

(iv) drink two-four times a month and consume four beers or three drinks

(v) drink more than once a week and consume six beers or five drinks.

Terms which are used may be defined as follows:

Drinking: The intake of any alcoholic beverage within the past year.

Frequency: How often one drinks during the past year or during the past six months.

Quantity: How much does one consume at any sitting.

Quantity-Frequency Index: Is based on the respondent's report of the number of drinks he ordinarily consumes at a sitting, combined with the reported frequency of such sittings in a given period of time.¹ The response alternative to quantity question classified as "small," "medium" and "large" are as follows:

Small amount: one-five glasses of beer or one-three bottles of beer, or one-two drinks of liquor.

Medium amount: six-nine glasses of beer or four-six bottles of beer, or three-four drinks of liquor.

Large amount: ten or more glasses of beer, or seven or more bottles of beer, or five or more drinks of liquor.

Bacon and Straus arrived at trichotomy after converting standard "bottles" glasses and drinks to amount of absolute alcohol.

¹Q-F index originally developed by Robert Straus and Selden Bacon, p. 105.

Sample

The sample was collected from Langston University, a predominantly Negro college in Oklahoma. Before the sample was collected, the researcher made two preliminary visits to the campus in order to obtain a list of fraternity members and to get two helpers for administering the questionnaire.

Because of a paucity of fraternity members on campus for the summer, it was decided to include pledges (the pledges consisted of persons who have undergone a semester's initiating, but have not been fully inducted into a fraternity) in the fraternity sample, and also to administer the questionnaire to fraternity members within the context of a group setting. In addition it was also decided that non-fraternity members would be selected from the college directory, by taking of every other name on the list.

A total of 100 questionnaires were given to the two aides. Fifty questionnaires each were administered to fraternity and non-fraternity members. Respondents were assured of their anonymity and the purpose of the survey was explained.

The response was quite good, a return of 44 usable questionnaires was obtained from each group. All respondents came from urban areas and represented each college grade level. They came predominantly from middle-class homes as evidenced by parental occupations, and were within the 18-22 age bracket.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Most of the hypotheses were tested by Chi square. In cases where Chi square could not be used, percentage comparisons proved to be quite useful. After deciding upon the statistical test to be used, questionnaire items were analyzed. The following is a summary and interpretation of the findings of the study.

The first hypothesis was that "fraternity members' frequency of alcohol consumption is different from that of non-fraternity members." The hypothesis was tested by the use of Chi square. The results (see Table I) show that there was no significant difference in the drinking frequency of the fraternity and non-fraternity Negro college students in this sample. A percentage breakdown of the frequency of drinking for fraternity and non-fraternity members is also presented in Table I.

The largest group of fraternity and non-fraternity members drank six to twelve times and over during the past year, with percentages being 52 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively. For those who drank one to five times, fraternity members, 23 per cent, were below non-fraternity members. Twenty-five per cent of the fraternity and

16 per cent of the non-fraternity members abstained from drinking. Thus, although the difference is not statistically significant, fraternity members were more likely to abstain completely.

TABLE I
DRINKING FREQUENCY DURING THE PAST YEAR:
FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Drinking Frequency For the Past Year	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	11	25.01	7	15.90	18
1-5 times	10	22.72	16	36.36	26
6-12 times and over	23	52.27	21	47.72	44
TOTAL	44	100.00	44	99.98	88

$\chi^2 = 2.03$ $d_f = 2$ $.30 < p < .40$

It is possible that these results may not be reliable, due to the fact that differences in age groups of college students could have influenced the findings. A comparison of fraternity and non-fraternity members by years spent in college was also made in order to determine the extent to which this could have affected the data. The four school years (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior) were collapsed into two sub-groups, Freshman-Sophomore and Junior-Senior. Collapsing of categories was necessary because the

use of all four groups resulted in a situation in which some cells had an expected frequency below five and could not be statistically tested. The results in Tables II and III support the earlier finding that there was no significant difference in the frequency of alcohol consumption of fraternity and non-fraternity Negro college students.

TABLE II
 FREQUENCY OF DRINKING DURING THE PAST YEAR:
 FRESHMAN-SOPHOMORE FRATERNITY AND
 NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Drinking Frequency	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	7	28.00	3	23.07	10
1-5 times	7	28.00	5	38.46	12
6-12 times and over	11	44.00	5	38.46	16
TOTAL	25	100.00	13	99.99	38

$\chi^2 = .43$ $d_f = 2$ $.80 < p < .90$

The percentage breakdowns in Tables II and III show differences in the drinking behavior of Freshman-Sophomore and Junior-Senior respondents. The largest group of the Freshman-Sophomore fraternity and non-fraternity members drank six to twelve times and over for the past year. The percentages for fraternity and non-fraternity members are

44 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively. For drinking one to five times, Freshman-Sophomore fraternity had 28 per cent, while Freshman-Sophomore non-fraternity members had 38 per cent. Twenty-three per cent of the non-fraternity members and 28 per cent of the fraternity members abstained from drinking.

TABLE III
 FREQUENCY OF DRINKING DURING THE PAST YEAR:
 JUNIOR-SENIOR FRATERNITY AND
 NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Drinking Frequency	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	4	21.05	4	12.90	8
1-5 times	3	15.78	11	35.48	14
6-12 times and over	12	63.15	16	51.61	28
TOTAL	19	99.98	31	99.99	50

$\chi^2 = .64$ $d_f = 1$ $.70 < p < .80$

A similar percentage analysis was made using the Junior-Senior dichotomy. Most Junior-Senior fraternity and non-fraternity members drank six to twelve times and over for the past year (63 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively for fraternity and non-fraternity members). Thirty-five per cent of non-fraternity members drank one to five times and

16 per cent of fraternity members did so. Twenty-one per cent of the fraternity members and 13 per cent of the non-fraternity members abstained from drinking.

To provide more specific data covering drinking habits, a second set of questionnaire items, focused over a shorter time span, were used. In this analysis, data were examined which covered the last six months. Using this shorter time span, significant differences in the drinking frequencies of fraternity and non-fraternity college students did occur. Although a larger number of fraternity and non-fraternity members most often drink about once a week, fraternity members show a definite trend toward more frequent drinking (see Table IV).

TABLE IV
FREQUENCY OF DRINKING FOR PAST SIX MONTHS:
FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Drinking Frequency	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	4	9.09	10	22.12	14
Once a week	18	40.90	25	56.81	43
Three days a week	16	36.36	17	15.90	23
Four or more days a week	6	13.63	2	4.54	8
TOTAL	44	99.98	44	99.37	88

$$\chi^2 = 8.36$$

$$d_f = 1$$

$$p < .005$$

Forty-one per cent of the fraternity members and 57 per cent of the non-fraternity members drank once a week. Thirty-six per cent of the fraternity members and 16 per cent of the non-fraternity members drank three days a week. Fourteen per cent of the fraternity members and five per cent of the non-fraternity members drank four or more days a week, and nine per cent of the fraternity members and 23 per cent of the non-fraternity members abstained from drinking for the past six months.

A test of fraternity and non-fraternity drinking frequency was also made, using years in college as a variable. The results as presented in Tables V and VI confirm that the different frequency of drinking for fraternity and non-fraternity members was significant for the past six months and that this difference holds true for different grade levels.

TABLE V

DRINKING FREQUENCY OF FRESHMEN-SOPHOMORES FOR THE PAST SIX MONTHS: FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Frequency of Drinking	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	2	9.09	4	30.76	6
Once a week	10	45.45	5	38.46	15
Three days a week	6	27.27	2	15.38	8
Four or more days a week	4	18.18	2	15.38	6
TOTAL	22	99.99	13	99.98	35

$\chi^2 = 10.05$ $d_f = 1$ $p < .005$

TABLE VI

DRINKING FREQUENCY OF JUNIOR-SENIORS FOR THE PAST SIX MONTHS: FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Frequency of Drinking	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	2	9.09	6	19.35	8
Once a week	8	36.36	20	64.51	28
Three days a week	10	45.45	5	16.12	15
Four or more days a week	2	9.09	---	---	2
TOTAL	22	99.99	31	99.98	53

$$\chi^2 = 14.70$$

$$d_f = 1$$

$$p < .05$$

The results from Table V have shown that for the six months preceding the period under study there were significant differences in the drinking frequencies of fraternity and non-fraternity members. The largest group of fraternity and non-fraternity members had an inclination to drink once a week. Forty-five per cent of the fraternity members and 38 per cent of non-fraternity members drank with this frequency. Twenty-seven per cent of fraternity and 15 per cent of the non-fraternity members fell into the three days a week category. For those drinking four or more days a week, fraternity and non-fraternity members differed only slightly, (18 per cent for fraternity members and 15 per cent

for non-fraternity members). Abstinence was greater for members of fraternities than for non-fraternity members.

A comparison of Freshman-Sophomore and Junior-Senior fraternity and non-fraternity members provided additional evidence that a significant difference existed in the drinking patterns of fraternity and non-fraternity members.

The largest group of fraternity and non-fraternity members do their drinking three days a week and once a week, respectively; however, the percentage of drinking once a week was greater for non-fraternity members. In all other categories, the percentage distribution of drinking frequencies showed even greater differences.

Another method for testing the first hypothesis (that is, that a significant difference exists between drinking frequency of fraternity and non-fraternity members) was developed with the use of Straus and Bacon¹ quantity frequency (Q-F) index. Since frequency of drinking is only one measure of how much alcohol is consumed, a measure of how much is normally drunk at any one sitting was obtained. A quantity-frequency index was obtained by combining scores of two measures of consumption. The number of drinks consumed at one sitting and the frequency of such sitting (see chapter on methodology, pages 9-10).

In Table VII, fraternity and non-fraternity members were compared on the basis of this Q-F index. The characteristic of each Q-F level are also given in this table.

¹Straus and Bacon, p. 100.

The Chi square test using the Q-F index did not indicate a significant difference in the quantity-frequency of drinking between fraternity and non-fraternity members.

TABLE VII

Q-F INDEX OF A SERIES OF INDEPENDENT QUESTIONS ON
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION: FRATERNITY AND
NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Q-F Index Types	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
1. Drink once each month or less and consume only small amounts.	20	18.18	11	15.06	31
2. Drink less than 3 beers or 2 drinks once a month or less.	15	13.63	13	17.08	28
3. Drink more than 3 beers or more than 2 drinks a month.	23	20.90	20	27.39	43
4. Drink 2-4 times a month and consume 4 beers or 6 drinks.	30	27.27	17	23.38	47
5. Drink more than once a week and consume 5 beers or 8 drinks.	22	20.00	12	16.43	34
TOTAL	110	99.98	73	99.34	183
$\chi^2 = 2.11$					
$d_f = 4$					
$.80 > p > .70$					

The largest number of non-fraternity and fraternity members have Q-F indexes of four and three, respectively.

The percentages in the other categories are quite homogeneous, although there was a greater tendency for fraternity members to be in the high Q-F index categories. A comparison of Q-F indexes by college year (Table VIII) also shows that the difference in the Q-F indexes for Freshman-Sophomore fraternity and non-fraternity members was not significant. The largest number of fraternity and non-fraternity members have indexes of four and three, respectively.

TABLE VIII

Q-F INDEX FOR FRESHMAN-SOPHOMORE: FRATERNITY AND
NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Q-F Index Type*	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
1	12	21.81	5	18.51	17
2	5	9.09	6	22.22	11
3	13	23.63	10	37.03	23
4	16	29.09	4	14.81	20
5	9	16.36	2	7.40	11 ³¹
TOTAL	55	99.98	27	99.97	82

$\chi^2 = 6.49$ $d_f = 3$ $.05 < p < .10$

*Categories 4 and 5 are combined.

The Q-F index of Juniors and Seniors fraternity and non-fraternity members, however, is significantly different.

TABLE IX

Q-F INDEX OF A SERIES OF INDEPENDENT QUESTIONS OF
JUNIOR-SENIOR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION: FRATERNITY
AND NON-FRATERNITY

Q-F Index Types	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
1	8	14.54	6	13.04	14
2	10	18.18	7	15.21	17
3	10	18.18	10	21.73	20
4	14	25.45	13	28.26	27
5	13	23.63	10	21.73	23
TOTAL	55	99.98	46	99.97	101

$$\chi^2 = .43$$

$$d_f = 4$$

$$.975 < p < .99$$

The largest group of fraternity members fell within a Q-F index of four. Twenty-five per cent of the members of fraternities had this type of Q-F index. However, while the largest number of the non-fraternity members had the same Q-F index as fraternity, the percentage that fell into this category was larger for non-fraternity members. The percentages were 28 per cent for non-fraternity and 25 per cent for fraternity members.

In attempting to explain why and how people drink (see Chapter I), importance was given to reference groups. It was hypothesized that reference groups are responsible for

difference in the use of alcohol. If this is so, it should be most apparent in those groups that abstain completely from the use of alcoholic beverages.

This one important source of information regarding alcohol use is to find out why some individuals completely abstain. Since fraternity and non-fraternity members represent different groups, the second hypothesis stated that the reasons for abstinence would be different for fraternity than non-fraternity members. The reasons for abstinence were as shown in Table X.

TABLE X

REASONS FOR ABSTINENCE: FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY

Reasons for Abstinence	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity	
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent
Religious reasons	--	---	3	21.42
Do not like the taste	--	---	4	28.57
Dangerous to health	--	---	5	35.71
Interferes with study	3	100.00	2	14.28
Pledge not to drink	--	---	--	---
TOTAL	3	100.00	14	99.98

The results show that non-fraternity members are more inclined to abstain than fraternity members, and that the reasons are more varied.

The only reason for abstinence given by fraternity members was that drinking interfered with their studies and only two non-fraternity members indicated that this was the reason. These data, while based upon limited sample, definitely show not only that fraternity members are less likely to abstain, but also that the reasons are quite different from those given by non-fraternity members. Apparently, membership in a fraternity has the effect of providing considerable homogeneity of opinions regarding alcohol and its usage.

A breakdown of the data by year in college shows that Junior-Senior non-fraternity members are more inclined to abstinence than any other group. On the other hand only one reason for abstinence was given by all abstaining fraternity members, and only one upperclass fraternity member abstained. This almost complete homogeneity of opinion and practice among fraternity members strengthens the view that reference groups are vital in the development of drinking attitudes and practices. Findings in this study also exemplify the importance of the reference group in structuring behavior.

It should be emphasized that although the abstinence rate is quite different between fraternity and non-fraternity groups, the reasons for drinking may also vary among groups. Robert F. Bales maintains that drinking indulgence can be perpetrated for a variety of reasons² such as ritualism,

²Robert F. Bales, "Cultural Differences in Rates of Alcoholism," Quarterly Journal of Studies of Alcohol, V. 6, 1946, pp. 480-499.

conviviality, and utilitarian reasons. Donald Horton³ and E. Franklin Frazier⁴ were not specific in outlining reasons as Bales was; however, they elaborated upon the functional usage of alcohol in various cultures. Since reasons for using alcohol vary for different groups, it is also expected that the reasons for drinking also vary between fraternity and non-fraternity members.

It was on this basis that the second hypothesis that fraternity and non-fraternity members' reasons for drinking are different was advanced. The Chi square test of the difference reported in Table XI did not indicate that the reasons for drinking were significantly different for fraternity and non-fraternity members. The percentage breakdown of reasons for drinking is presented in Table XI.

Both fraternity and non-fraternity members gave "helps me to enjoy a party" as the most common reason for drinking. Seventeen per cent of the fraternity members and 19 per cent of the non-fraternity respondents indicate this as a reason. The least common response is that "it helps me to study better." Six per cent of fraternity and two per cent of the non-fraternity members gave this response.

³Donald Horton, "Function of Alcohol in Primitive Society," in R. G. McCarthy, pp. 251-262.

⁴E. Franklin Frazier, pp. 81-232.

TABLE XI

A SERIES OF INDEPENDENT REASONS FOR DRINKING:
FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Reasons For Drinking	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
Helps me feel better	36	15.45	25	16.12	61
Helps me to enjoy a party	40	17.16	30	19.25	70
Helps me to improve conversation	33	14.16	21	13.54	54
Makes a social gathering enjoyable	37	15.87	28	18.06	65
Helps me to relieve fatigue	23	9.87	22	14.19	45
Helps to get along better with dates	19	8.15	15	9.67	34
Helps me to feel satisfied with myself	31	13.30	11	7.09	42
Helps me to study better	14	6.00	3	1.93	17
TOTAL	233	99.96	155	99.95	388

$$\chi^2 = 9.17 \quad d_f = 7 \quad .20 < p < .30$$

The findings of no difference holds when fraternity and non-fraternity are compared by college year (see Tables XII and XIII).

TABLE XII

A SERIES OF INDEPENDENT REASONS FOR DRINKING
FRESHMEN-SOPHOMORES: FRATERNITY
AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Reasons For Drinking	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
Helps me feel better	20	15.74	5	15.62	25
Helps me to enjoy a party	25	19.68	6	18.75	31
Helps me to improve entertainment with my friends	18	14.17	5	15.62	23
Makes a social gathering more enjoyable	20	15.74	8	25.00	28
Helps to relieve fatigue	11	8.66	4	12.50	15
Helps me to get along better with dates	10	7.87	2	6.25	12
Helps me to feel satisfied with myself	15	11.81	2	6.25	17
Helps me to study better	8	6.29	--	---	8
TOTAL*	127	99.96	32	99.99	159

$$\chi^2 = 3.23 \quad d_f = 4 \quad .50 < p < .60$$

*Categories in upper end of table are collapsed.

In Table XIII, the most commonly held reason for drinking for fraternity members was "it makes a social gathering more enjoyable." Sixteen per cent gave this

response. The least commonly held reason was "it helps me to study better," only five per cent gave this reason. For non-fraternity members, 20 per cent gave it "helps me to enjoy a party" as the most commonly held reason for drinking. Only two per cent gave it "helps me to study better" as the reason for drinking.

TABLE XIII

A SERIES OF INDEPENDENT REASONS FOR DRINKING
JUNIOR-SENIOR: FRATERNITY AND
NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Reasons For Drinking	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
Helps me feel better	16	15.38	20	17.09	36
Helps me to enjoy a party	15	14.42	23	10.65	38
Helps me to improve entertainment with my friends	15	14.42	16	13.67	31
Makes a social gathering more enjoyable	17	16.34	20	17.09	37
Helps to relieve fatigue	12	11.53	19	16.23	31
Helps me to get along better with dates	8	7.69	9	7.69	17
Helps me to feel satisfied with myself	16	15.38	7	5.98	23
Helps me to study better	5	4.80	3	2.56	8
TOTAL	104	99.96	117	99.96	221
	$\chi^2 = 7.32$	$d_f = 7$	$.30 < p < .40$		

It was stated in Chapter I that the reference group can both proscribe and prescribe drinking. It can also prescribe norms that are in conflict with prevailing customs, to the extent that one may overindulge in a form of activity and evoke sanction. To examine this aspect, a third hypothesis was set forward "non-fraternity members numbers of complications resulting from the use of alcohol are significantly different from that of fraternity members." A Chi square test showed that there was a difference, although both groups have had problems due to drinking.

Thirty per cent of fraternity members gave "foregoing of badly needed articles" as their most common problem. The least common problem for members of fraternities was "trouble with authorities." Non-fraternity members' most common problems were alcohol "interfering with school work." Their least commonly mentioned problem was "the loss of close friends." Table XIV gives a concise indication of fraternity and non-fraternity alcohol complications.

Literature on college drinking, especially the Straus and Bacon study, has not substantiated whether there is a relation between grade point index and drinking behavior. The fourth hypothesis, that drinking patterns of fraternity members with high grade indexes (3.00-4.00) are different from those of non-fraternity members with similar grade indexes, was advanced to see whether this held for fraternity and non-fraternity Negro male college students.

TABLE XIV

A SERIES OF INDEPENDENT PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM
DRINKING: FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY

Problems	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
Has drinking ever interfered with your preparation for classes or exams?	11	27.50	14	45.16	25
Has drink ever caused you to lose friends or damage a relationship?	11	27.50	4	12.90	15
Has drinking ever resulted in accidents, arrests or brought you before the school authorities?	6	15.00	7	22.58	13
Has the use of liquor caused you not to buy other articles?	12	30.00	6	19.35	18
TOTAL	40	100.00	31	99.99	71
$\chi^2 = 4.64$		$d_f = 3$		$p = .2$	

The hypothesis could not be tested statistically owing to the paucity of respondents with high grade indexes. On a percentage basis, it appeared that there was some difference between the drinking patterns of fraternity and non-fraternity members with high grade point averages. Table XIV shows the percentage distribution of drinking patterns of fraternity and non-fraternity members. Seventy

per cent of the fraternity and 70 per cent of the non-fraternity members with high grade indexes drank once a week. Drinking three days a week was restricted only to fraternity, while abstinence was restricted only to non-fraternity members.

TABLE XV

FREQUENCY OF DRINKING BY HIGH GRADE POINT AVERAGE
STUDENTS: FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY

Frequency of Drinking	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	--	---	2	28.57	2
Once a week	7	70.00	5	71.42	12
Three days a week	3	30.00	--	---	3
Four or more days a week	--	---	--	---	--
TOTAL	10	100.00	7	99.99	17

The fifth hypothesis was a corollary of the fourth hypothesis and was advanced to see whether fraternity and non-fraternity members with low point averages (0 - 2.99) had different drinking patterns. The hypothesis was not testable by Chi square because there were no responses in some categories. However, data in Table XVI show that there was a difference in the drinking behavior of fraternity and non-fraternity members on grade point basis.

TABLE XVI
 FREQUENCY OF DRINKING BY LOW GRADE POINT AVERAGE
 STUDENTS: FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY

Frequency of Drinking	Fraternity		Non-Fraternity		Total
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N
None	6	17.64	12	32.43	18
Once a week	12	35.29	25	67.56	37
Three days a week	9	26.47	--	---	9
Four or more days a week	7	20.58	--	---	7
TOTAL	34	99.98	37	99.99	71

Abstinence was greater for non-fraternity members than for fraternity members. The largest number of fraternity and non-fraternity members drank once a week. The percentage being 35 per cent for fraternity members and 68 per cent for non-fraternity members. Only fraternity members drank three or more days a week. Thus the position that there is a difference in the drinking patterns of fraternity and non-fraternity members is further supported by this analysis.

The last hypothesis was advanced to see the influence of the reference group on the degree of homogeneity found in drinking patterns. The hypothesis advanced was that there "is significantly less variation in the drinking frequency of fraternity as opposed to non-fraternity members." Both

groups were tested on drinking for the past six months. The results in Table XVII show no difference in the variation of drinking.

Differences in drinking are observable most frequently in the extreme cases. Nine per cent of the fraternity members and 22 per cent of the non-fraternity members abstained from drinking. At the other extreme, 14 per cent of the fraternity members and four per cent of the non-fraternity members drank four or more days a week.

Since most of the findings of the study were not statistically significant, the data can be summarized thus:

1. There was no significant difference in the drinking frequencies of fraternity and non-fraternity members for the period of a year.
2. There was a difference in the drinking patterns of fraternity and non-fraternity members for a period of six months.
3. The reasons for abstinence were too few for statistical testing. However, some differences were indicated by inspection. Non-fraternity members are more inclined to abstain than fraternity members. The only reason for abstinence given by fraternity members was that drinking interfered with their studies, and only two non-fraternity members indicated this was their reason.

TABLE XVII

VARIATION IN FREQUENCY OF DRINKING: FRATERNITY
AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERS

	None		Once a week		3 days a week		4 or more days a week		Total	
	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent	N	Per Cent
Fraternity	4	9.09	18	40.90	16	36.36	6	13.63	44	99.98
Non-fraternity	<u>10</u>	22.72	<u>25</u>	56.81	<u>7</u>	15.90	<u>2</u>	4.34	<u>44</u>	99.37
TOTAL*	14		43		23		8		88	

$\chi^2 = 3.38$
 $d_f = 2$
 $.10 < p < .20$

*None and three days a week are combined.

4. Differences in complications resulting from the uses of alcohol were not significant for fraternity and non-fraternity members.
5. There was a tentative marked, although untestable, difference in the drinking patterns and grade point indexes of fraternity and non-fraternity members.
6. Both fraternity and non-fraternity members with low grade point indexes (0 - 2.99) drink an average of once a week.
7. There was no apparent significant difference in the uniformity of fraternity and non-fraternity members.

The findings present a number of questions which can be readily utilized for further research. The following chapter presents a general summary of the problems and conclusions based on the above findings.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to examine, on a comparative basis, the drinking patterns of Negro fraternity and non-fraternity college students. This objective was deemed important because a similar comparative study of drinking among sub-groups within the Negro community has not been done before.

Data for this study were obtained by means of a 35-item questionnaire (see Appendix A) which was designed to determine the frequency and quantity of alcohol consumption of fraternity and non-fraternity members and to probe some possible sources of behavior in this area. It was administered to a sample of eighty-eight respondents, forty-four fraternity members and forty-four non-fraternity members, respectively. Respondents came predominantly from middle-class homes, as evidenced by parental occupations, and were within the 18-22 age group.

In the first chapter attention was given to reference groups as the basis of behavioral norms. These groups are important because they are crucial in structuring the normative orientations of each member. In this study, the reference group was considered to be crucial in determining

whether fraternity and non-fraternity members would drink and the extent of drinking as measured by a quantity frequency index. This was supported by the data as it was found that norms of abstinence were more prevalent among non-fraternity members. This phenomenon is a concrete example of the importance of reference groups as determinants of behavioral norms.

The data, while based upon a somewhat limited sample, definitely show that fraternity members have a higher Q-F index than non-fraternity members.

The writer believes that the study may be considered as a pilot project based upon a comparative study of Negro sub-groups within the college community. The findings may be supported further through research which makes use of larger samples. A larger sample would permit comparisons based upon social class, residence, and other important socio-cultural variables which may influence drinking attitudes and behavior.

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APPENDIX A

DRINKING SURVEY

The Department of Sociology at Oklahoma State University asks your cooperation in this questionnaire study.

The study is designed to find out the drinking patterns of Negro male fraternity and non-fraternity college students at Langston University. Respondents are assured that no part of this survey will be disclosed to any office or agency. Your anonymity is assured; and, results will be kept with utmost confidence.

This section is designed to get general information about you. Will you circle the appropriate answer.

- | 1. <u>Year in College</u> | | 2. <u>Age</u> | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------|---|
| Freshman | 1 | 18 | 1 |
| Sophomore | 2 | 19 | 2 |
| Junior | 3 | 20 | 3 |
| Senior | 4 | 21 | 4 |
| | | 22 and over | 5 |
3. Write in (be specific, such as farmer, welder, etc. If not working, write in, not regularly employed).
- Father's Occupation _____
- Mother's Occupation _____

4. Circle one

Are you from:

Rural Area

Urban Area(over 2500)

Rural Nonfarm (Town less than 2,500)

5. What is the approximate population of your town or city?

6. The following questions are designed to find out how much and how frequently you drink. Please circle the questions that refer to you most.

Would you say that during the past year you drank -

None	1
1 - 5 times	2
6 - 12 times	3

7. Would you say during the past 6 months you drank

None	1
Once a week	2
Three or more days a week	3
Four or more days a week	4

CIRCLE YES OR NO TO THE FOLLOWING:

8. Would you say you drink once each month or less and consume only a small amount?

Yes or No

9. Drink less than three beers, two drinks once a month or less?

Yes or No

10. Drink more than three beers, more than two drinks a month?

Yes or No

11. Drink two to four times a month and consume medium or larger amounts?

Yes or No

12. Drink more than once a week and consume medium or larger amounts?

Yes or No

13. Circle the ones that most usually describe your drinking?

Would you say you drink mostly on weekends and holidays?

Weekends and holidays	1
Anyday	2
Specific weekends	3

14. At what time in a particular day do you do most of your drinking?

Afternoon	1
Morning	2
Night	3
Anytime	4

15. The following is a set of reasons why people abstain from drinking. If you do not drink, circle the appropriate reasons or reason why you do not drink. (Circle as many as possible in your case.)

Religious Reasons	1
Do not like the taste	2
Dangerous to health	3
Pledge not to drink	4
Interfere with my study	5

PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO TO THE FOLLOWING:

16. Drinking sometimes helps me to feel better.

Yes or No

17. Drinking helps me to enjoy a party.

Yes or No

18. Drinking improves entertainment with my friends.

Yes or No

19. Drinking makes a social gathering more enjoyable.

Yes or No

20. Drinking helps me to relieve fatigue or tension.

Yes or No

21. Drinking helps me to get along better with dates.

Yes or No

22. Drinking helps me to feel more satisfied with myself.

Yes or No

23. Drinking helps me to study better.

Yes or No

The following are some of the effects of drinking.
Please circle the ones that refer to you.

24. Has drinking ever interfered with your preparation for classes or exams?

Yes or No

25. Has it ever caused you to lose close friends or damage a relationship?

Yes or No

26. Has drinking ever resulted in accidents, injury, arrest or brought you before the school authorities?

Yes or No

27. Has the cost of liquor caused you not to buy other articles?

Yes or No

28. On how many of these occasions do you drink the following:

Beer; Wine; Hard Liquor. (Circle the right answer for each of these.)

Not at All Part of the Time Most of Time All of Time

29. Please circle one of the following: Are you a member of

Phi Beta Sigma	1
Alpha Phi Alpha	2
Kappa	3
Omega	4
Other	5

30. If you were invited to join one of these groups tomorrow, you would: (Circle as many)
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Immediately accept invitation | 1 |
| Probably accept, but depend on group | 2 |
| Probably not accept | 3 |
| Definitely not accept | 4 |
31. Which of the following reflects the drinking patterns of members of the organization to which you belong. (Circle ones that refer to you.)
- | | |
|---|---|
| They do not drink | 1 |
| They drink on special occasions | 2 |
| They have occasional parties but few mildly get intoxicated | 3 |
| They have weekend parties with heavy drinking | 4 |
32. Would you say you are attracted to this organization because: (Circle ones that refer to you.)
- | | |
|--|---|
| It enhances my status on the campus | 1 |
| People who don't belong to one are looked down upon as squares or book worms | 2 |
| People who don't belong are left out | 3 |
| It is the in-way to have friends | 4 |
33. Circle the appropriate one:
Would you say your grade point average is between
- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1.00 - 1.99 | 1 |
| 2.00 - 2.99 | 2 |
| 3.00 and up | 3 |
34. Would you say drinking helps you to maintain your grade point?
- Yes or No
35. If the answer is No, would you say that if you were to stop drinking your grade point would improve?
- Yes or No

VITA

Curlew O'Sullivan Thomas

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE DRINKING PATTERNS OF
NEGRO MALE FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY COLLEGE
STUDENTS

Major Field: Sociology

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Montego Bay, Jamaica (West
Indies), May 29, 1939, the son of Martin Luther
and Meldora Matilda Thomas.

Education: Received Cambridge School Certificate in
1959, from North Western Academy (Montego Bay,
Jamaica); received the Bachelor of Arts degree
from Arkansas Agriculture Mechanical and Normal
College with a major in Sociology in May, 1965.
Completed requirements for the Master of Science
degree in May, 1968.