

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF AN EXPERIMENTAL METHOD  
TO DETERMINE IF A MEMBERSHIP GROUP IS  
FUNCTIONING AS A REFERENCE GROUP  
FOR AN INDIVIDUAL

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Newcomb has stated that the importance of the concept of reference group to the social psychologist is that, "It is a variable intimately associated with that central problem of social psychology: the relation of self to society" (Hyman & Singer, 1968, p. 21). As will be shown, this concept has been widely used as an explanatory construct since its introduction by Hyman twenty-seven years ago. Even so, Pollis (1968) states that the term has never been worked into a precise theoretical tool. Pollis concluded that the operational meaning and use of the term remain to be defined. As a solution he proposes that the concept of reference group be used to predict individual behavior as it is related to relevant social stimulus situations. The concept reference group denotes that group the norms of which an individual, as he perceives them, has internalized as his own attitudes. Therefore, Pollis's proposal requires an attitudinal analysis of individual behavior in social situations for which experimental methods and procedures must be developed. The goal of this research is to explore a method to determine experimentally if a given membership group is functioning as a reference group for an individual.

The term reference group was first employed by Herbert Hyman in his article The Psychology of Status (1942). Prior to this study the ideas of earlier theorists suggest an awareness of the need for a

concept like reference group. In 1890 William James suggested that our "potential" social self was developed and inwardly strengthened by thoughts of remote groups and individuals who function as points of reference. Charles Cooley (1902) discussed "selective affinity" for groups outside of one's immediate environment. William Graham Sumner (1906) used the related notion of in-groups and out-groups in explaining social behavior. Thomas Dewey (1927) talked about conflicting attitudes within the individual due to multiple group membership. F. H. Allport (1937) discussed the problem of trying to categorize individuals into "publics" the norms of which reflected the attitudes of the individuals studied. It was only by placing a subject in one of his "publics," Allport theorized, that we could anticipate his behavior.

Hyman (1942) first proposed the concept of reference group to explain the way individuals ranked themselves in terms of their choice of a social framework for comparison. Using interviews, Hyman explored the groups that subjects used as social comparison points in judging themselves. Hyman found that the standards people set for themselves were determined by the standards to which they related themselves, that there was a greater frequency of more intimate reference groups for subjects than just the general population, and that the values of an individual were set into operation by his reference groups.

Newcomb (1943) used the concept of reference group to explain changes in the attitudes of students who had had extended membership in the Bennington College community. Using interviews and questionnaires to measure attitudes over a four year period, Newcomb determined which students eventually adopted the norms of the community as their



own attitudes, i.e., who chose the college as a reference group.

Stouffer, Suchmann, DeVinney, Star, and Williams (1949) used a concept related to reference groups--relative deprivation--to explain attitudes held by individuals which did not reflect their objective situation. Using questionnaires, Stouffer determined which groups a subject used as reference points for social comparison. He found that a person's feeling of well being or deprivation was not constant but relative to the feelings of well being and deprivation perceived in the groups with which he compared himself.

Since the early fifties the term reference group has enjoyed growing popularity. The concept has been used to account for such processes as the formation and change of attitudes, personal conflict and the condition of marginality (Sherif & Sherif, 1956). It has also been applied to practical problems such as mental illness, acculturation, marketing and public relations, political behavior, consumer behavior, labor relations, formal organizations, mass communications, juvenile delinquency and opinion formation (Hyman & Singer, 1968).

The concept of reference group has been defined by contemporary researchers in a variety of ways. Sherif and Sherif defined a reference group as:

. . . those sets of people to which one feels he belongs, relates himself to psychologically. . . those groups in which he wants to be counted as an individual, which include the individuals whose opinions make a difference to him, whose standards and goals are his (1964, pp. 54-55).

Shibutani defines a reference group as:

. . . that group whose outlook is used by the actors as the frame of reference in the organization of his perceptual field. Reference groups arise through the internalization of norms; they constitute the structure of expectations imputed to some audience for whom one organizes his conduct (1955, pp. 562-569).

Krech and Crutchfield state a reference group is:

Any group with which an individual identifies himself such that he tends to use that group as a standard for self evaluation and as a source of his personal values and goals (1962, p. 102).

Newcomb, Turner, and Converse state:

It should now be clear that a group is a reference group for an individual with respect to a certain object when the group and its attitudes toward the object are part of the same system as the individual's own attitudes toward the object (1965, p. 145).

From the definitions by Shibutani (1955), Krech and Crutchfield (1962), Sherif and Sherif (1964) and Newcomb, Turner and Converse (1965) it can be said that the concept of reference group consists of two jointly related parts: an attitudinal predisposition toward some relevant stimuli; and the identification of a collectivity, group or organizational entity whose norms the individual has internalized as his personal attitudes about that stimuli.

For the social psychologist the usefulness of studying reference groups lies in knowing which group's norms the individual has adopted as his own attitudes. These attitudes are formed in relation to the norms of the reference group which are social stimuli. Once formed they relate a person to relevant social stimuli. Because of this it may be useful to discuss the development of attitudes formed in relation to social stimuli and the related processes of group and norm formation. It may also be useful to consider the importance of these processes as they relate to the satisfaction of an individual's needs and the attainment of his goals.

The Emergence of Groups, Norm Formation and  
the Internalization of Attitudes

Field studies (Whyte, 1942; Sherif & Sherif, 1964) and experiments in group formation (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961) have demonstrated that groups evolve as individuals engaging in regular interaction come to perceive one another as necessary for the achievement of common goals. A group may be defined as:

. . . a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in (more or less) definite status and role relationships to one another and which possess a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 144).

As group formation occurs the role expectations and the prestige given to each role become standardized in the norms of the group.

Norms may be defined as:

. . . standardized ways of seeing and doing things. . . . the expected modes of behavior for the individual group members (MacNeil, 1967, p. 2).

Norms may be conceptualized as behavior with a modal tendency and a range of variation around it (MacNeil, 1964). The norms that are formed in any group, as well as the division of labor that occurs, organize group efforts to satisfy those needs and motives that are collectively important to the members of the group. The norms most binding for the group members are those related to shared motives important in the formation and later the maintenance of the group. As such, norms define an individual's relationship to other group members and those things important to the group. From the members' standpoint, the norms and the influence of the norms on their perception of one another serve to identify the group and separate its

members from nonmembers. These in-group feelings, like the status and role relations, become standardized in the norms of the group.

In the early stages of group formation the norms tend to allow for wide ranges of individual behavior. As the group structure emerges, however, ranges of acceptable behavior in regard to matters important to the group tend to become more standardized for the group members. Less and less variation in behavior will be tolerated by the group members in relation to things important to the group.

During group interaction individual members internalize the most important norms of the group as their own attitudes defining their relationship to things important to the group. An individual who has become psychologically a member of a group has internalized these norms as his attitudes.

Attitudes may be defined as:

. . . certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts, and predispositions to act toward some aspect of his environment (Secord & Backman, 1964, p. 97).

Social attitudes are those attitudes shared with other persons and formed in relation to social stimuli, e.g., social norms, material culture, people, groups and institutions. Attitudes serve as categories within which the individual can organize and group his perceptions. Once learned, attitudes become stimuli within the individual which are consistent when aroused. They define a relatively persistent state of the individual in relation to some stimulus so that, once formed, reexposure to that stimulus repeatedly evokes that attitude to some degree. Therefore it may be said that an attitude "defines an individual's characteristic and consistent modes of behavior in relation to relevant stimuli" (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 494). Sherif states that

attitudes have motivational-affective properties. This affective property of an attitude is due:

. . . either to the intrinsic, direct, or "instrumental" motivational appeal of the stimulus (such as food, a sex object, mother, milk bottle, a period of romance) or to the socially invested stamp of value on the stimulus (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 495).

In addition, symbolic processes in humans enable the formation of attitudes toward social stimuli not in their immediate physical presence. This process is exceedingly important in the study of reference group attitudes for it can be seen that many individuals aspire to and identify themselves psychologically with collectivities, groups, or organizations in which they are not members. In addition, there are many groups in modern differentiated societies to which individuals belong but whose norms are not reflected in those individuals' attitudes and behavior. These groups are membership groups for the individual and should not be confused with his reference groups.

#### Attitudes and the Self Concept

It is in the process of social interaction that individuals acquire or internalize attitudes. Campbell has stated that social attitudes may be conceived of in the following manner: "A social attitude is (or is evidenced by) consistency in response to social objects" (1950, p. 31). The attitudes that define a person's consistent relationship to his physical and social environment do not remain unrelated items in the functional process of relating self to the environment. As such they may become a part of the self concept. Sherif has stated that the self concept may be conceived of as:

. . . a developmental formation (a subsystem) in the psychological make-up of the individual consisting of inter-related attitudes which are acquired in relation to his own body, to objects, family, persons, groups, social values, and institutions and which define and regulate his relatedness to them in concrete situations (1956, p. 581).

Sherif calls this system the ego or self. The attitudes constituting this system provide an individual with an estimation of his value as he believes others perceive him. Sherif designates attitudes forming this system as ego-attitudes. Formed in relation to relevant social stimuli, many ego-attitudes are thus social in origin. Ego-attitudes impart a characteristic regularity to the individual's day to day behavior. Thus, when an individual is confronted with ego-involving objects, events, groups, norms, etc., he behaves much the same as he did in earlier encounters with the same or similar stimuli.

Ego-attitudes become a factor in determining the experience and behavior of individuals when they are aroused by relevant stimuli. "Ego-involvement means that one or more ego-attitudes have become functionally operative in a given frame of reference along with other internal and external factors" (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 402). Ego-involved behavior is always goal directed. The degree of ego-involvement varies from mild to intense depending on the significance of the attitudes aroused in the individual's personal frame of reference.

Using the conceptual paradigm of Sherif (1936), experience and behavior are considered to be jointly determined by the interaction of all the internal and external factors functioning in the individual's immediate frame of reference. But not all factors weigh equally in determining this outcome. In a given frame of reference those stimuli most important in determining the particular characteristics of an

individual's experience and behavior are referred to as anchorages (Sherif & Sherif, 1956).

At a given moment some attitudes are more influential in determining our experience and behavior than others.

In addition, not only attitudes (internal factors) but the situational variables (external factors) in relation to which the attitudes were formed must be considered as factors in the frame of reference. In this context the concept reference group accounts for those groups providing the main anchorages determining individual experience and behavior in relation to social stimulus situations. The concept of reference group focuses on the group whose norms are the source of the individual's attitudes.

#### Reference Group and the Social Psychological Level of Analysis

Pollis (1968) states that one reason for the present ambiguity of the concept reference group is that there is little agreement on its operational meaning and use. Basically, the question yet to be answered is what phenomena are to be explained by the concept. Pollis hypothesizes that the confusion over the concept's meaning and use may be due to a lack of consensus on the level of analysis at which the term should be used. In his discussion, and without proposing a hierarchy, Pollis notes three possible levels of analysis. They are: the sociological level of analysis, where collectivities, groups and organizations are studied without reference to given individuals; the psychological level of analysis, where individual psychological processes, judging, perceiving, learning and motivation are studied; and the

social psychological level of analysis, where these basic psychological processes are studied as they influence and are themselves influenced by those persons, groups and institutions in the environment of the individual.

In research using the concept of reference group, Pollis contends that lack of agreement on the level of analysis at which the term is used has led researchers to confuse the concepts of attitude and social norm. Pollis states:

. . . social norms as defined by perspectives, a group or collectivity, although not equatable with an individual's attitudinal orientation, have been made functionally equivalent. . . It is one thing to make a statement about the expected collective impact of behavior of a group as defined by the norms of that group and another to make a statement about the expected behavior of an individual (1968, p. 301).

As a solution Pollis proposes that the concept reference group be operationalized at the social psychological level of analysis accounting for individual behavior in relation to relevant social stimulus situations. In terms of a research approach Pollis suggests the method used in this experiment, stating that "an attitudinal analysis, using individual behavioral data, acquired in relation to social stimulus situations, rather than social system analysis using normative data would be necessary" (1968, p. 301).

Using the concept of reference group at the social psychological level of analysis in this research indicates that the differential effect of specific group and organizational influences on attitudinal predispositions of the individual are studied.

In terms of individual motivation the influence of a reference group is in the form of attitudes defining the individual's personal relatedness to some relevant stimulus (Pollis, 1968). This is to be



contrasted with the effects of a membership group whose influence over an individual is more likely the pressure of external social expectations than the individual's expectations of himself. Thus a reference group may be conceived of as:

. . . a configuration of sociologically relevant attitudes within the individual which are a part of the ego-system and which define that individual's characteristic mode of response in specific normative relevant situations (Pollis, 1968, p. 302).

The attitudes formed in interaction with one's reference groups constitute at least a major portion of the ego-system or self concept. These attitudes, internalized as our personal standards, become the basis for the consistency of our behavior from day to day. The more important ego-attitudes are related to our identity, feelings of acceptance and status, as well as the satisfaction of our basic needs. In the individual's ego-attitudes there exists the persistent personal pattern which forms his relationship to the social and physical surroundings. This is his way of relating to the world and satisfying his needs.

#### Reference Groups and Conformity and Compliance

In this research we will attempt to determine if a membership group is also a reference group for an individual. It will be remembered that a membership group is one to which an individual belongs but whose norms may not be reflected in his attitudes, i.e., the norms will not be reflected in his attitudes unless the group is also a reference group. How can an individual who behaves in accordance with the expectations of a group but has not internalized the norms as his own attitudes be distinguished from one who has? This is the problem

in distinguishing a reference group from a membership group for a given individual. To account for this problem it might be useful to distinguish between conformity and compliance.

Pollis (1967) has defined conformity as behavior consistent with previously internalized judgmental standards. That is, conformity is behavior consistent under social pressure and remaining consistent when the social pressure is subsequently removed. He defined compliance as behavior inconsistent with previously internalized judgmental scales. That is, compliance is behavior consistent under social pressure which does not persist in the absence of the social pressure.

Using an auditory stimulus situation Pollis (1967) studied the resistance to change of experimental norms established under one of three conditions: an alone, a togetherness (pairs of strangers) and a group condition. He demonstrated that subjects forming experimental norms in the presence of persons with whom they had established social relationships resisted pressures to change their judgmental norms significantly more than subjects forming norms with strangers (togetherness) or subjects forming norms alone.

Pollis and Montgomery (1966), using judgments of autokinetic movement, found that individuals forming norms alone conformed least to previously established norms and complied most with majority pressure to change their judgmental scales. Subjects forming norms with strangers conformed more to their previously internalized scales of judgment and complied less than subjects in the alone condition. Subjects forming norms with their group members conformed the most to their previous judgmental scales and complied least with pressure to shift their judgments.

Thus behavior consistent with previously internalized ego-involving norms acquired in interaction with group members is viewed as conformity and not compliance. Following Pollis (1967) we may state that the attitudes (internalized norms) most influential in determining the specific character of our experience and behavior are those formed in interaction with groups and organizations in which we are not only members but with which we identify. These are our reference groups.

The concept reference group, when taken with Pollis's distinction between conformity and compliance, represents that collectivity, group or institution the norms of which the individual is using as his personal judgmental scales, to which he is conforming. These attitudes, formed in relation to the norms of the individual's group, define his relatedness to various social stimuli and are functional in the achievement of need satisfaction. As such they constitute a part of the individual's ego-system. Since a reference group is the source of attitudes formed in relation to specific social stimuli it is in the study of attitudes that reference group identification might be determined.

In laboratory studies simple perceptual-judgmental tasks have been used successfully to indicate an individual's attitudes. The basic idea underlying this approach is that a subject's attitudes when confronted with relevant stimuli become important factors in determining his responses to even simple judgments. Thus when measuring attitudes in the laboratory it is necessary to select an experimental method that allows the subject's own attitudes to determine his response to the stimuli. A study by Thrasher (1954), utilizing a

psychophysical stimulus, established that subjects confronted with objectively well structured stimulus situations tend to perceive the stimuli in terms of the structure present in the situation. This study also demonstrated that the more the stimulus field was lacking in objective structure the greater the effect of internal factors within the individual in shaping the perception of the stimuli. For example, Thrasher demonstrated that internal factors such as established friendship patterns with other subjects invariably become dominant factors in influencing the perception and judgment when more objective structure is lacking. The study by Thrasher (1954) indicates that the more uncertain the stimulus situation the more important an attitude can become in shaping the individual's response.

When simple judgmental tasks are used in studying attitudes the experimenter must fulfill three requirements. The stimulus presented to the subject must be relevant to the attitudes being studied. The researcher must make certain that there is a definite lack of objective structure in the presentation of the stimulus, thus allowing the subject's previously formed attitudes in relation to the desired stimulus to become dominant factors in determining his response. Finally, the task should always be presented to the subject such that it appears unrelated to the behavior being studied in the experiment (Sherif & Sherif, 1956). In this context Hammond (1948) has demonstrated that subjects' responses are differentially effected if they are aware of the behavior studied in an experiment. The experimenter and the experimental situation are not neutral stimuli to the subject. Using a more indirect method that is also lacking in structure helps to elicit the subject's attitudes in relation to the stimuli without arousing his

defenses. Credible cover stories for the study are useful in this context. These three requirements can be adapted to many situations.

#### Purpose of the Study

Experimentally operationalizing the term reference group at the social psychological level of analysis necessitates the development of techniques to (1) identify an individual's reference groups; (2) identify the norms important to the group in relation to specific social stimuli; and (3) determine behaviorally the attitudes (reflective of group norms) forming the individual's personal judgmental scales that define his relatedness to ego-involving stimuli. These attitudes would be distinguished from those that are inferred from the subject's behavior but which prove inconsistent with his internalized reference scales. The former would be labeled as reference group attitudes and the latter as non-reference group attitudes. This research will be an exploratory study of an experimental method to determine whether a membership group is also a reference group for a given individual.

## CHAPTER II

### PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESES

The goal of this research was to develop an experimental method to determine whether a given membership group is functioning as a reference group for an individual. An experimental situation was employed in which an individual's judgments of relevant social stimuli were studied. This approach was deemed appropriate for the reasons presented in the previous discussion and amplified below.

#### Approach to Attitude Measurement

It can be said that an individual's reference groups are those from which he acquires the ego-attitudes central to his self concept, feelings of well being and need satisfaction. These attitudes are formed in relation to the stimuli, values, beliefs, peoples, places, groups, etc. most important in the individual's scheme of things. It is questionable whether attempts to measure ego-attitudes have proven successful when using direct attitude measurement techniques. It is obvious that no researcher, his questions, his manner of inquiry or the stated purpose of his study would be neutral stimuli to the subject. The researcher and his behavior evoke the subject's own attitudinal predispositions toward answering personal questions from strangers, his personal prejudices, attempts to appear to be a certain type person, etc. Public opinion polls, undisguised interviews and

direct questionnaires are not too useful in studying private stands on controversial issues without arousing defensive responses. To study these attitudes it seems more practical to employ an indirect approach. An indirect method minimizes the possibilities of eliciting the subject's defensive attitudes. If it is unstructured it also allows him to respond in terms of his own personal values.

### The Stimulus and Its Presentation

The stimuli in relation to which reference group attitudes are formed must be presented in the experimental situation to obtain a measure of reference group behavior. It is the individual's attitudes in relation to certain stimuli that identify reference group behavior. These attitudes originate in interpersonal interaction which is likely to be highly personal to the individual. Thus in the experiment the stimuli evoking these reference group attitudes are likely to be very visible. When presenting the relevant stimuli in relation to which these attitudes have been formed the stimulus must not stand out unnaturally in the subject's perception of the experiment. Again this might elicit attitudes of defensiveness conducive to "role playing" or compliant behavior rather than responses consistent with his previously internalized reference group attitudes. In terms of the subject's perception, the stimulus relevant to his reference group attitudes must not be viewed as the subject of the study.

The presentation of the stimulus must also allow the subject to make alternative responses in relation to the relevant stimuli. Past research has demonstrated that this lack of structure is conducive to allowing the subject's own attitudes to become the dominant factors in

determining his responses (Thrasher, 1954). It is these natural responses to pertinent stimuli reflecting the subject's personal attitudinal predispositions that must be measured experimentally.

#### Distinguishing Conformity from Compliance

The experimental method must also provide the ability to distinguish between an individual conforming to reference group attitudes and one merely complying with perceived social expectations. In this context the studies of Pollis (1967) and Pollis and Montgomery (1966) may prove useful. Pollis determined that those values or norms formed in social interaction with one's group members were those that resisted change most and were least variable over time. These attitudes, however, were formed in relation to an auditory stimulus and not one of lasting personal significance to the subjects. Yet the results do parallel those obtained in field studies of natural groups for the individuals studied. In this case the norms formed in group interaction and internalized as individual attitudes in relation to stimuli important to the group were reported as lasting group products. They were also relatively consistent in the influence they exerted on a member's behavior when alone and confronted with the same stimuli (Sherif & Sherif, 1964).

Considering these factors an experimental situation was employed in which individual responses to relevant social stimuli were indirectly analyzed in terms of simple judgments. The social stimuli presented to the subjects were chosen to be (1) ego-involving and, (2) at least in terms of face validity, relevant to the norms of the group. The content of the stimuli presented was either negative or positive in



affect. This was done to increase the ego-involving aspect of the stimuli and elicit the subject's characteristic responses to the stimuli in terms of his reference group attitudes. The stimulus was presented among other related topics so as to be as inconspicuous as possible. A false cover was given as the purpose of the study. The subject was also subjected to social pressure to change his judgment thus providing a simple measure of conformity or compliance.

From the previous research it does seem clear that lasting attitudes are internalized in individuals in the process of social interaction with group members. Accordingly, the subjects in this study were fraternity men, and the stimuli presented were positive and negative statements about fraternities and fraternity life. Almost without exception this form of social interaction is voluntary and never forced upon an individual. Both the individual and the fraternity have to find each other acceptable or interaction with the fraternity is terminated. In the process of an individual's socialization into a fraternity the individual must comply to the norms of the group or he will never be accepted as a member.

Part of the socialization process in a fraternity, as in any group, is acquiring positive in-group attitudes distinguishable by feelings of belongingness and common identity with the group. This affective predisposition colors the individual's perception of the norms of the group, its standards of conduct, and matters important to the group. These norms, beliefs, and activities come to be seen as desirable and good in themselves as well as the socialized members' own personal standards. Following Pollis and Montgomery (1966) we would expect a subject who has not internalized the group norms to be

distinguished from one who has by greater compliance with social pressure to make negative evaluations of his group rather than conformity to previously established positive evaluations of the group.

Accordingly the experiment was divided into three phases. In phase I a baseline measure of attitudes was obtained in relation to the ego-involving stimuli. In phase II the stimuli, in equivalent form, were presented to the subject again. This was an experimental session in which the naive subject was subjected to social pressure by three "planted" subjects. This was an attempt to induce a change in the naive subject's previous attitudinal position in relation to the relevant stimulus. The degree of shift relative to each subject's previously stated attitudes in phase I was the dependent measure in the study.

Those individuals conforming most to previous positive evaluations of their group, and complying least with social pressure in phase II to shift to negative evaluations, would also be expected to show a differential interaction pattern from those complying most and conforming least to previous judgmental scales. That is, those subjects who have internalized the group norms as their pattern of relatedness to things of group importance would seem to be those participating more in group activities. It would be generally expected that individuals higher in conformity participate more in group activities and those higher in compliance participate less in group activities. Phase III of this study attempted to determine a qualitative measure of each individual's participation in group activities. Through the use of a disguised interview employing open-ended questions subjects were categorized into one of the three groupings: (1) those subjects for whom

the fraternity was a reference group; (2) those subjects ambivalent about the fraternity as a reference group; and (3) those subjects for whom the fraternity was not a reference group. The responses of the subjects in each category were compared with their responses in phase II. The categorization of subjects in phase III was conducted without knowledge of the results of phases I and II.

### Hypotheses

From the research of Pollis (1964), Pollis and Montgomery (1966) and the field studies of natural groups by Sherif and Sherif (1964), the following predictions are made:

I. Subjects expressing membership attitudes, positive evaluation of the fraternity in relation to the social stimuli presented in phase I, and maintaining those attitudes under social pressure to make a negative evaluation of their groups in phase II will be independently categorized as individuals for whom the fraternity is a reference group in phase III.

II. Subjects expressing membership attitudes, positive evaluations of the fraternity in relation to the social stimulus presented in phase I, and shifting to a stronger membership position when confronted with social pressure to make a negative evaluation of their groups in phase II will be independently categorized as individuals for whom the fraternity is a reference group in phase III.

III. Subjects expressing membership attitudes, positive evaluation of the fraternity in relation to the social stimuli presented in phase I, and shifting to negative attitudes when confronted with social pressure to make a negative evaluation of their groups in phase II will

be independently categorized as individuals for whom the fraternity is not a reference group or who are ambivalent about the fraternity as a reference group in phase III.

- a. Those subjects shifting most to negative evaluations of the group will be most often categorized as individuals for whom the fraternity is not a reference group.
- b. Those subjects shifting less than the non-reference group category of subjects will be most often categorized as ambivalent about the fraternity as a reference group.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

#### Subjects

The forty-five subjects selected for study were undergraduate males living in fraternities at Oklahoma State University. Subjects were selected during phase I from all male students taking introductory psychology and sociology courses. This selection was based on the subjects' indication that they lived in fraternities when giving their addresses on an information sheet in the phase I questionnaire.

Forty-seven per cent of the subjects were college freshmen, forty-two per cent were sophomores, nine per cent were juniors and two per cent were seniors. Sixty-four per cent of the subjects had interacted with their fraternities long enough to become formal members (at Oklahoma State University this would normally be six to ten school months). Thirty-six per cent of the subjects had not interacted with their fraternities long enough to become formal members.

#### Design

The experiment was divided into three phases. In phase I a baseline position representing the subject's attitude about his fraternity (membership group) was established. In phase II changes in the subject's positive evaluation of fraternities when confronted with negative evaluations from a "planted" majority were measured in an experimental

situation. In phase III an interview was conducted in which the subject was categorized as either (1) taking the fraternity as a reference group; (2) ambivalent about the fraternity as a reference group; or (3) not taking the fraternity as a reference group. Each phase of the experiment was conducted independently and without knowledge of the data collected in the other phases.

Each subject participated in what appeared to the subjects to be three different projects. These projects were the three phases of the experiment. Phases I, II, and III of the study were performed by different research assistants under the direction of the author. Each phase was conducted in a different location and with a different stated purpose. Every similarity, or possible connection, between the three phases was minimized. This was deemed necessary to preserve the cover that these studies were unrelated, thus allowing the experimenter to make repeated measures of a subject without the subject's knowledge. This was necessary since some of the subjects interacted daily with others in their fraternity who had also participated in this research. The procedure used minimized the possibility of subjects discussing among themselves the experiments they had participated in, noticing anything suspicious and reverting to "role playing" in phase II or III.

#### Instruments

Three different questionnaires were used to gather data on the subject's attitude about his membership group. In phase I the first questionnaire was a pencil and paper instrument administered in basic psychology and sociology classes. In phase II the second questionnaire was made into a tape recording to which the naive subject and three

plants responded aloud in an experimental situation. In phase III the third questionnaire was used as an open-ended interview with items designed to determine a subject's reference group identification.

Since repeated measures were needed to determine experimentally the subject's attitude toward his fraternity, those items on which displacement was measured had to be comparable. The subjects were presented with the stimuli about their membership group within a short time span of one to three weeks. Because the probability was great that the items about fraternities were highly visible to at least some subjects, a procedure was necessitated to reduce the similarity. This procedure served to lessen suspicions of the subjects as to what was actually being studied, thus helping to insure more natural responses. Accordingly, different questionnaires were used in phases I and II. To reduce the visibility of the stimulus material in the questionnaire, both critical and non-critical items had to blend such that the focus of study was not obvious.

#### Non-Critical Items

Seven general topic areas relevant to the environment of the subjects were chosen as the source of the non-critical items. They were: (1) everyday college experiences, (2) dormitory living in college, (3) collegiate sports, (4) college academics, (5) campus politics, (6) college administration, (7) college religious experiences. The topic of fraternity living was the source of the critical items. Both critical and non-critical items were written in such a way that the wording of the critical items did not make them obvious as the point of study. All items were either positive or negative in affect; no

neutral items were used. The questionnaires in phases I and II consisted of thirty-eight items with an approximately equal number of items dealing with each of the topics (listed above) in each instrument.

### Critical Items

There were four critical items on each instrument. They consisted of two positive and two negative statements about fraternities. It was thought that the same items on both instruments would be too recognizable, so the items in phase I were rewritten and used in phase II as follows:

#### Phase I

1. In a fraternity it's sort of difficult to really be yourself (item 33).
2. One of the best ways to have all the good things in college life is to belong to a fraternity (item 8).
3. Being in a fraternity sort of helps to complete a student's education (item 15).
4. All fraternities are just snobbish, conceited little groups (item 26).

#### Phase II

1. It's kind of hard to just be yourself when you live in a fraternity (item 7).
2. Fraternity life is one of the best ways to experience the finer things in college life (item 15).
3. A student's education is more complete if he has lived in a fraternity (item 26).
4. On every campus the most self-centered, stuck-up cliques are always fraternities (item 33).

In rewording the four items the author attempted to convey the same information with the same degree or direction of affect. The positive or negative affect was made comparable by using similar adjectives. The distinction between extreme and moderate statements was also maintained within each statement.

A different but comparable five-point Likert scale was used in



phases I and II. The same scale was not used in order to reduce any similarity in the two instruments. In phase I the scale used was: Very Pro, Pro, Neutral, Anti, and Very Anti. In phase II the scale used was: Very Positive, Positive, Neutral or Middle, Negative, and Very Negative.

#### Phase I: Establishment of Baseline Attitudes

A questionnaire was administered to approximately 1500 students in introductory psychology and sociology classes (Appendix A). The members of social fraternities were the only subjects of interest. However, by having all students in class fill in the questionnaire the subjects being studied were unaware of this and suspicion of anything different from what the instrument purported to measure was minimized. The cover of the questionnaire was labeled as a master's project in the Department of Sociology titled "A Study of the Student's Perception of College Life." Twenty graduate assistants administered the questionnaire for the experimenter in the classrooms, stating that they were doing so for someone else. A fictitious name was used on the front of the instrument.

#### Phase II: Measuring Shifts in Subject's Attitudes About the Membership Group When Confronted with a Conflicting Majority

In phase II subjects obtained in phase I were telephoned by a female assistant and asked to participate in a psychology experiment. All of the subjects were told that their names had been selected at random from enrollment lists. Upon agreeing to participate they were

told when and where the experiment would be conducted and the name of the person who would be running the experiment. The author did not appear or take part in phase II. By using an assistant to gather the data the author remained unassociated with phase II.

Each subject was told he would be paid \$2.00 for serving as a subject. Of the seventy-eight subjects gained in phase I, seventy subjects agreed to participate in phase II and fifty-two actually attended the experimental session. On the average three to four subjects were contacted from each of twenty social fraternities. This small number of subjects from each fraternity minimized the probability of rumors arising about this phase of the research.

If a subject agreed to participate he was scheduled for a particular time a few days in advance. All subjects were reminded of the experiment by a post card. To help the subjects remember their scheduled time they were instructed to keep their post cards and bring them with them. On the day of the experiment the subject was reminded by phone. If he did not come he was rescheduled, and if possible another subject was contacted to fill the vacant time.

Phase II was conducted in a small classroom. When the subject arrived he was asked to wait in an anteroom with three other subjects (actually collaborators serving as planted subjects) waiting to participate in the same study. A female assistant collected the post cards from the naive subject and those provided by the researcher for each planted subject. When all four subjects were present the assistant escorted them into the classroom.

In the classroom the four subjects sat facing another assistant across a table. A tape recorder with the instrument used in phase II

recorded on it, the data sheets used to record responses and a cardboard sign sitting upright with a five-point scale printed on it were centered on the table. Once in the room the assistant casually suggested where each subject should sit, the naive subject sitting in the fourth seat so that his responses would be preceded by those of the plants. This seating arrangement was planned to create maximum social pressure for the naive subject to comply with the plants on the critical items concerning fraternities.

If the naive subject happened to sit in a middle seat the assistant corrected this by a simple technique. When all the subjects were seated he wrote their last names on a data sheet used to record each subject's responses. The assistant would purposely copy (in ink) the names in the wrong order, casually discover the mistake, and apologetically ask the subjects to switch seats. The order was always the same: the three plants giving their judgments first and then the naive subject making his judgment.

When all subjects were seated in the proper order the assistant read the following instructions:

You have been asked here to participate in some research on attitudes. The purpose of this study is to explore the meaningfulness of student participation in the campus environment. This is an area in which there has been much discussion and research.

Tonight you will be presented with several statements about campus life. Each statement will be repeated twice. You will use the scale in front of you to respond to these statements. The scale ranges from two pluses, Very Positive; one plus, Positive; zero, Neutral; one minus, Negative; two minuses, Very Negative. This is a common scale used in such research. You are to respond aloud according to your personal view of each statement by using this scale.

The assistant answered any questions about the procedure and then began the experiment. In phase II the instrument used was made into a

tape recording and presented identically to all the subjects (Appendix B). This was done to reduce similarities between this instrument and the one these same subjects had filled out in phase I. It also reduced unnecessary variance in the presentation of the stimuli as might have occurred if the instrument had been verbally presented by the assistant.

The plants were trained in practice sessions to give certain responses on specific items. These items on which responses were prescribed by the researcher were the four critical items and the two statements immediately preceding each critical item. On all other non-critical items the plants were instructed to vary their judgments. Using this method natural appearing variation was maintained in the overall judgments of the plants. It was obvious that the statements about fraternities were not the only items on which the plants were unanimous. It was felt that this mixture of unity and variance in responses was normal enough not to arouse any suspicion in the naive subject. It also presented the naive subject with the unanimous conflicting judgment necessary to create the social pressure on the critical items.

After the session was finished each subject was paid \$2.00, signed a receipt for his money and left the classroom. The naive subject was the last to be paid and sign the subject receipt sheet. The assistant engaged him in a conversation long enough to allow the plants to step into an adjoining room. When the naive subject emerged he was the only one left in the anteroom. Using this procedure the subjects were run every forty-five minutes. The method enabled the assistant to use the same plants repeatedly without the subjects being collectively aware of it.

No naive subjects from the same fraternity were scheduled on the same day for phase II. This was done to reduce the possibility of rumors starting among the subjects discussing their similar experiences.

Phase III: Interview to Categorize Subjects as Using the  
Fraternity as a Reference Group, Not Using the  
Fraternity as a Reference Group, or  
Ambivalent About the Fraternity  
as a Reference Group

Subjects completing phases I and II were telephoned by the researcher and asked to participate in a survey being done by the Manpower Research Center. The researcher explained that he was a graduate assistant in the Manpower Program and was conducting interviews for his survey. Any one who participated would be paid about \$2.00 an hour, the subjects were told. Of the forty-six subjects agreeing to participate, forty-five were interviewed. When a subject agreed to help he was given a definite time for his interview. He was reminded a day ahead of time by post card and again the day of the interview by phone.

Phase III was conducted in the Manpower Research Center in the Business Building at Oklahoma State University. The interviews lasted about forty-five minutes and were tape recorded without the subject's knowledge. To make the subject feel at ease nothing he said was written down during this interview. This was done to make the interview more relaxed and to allow the subjects to feel free enough to respond spontaneously. The researcher began the interview by thanking the subject for coming and telling him how much he appreciated the

subject's help. The researcher then paid the subject for helping with the survey. From the very beginning the subject was engaged in friendly small talk. The interviewer inquired where he was from, why he came to Oklahoma State University or anything that appeared appropriate. Through this process the interview was begun in a friendly atmosphere in which the interviewer tried to get the subject to talk freely about himself. When rapport was established the researcher repeated from memory the purpose of the study:

(Subject's Name), I am a Fellow in the Manpower Program here in the Department of Economics. This is an interdisciplinary program made up of students from several departments, all training to be Manpower researchers. This project you are helping me with serves two purposes: (1) it is part of an internship for my degree and (2) it gives me a chance to use some of the statistical and methodological techniques I have been learning in other courses. What I am working on, along with all the other Manpower Fellows, is how institutions effect the solutions of Manpower problems. Because my background is in psychology, I am studying (1) how individuals perceive institutions, (2) how they relate to them, and (3) how much they are satisfied by the institutions that serve them.

I have selected the campus and its institutions as my subject for study. The institutions I am concerned with are the administration, the faculty, the student body with its regulations; the physical structure of the campus and its regulations, and all the organizations on and off campus.

At this point the subject was shown a letter from the Dean of Men approving the project and asking all students participating to cooperate fully. The experimenter then repeated from memory:

(Subject's Name), I want you to know that everything we do and say here is absolutely confidential. After you leave I'll just jot down a few notes from what you have told me. I'll combine these and all my other notes to write my research report this summer when I am finished. Your name and what you tell me will not appear in any specific manner. OK?

The interview then began. It consisted of forty questions all of which were open-ended allowing the subject to say as much or little

as he pleased (Appendix C). Throughout the interview the researcher tried to maintain a relaxed atmosphere by working each question into the conversation. There was no fixed order for the questions.

The topic of the survey (used as a cover) was "Institutions as They Are Perceived by the People They Serve." The university administration, the faculty, student body and student regulations, the physical construction of the university and all the organizations on and off campus were being studied as "institutions," the subject was told. Thus the subject could legitimately be asked questions about his fraternity.

The discussion of a subject's relationship to his fraternity, the amount of time he spent with his fellow members, what activities he participated in and ~~those~~ he did not, whether he intended to continue to live in the fraternity, why he pledged his fraternity, how happy he was with it, and how it had changed for him since he began associating with it were all woven into the general conversation. Generally, each fraternity question was prefaced by items asking for similar opinions or information about some other "institution" also being studied. At the end of the interview the experimenter asked each subject what he thought of the study. No subjects appeared alarmed or upset, and many said they enjoyed it and were glad they could help. The researcher thanked the subject and escorted him out of the building.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In this research reference group identification is measured by comparing the degree of judgmental displacement from phase I to phase II with the categories assigned each subject in phase III. The category assigned to each subject in the phase III interview was based on three factors: a content analysis of each interview, the group activities each subject said he engaged in, and the interviewer's subjective impressions of the subject.

The content analysis of the interviews in phase III was performed by tape recording all sessions and analyzing them for content themes in six categories: positive, neutral and negative themes stated about the subject's local fraternity chapter and positive, neutral and negative themes toward the subject's national fraternity organization or fraternities in general. A theme was defined as a phrase, a sentence, or even a word that expressed a single idea or thought about some object.

The subject's behavioral activities as he related them were also recorded from the interview. These were used to determine some estimate of his activity in his fraternity.

Finally the researcher's subjective impressions of the subject's interest and involvement in his fraternity were also taken into consideration in categorizing each subject as taking the fraternity as a



reference group, ambivalent about the fraternity as a reference group, or not taking the fraternity as a reference group.

Chi-square analyses of the distributions of positive, neutral and negative themes expressed by subjects classified as reference group, ambivalent and non-reference group were performed. The distribution of affective themes for subjects assigned to the reference group and subjects assigned to the non-reference group category were both significant at the .01 level. Approximately 70 per cent of all themes expressed toward the local chapter and fraternities in general by subjects in the reference group category were positive in affect. In contrast, approximately 66 per cent of all themes toward the chapter and fraternities in general for subjects in the non-reference group category were negative in affect. The distribution of all themes expressed by subjects in the ambivalent category were approximately equal and not significant by the Chi-square test. All subjects tended to use the same proportion of affective themes to discuss the local chapter of their fraternity as they did when discussing fraternities in general. This analysis of affective themes was used to support the categorization of subjects into the three groups in phase III.

The mean frequency of affective themes expressed by subjects during the interview were distributed as shown in Table I. Table I shows a decreasing average frequency of positive themes in the order of the reference group, the ambivalent and the non-reference group category of subjects. This held true for the attitudes toward the local chapter as well as fraternities in general. There is also an increasing frequency of negative themes in the order of the reference group category, the ambivalent category, and the non-reference group

TABLE I

MEAN FREQUENCY OF POSITIVE, NEUTRAL AND NEGATIVE THEMES EXPRESSED  
TOWARD THE LOCAL CHAPTER AND FRATERNITIES IN GENERAL

Classification of Subjects in Relation to Fraternity	Themes Expressed Toward Local Chapter of Fraternity			Themes Expressed Toward Fraternities in General		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Reference Group	8.72	2.50	.93	7.60	2.40	.89
Ambivalent	6.36	5.70	5.70	5.30	3.00	3.60
Non-Reference Group	1.30	3.00	9.70	.60	2.00	4.40

category of subjects. Again this holds true for the attitudes expressed toward the local chapter and fraternities in general.

Under social pressure the mean amount of displacement in attitudinal position from phase I to phase II was greatest for the non-reference group category of subjects ( $\bar{X} = 5.33$ ). This was expected. The reference group category of subjects ranked second in the amount of displacement under social pressure ( $\bar{X} = 1.79$ ). This was not expected. The ambivalent category of subjects displaced the least under social pressure ( $\bar{X} = 1.00$ ). This, of course, was also not expected. Out of 45 subjects, 38 were classified in the reference group category, 4 in the ambivalent category and 3 in the non-reference group category. The small number of subjects in this research classified in the non-reference group and ambivalent category may have produced the unexpected ordering of the degree of displacement in the three categories.

When the mean amounts of displacement for all three categories were compared with one another by a Duncan's Range Test each mean was found to differ significantly from the other two (Table II).

The mean positive themes taken from the content analysis of the phase III interview were compared for the reference group, ambivalent and non-reference group categories by a Duncan's Range Test. Each of the three means was found to differ significantly from the other two (Table III).

The mean negative themes taken from the content analysis of the phase III interview were compared for the reference group, ambivalent and non-reference group categories by a Duncan's Range Test. Again each of the three means was found to differ significantly from the other two (Table IV).

TABLE II

A COMPARISON OF THE MEAN AMOUNT OF DISPLACEMENT (PHASE I TO PHASE II)  
ACROSS THE THREE CATEGORIES: REFERENCE GROUP, AMBIVALENT  
AND NON-REFERENCE GROUP

Categories Compared	Mean Amount Displacement	df	P<*
Reference Group vs. Ambivalent	1.79 vs. 1.00	43,43	.05
Reference Group vs. Non-Reference Group	1.79 vs. 5.33	43,43	.05
Non-Reference Group vs. Ambivalent	5.33 vs. 1.00	43,43	.05

\*Duncan's Range Test (McGuigan, 1968, p. 204).

TABLE III

A COMPARISON OF THE MEAN POSITIVE THEMES (PHASE III) AMONG  
THE THREE CATEGORIES: - REFERENCE GROUP, AMBIVALENT  
AND NON-REFERENCE GROUP

Categories Compared	Mean Positive Themes	df	P<*
Reference Group vs. Ambivalent	8.72 vs. 6.36	43,43	.05
Reference Group vs. Non-Reference Group	8.72 vs. 1.30	43,43	.05
Non-Reference Group vs. Ambivalent	1.30 vs. 6.36	43,43	.05

\*Duncan's Range Test (McGuigan, 1968, p. 204).

TABLE IV

A COMPARISON OF THE MEAN NEGATIVE THEMES (PHASE III) AMONG  
THE THREE CATEGORIES: REFERENCE GROUP, AMBIVALENT  
AND NON-REFERENCE GROUP

Categories Compared	Mean Negative Themes	df	P <sub>α</sub> *
Reference Group vs. Ambivalent	9.60 vs. 5.70	43,43	.05
Reference Group vs. Non-Reference Group	9.60 vs. .93	43,43	.05
Non-Reference Group vs. Ambivalent	.93 vs. 5.70	43,43	.05

\*Duncan's Range Test (McGuigan, 1968, p. 204).

A comparison between the summed mean displacement (phase I to phase II) is presented in Table V. From Table V it may be seen that the reference group category of subjects remained the closest to the strongest possible membership position of 20 in phase II. The ambivalent category of the subjects remained the second closest to the strongest membership position while the non-reference group category of subjects shifted to the weakest membership position.

TABLE V

A COMPARISON OF THE SUMMED MEAN SCALE POSITION ON THE CRITICAL ITEMS (PHASE I TO PHASE I): WITH A TOTAL OF 20 POSSIBLE POINTS INDICATING STRONGEST MEMBERSHIP POSITION

Phase III Interview	Mean Summed Position On Critical Items Phase I	Mean Summed Position On Critical Items Phase II
Reference Group	18.15	16.05
Ambivalent	15.75	14.75
Non-Reference Group	16.30	11.00

A comparison of the shift in attitudinal positions from phase I to phase II and the categorization of subjects in phase III produced the distribution in Table VI.

On the basis of the data in Table VI the following conclusions about the hypotheses are made.

Hypothesis I stated that subjects expressing membership attitudes in phase I and maintaining those attitudes in phase II would be

TABLE VI

A COMPARISON OF THE DEGREE OF DISPLACEMENT (PHASE I TO PHASE II) WITH THE THREE CATEGORIES ASSIGNED IN PHASE III: REFERENCE GROUP, AMBIVALENT AND NON-REFERENCE GROUP

Algebraic Sum of Total Displacement on Critical Items (Phase I to Phase II)	Categorizations Based on the Interview in Phase III	Algebraic Sum of Total Displacement on Critical Items (Phase I to Phase II)	Categorizations Based on the Interview in Phase III
+2	Ambivalent	-2	Reference Group
+2	Reference Group	-2	Reference Group
+2	Reference Group	-2	Reference Group
+2	Reference Group	-3	Ambivalent
+1	Reference Group	-3	Non-Reference Group
+1	Reference Group	-3	Reference Group
+1	Reference Group	-4	Non-Reference Group
0	Reference Group	-4	Reference Group
0	Reference Group	-4	Reference Group
0	Reference Group	-4	Reference Group
0	Reference Group	-4	Reference Group
0	Reference Group	-4	Reference Group
0	Reference Group	-4	Reference Group
-1	Ambivalent	-5	Reference Group
-1	Reference Group	-5	Reference Group
-1	Reference Group	-5	Reference Group
-1	Reference Group	-5	Reference Group
-1	Reference Group	-5	Reference Group
-1	Reference Group	-5	Reference Group
-1	Reference Group	-6	Reference Group
-1	Reference Group	-7	Reference Group
-2	Ambivalent	-8	Reference Group
-2	Reference Group	-9	Non-Reference Group
-2	Reference Group		



independently categorized in phase III as individuals for whom the fraternity functioned as a reference group. Hypothesis I received only weak support from the data presented in Table VI. From Table VI it may be seen that all subjects not shifting their position in phase II (all subjects with zero) were assigned to the reference group category in phase III. The hypothesis is only partially supported, however, because of the large number of subjects assigned to the reference group category that shifted negatively.

Hypothesis II stated that subjects expressing membership attitudes in phase I and shifting to a stronger position in phase II would be independently categorized in the phase III interview as individuals for whom the fraternity functioned as a reference group. It received only weak support from the data in Table VI. Of the seven subjects shifting to a stronger position (all subjects with positive shifts) in phase II six were independently assigned to the reference group category and one to the ambivalent category. As with hypothesis I this prediction receives only partial support due to the large number of subjects assigned to the reference group category that did shift negatively.

Hypothesis III (a) stated that subjects expressing membership attitudes in phase I and displacing the most to weaker positions (subjects with negative shifts) in phase II would be most often assigned to the non-reference group category. Hypothesis III (a) was not supported by the data in Table VI. It was expected that subjects displacing to the weakest positions (defined in this research as displacement exceeding the median of the total range of negative displacement, i.e., -4) would be assigned to the non-reference group category in

phase III. Nine subjects displaced past the median of the total range of negative shifts. Of these eight were assigned to the reference group category while only one was categorized as non-reference group.

Hypothesis III (b) stated that subjects expressing membership attitudes in phase I and displacing less than the non-reference group subjects, i.e., less than -5, but more than the reference group subjects, i.e., -1 or more, would be assigned to the ambivalent category. It was not supported by the data in Table VI. There were twenty-three subjects that displaced away from the membership group less than the median of the total range of negative displacements. It was predicted that these subjects would be classified in the ambivalent category. Of these twenty-three, eighteen were assigned to the reference group category, three were placed in the ambivalent category, and two were labeled as not taking the fraternity as a reference group.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was the exploration of an experimental method to determine whether or not a given membership group also functioned as a reference group for an individual. Subjects were selected from fraternities in which they lived and interacted daily. All subjects participated in a three phase study. Each phase was made to appear as a different study. In phase I a baseline position representing the subject's attitudes about his fraternity (membership group) was established with a questionnaire administered in classrooms. Phase II was an experimental situation in which the subject was confronted with negative evaluations of fraternities from a "planted" majority. Any change in his previously stated attitudes about fraternities was measured in this session. In phase II a different questionnaire from the one used in phase I was administered from a tape recording to the subject and three plants. This questionnaire had the same number of comparable critical items as the questionnaire used in phase I. In phase III an interview employing open-ended questions was conducted. The interview was recorded by a hidden tape recorder. A content analysis of each subject's affective statements about fraternities, the group interaction each subject stated he engaged in, and the interviewer's subjective impressions of each subject's involvement in his fraternity were used to assign each subject to one of three categories.

Each subject was labeled as either (1) taking the fraternity as a reference group, (2) ambivalent about the fraternity as a reference group, or (3) not taking the fraternity as a reference group. The displacement on the critical items (about fraternities), when the subjects were confronted with pressure to evaluate the items negatively (adopt a non-reference group position), was the dependent variable in this study. Each subject's displacement on the critical items was compared with the category to which he was assigned in the third phase.

The content analysis of the recorded interviews determined the frequency of positive, neutral, and negative references to the subject's local chapter and fraternities in general. The mean affective reference for the three categories to which subjects were assigned were also compared with the mean displacement of the subjects for each of the three categories.

The results imply that an accurate determination of an individual's reference group could not be made using the degree of displacement in an individual's judgments occurring under social pressure. Only 38 per cent of the subjects studied displaced their judgments as predicted. However, the extremely small proportion of subjects assigned to the ambivalent and non-reference group categories does not allow a thorough evaluation of the method. The small per centage of subjects displacing as predicted may have been due to the number of subjects studied.

Hypotheses I and II predicted that those subjects for whom the fraternity functioned as a reference group would hold their original attitude toward fraternities or shift positively in the second phase. Though these predictions received partial support from the data in

Table VI they account for only 15 per cent of all the subjects studied. Of the 13 subjects displacing positively or not changing at all 12 were categorized as taking the fraternity as a reference group as predicted. One subject was assigned to a category not in line with the predictions.

Hypothesis III (a) predicted that those subjects not taking the fraternity as a reference group would displace the most under social pressure in the second phase. It was not supported by the data in Table VI. In terms of the shift in judgmental position in the experimental sessions the non-reference group category was defined as a shift to a weaker membership group position exceeding the median of the negative range of displacements. Of the subjects in this range of displacements only 13 per cent were categorized as not taking the fraternity as their reference group. Eighty-seven per cent of these subjects were labeled as taking the fraternity as their reference group.

Hypothesis III (b) predicted that those subjects ambivalent about the fraternity as a reference group though displacing negatively would not displace as far as the non-reference group category in phase III. This hypothesis was not supported by the data in Table VI. In terms of the shift in judgmental position in the experimental session, ambivalence was defined as displacement to a weaker membership group position that did not exceed the median of the total range of negative displacements. Of the subjects in this range of displacements only 19 per cent were categorized as ambivalent as predicted. Seventy-five per cent of the subjects in this range of displacement were categorized as reference group subjects and the remaining 6 per cent as non-reference group. Thus, 81 per cent of the subjects shifting to the ambivalent range when

confronted with social pressure to evaluate fraternities negatively were not recognized as ambivalent in the phase III interview.

The content analysis compared the mean positive, neutral and negative references to the fraternity with the mean amount of displacement of each category assigned in phase III. The non-reference group category of subjects displaced to the most negative membership group positions under social pressure. They also tended to give the most negative and least positive membership group references in the phase III interview. The ambivalent category of subjects tended to displace the least under social pressure. Though they displaced the least, they only ranked second in the number of positive and negative references to the fraternity and fraternities in general. The reference group category of subjects ranked second in displacement under social pressure but made the highest number of positive and the lowest number of negative references to fraternities. The differences in all these means were significant to the .05 level. However, the relation was not as would be expected between the order of displacement and the frequency of affective themes about the fraternity. Again the small number of subjects perceived as ambivalent about taking the fraternity as a reference group or not taking the fraternity as a reference group could be responsible for this reversed order.

#### Discussion of Experimental Results

The results indicate that the method employed in this research was not successful in determining whether a given membership group was functioning as a reference group for an individual. In evaluating the method's failure five points will be discussed. Were the critical

items ego-involving considering individual differences in the subject's interaction within the fraternity and its effects on his motives for membership? Was the social pressure created in the experimental session excessive? Was it feasible to use an interview to determine reference group--non-reference group membership? Did the situational context in which each phase was conducted confound the research? Finally, was the phase III interview biased in the direction of the reference group category so that it would require very negative subjects to register as non-reference group subjects?

The first problem is that the critical items may not have been ego-involving for the subjects studied. If this were so, their characteristic modes of response to those stimuli would not have been elicited. The results indicate that the critical items about fraternities did elicit very few neutral responses (3 per cent). At face value we might say that the stimuli were at least minimally involving. In addition, it will be remembered that the critical items were all positive or negative statements. To the positive fraternity items the plants in phase II gave only very negative evaluations and to the negative fraternity items they gave only very positive evaluations. This presented the subject with a continual conflict between being loyal to his fraternity or standing out as the only one not agreeing with the majority. This in itself was thought to heighten the subject's ego-involvement in the stimulus situation. These were the face value assumptions about the critical items and the stimulus situation in phase II which seemed justification enough for assuming that the stimuli would be ego-involving.

However, the subject population in this research belonged to

fraternities which vary in size and hierarchical differentiation. This variation in size and their status and role relations can mean a variation in the degree of face to face interaction. Increasing size would reduce the probability of interaction and the formation of norms common to all members which are internalized as ego-attitudes and regulate their behavior. Though the critical items may have been ego-involving in terms of the topic of fraternities in general they may or may not have been attitudinally relevant to each subject. The subjects, though giving lip service to the collective values expressed in the norms of their fraternity, may have a much more limited and individual pattern of interpersonal interaction from which emerge their personal attitudes in relation to the fraternity. Thus, a person may find only certain aspects of the group's values and specific members personally important. He may not perceive his membership in the fraternity in terms of norms common to all group members but only those norms specific to a smaller clique of individuals with whom he regularly interacts. The norms internalized from this clique would more accurately characterize his attitudes toward his fraternity as his reference group. They also form the reference scales to which he conforms whereas the organizational norms may be more involved in the "role playing" he engages in as a fraternity man. In keeping with the distinction between conformity and compliance offered by Pollis (1967) this adherence to the fraternity's organizational norms that are not internalized as attitudes would be compliant behavior.

Therefore, the stimuli presented had to be ego-involving and relevant in terms of those group values and activities which were important to each subject. With this in mind, it can be seen that the critical



items in the first and second phases dealt with relatively global group values which were probably less relevant to subjects than items relating to specific motives and limited activities with their cliques in the fraternity.

It is not surprising that subjects should shift to a weak or very weak membership position when confronted with social pressure in the experimental session and still appear very committed to their fraternity in the phase III interview. The critical items may have encompassed only organizational values to which the subject publicly adheres due to social expectations in his fraternity. Thus, when the force of social expectations was reversed the subjects no longer adhered to the values previously expressed.

As stated above the critical items used in this study might have been much less relevant to the subject's own personal values than norms formed during interpersonal interaction with a smaller set of individuals. Presenting a subject critical items based on small reference group norms might have elicited responses reflecting greater ego-involvement and hence a greater tendency to polarization. Such norms internalized as the subject's own attitudes would probably have been more resistant to the social pressure in the experimental session.

The second point to be considered is the possibility of excessive social pressure in phase II where the ratio of plant to subject was 3:1. Asch (1952) found that a unanimous majority of three induced as much compliance from one subject as a majority of fifteen. Considering the possibility that the critical items were peripheral to the subject's own personal reasons for belonging to his fraternity, the number of plants and the collective impact of their negative evaluations on

the critical items may have only induced the subjects to comply with the plants on the critical items. Compliance can be thought of on a continuum from lying to a temporary shift in perception under social pressure. The 3:1 ratio could have effected a temporary perceptual shift if the ego-involvement of the subjects were low, i.e., if the fraternity was not the subject's reference group. This could be an additional factor accounting for the large amount of displacement among the subjects. In the light of Asch's research the number of plants in phase II may have resulted in a high degree of compliance from the subjects.

The third problem that arose with this method was that of standardization in the phase III interview. This interview served the crucial purpose of providing the investigator with some indication as to whether or not the fraternity was the subject's reference group. This in turn was compared with the amount of displacement found from phases I to II to determine if these indications of reference group ties were connected. There were two difficulties that arose in the interview in phase III.

The experimenter tended to rely too much on subjective impressions in assigning subjects to a category with no attempt at rating each subject on a scale on an item by item basis during the interview. This should definitely be avoided as it tends to be misleading. More reliance should be made on relevant quantifiable indicants of reference group membership, i.e., content analysis as used in this research and the subject's stated activities in his fraternity.

In phase III some subjects tended to respond less than others. These few (4) subjects answered the interviewer in a very clipped

manner giving little information about themselves and their fraternity. Since they made the fewest spontaneous references to their fraternity they were very difficult to categorize. Since assignment to a category should be based on an equal amount of information for all subjects additional questions should have been used to obtain information. If an equal amount of information was not obtainable this might have been grounds for discarding a subject from the research.

The fourth point to be considered is the question of the contexts in which phases I, II and III were conducted. Charters and Newcomb (1947) have demonstrated the effect of heightened awareness of group membership on students in the classroom situation. Students subtly reminded of their religious affiliation gave significantly more responses in accord with the norms of their denominations than those not reminded. In terms of phase I of the research the subject may or may not have perceived himself as a fraternity man as much as a student in the classroom. Had the phase I questionnaire been administered in the fraternity houses a significantly different baseline attitudinal position may have been obtained. This raises the question of the situational salience of reference group attitudes and especially the expression of these attitudes. Though this complex topic is beyond the scope of this project it must be kept in mind while evaluating the results of this research and in future research.

Finally, it appears likely that the questionnaire used in phase III of this research may have been biased toward those subjects with positive feelings about their fraternity. The questionnaire lacks almost any items designed to elicit negative responses.

Throughout the interview it was the researcher's intent not to

arouse unnecessary suspicions about the purpose of the study. Likewise the interview was made as non-threatening as possible by asking questions so as to provide the subject with opportunities to express either negative or positive attitudes about his group membership without forcing the answers. However, it is the opinion of this researcher that without asking at least a few questions focusing specifically on any negative attitudes a subject may have held about his fraternity a questionnaire with a positive bias was being used. This seems especially relevant in light of the large number of subjects categorized (on the basis of the questionnaire) as taking the fraternity as a reference group that actually shifted their attitudinal position to a non-reference group stand under social pressure.

#### Recommendations for Future Study

This research endeavored to determine if displacement of previously expressed attitudinal positions under social pressure would serve as an indicant of reference group membership. It did not prove highly successful. If this method is to be explored further a different approach is suggested by this author. In particular it is suggested that the following things be established.

First, the researcher might study subjects with established group relationships and determine prior to the experimental session whether or not that group functions as a reference group for them. Natural observation and the techniques for determining group structure and the important norms (Sherif & Sherif, 1964) could be used for this purpose.

Second, to confirm the field observations it would be useful to study the group structure in a controlled situation. The modified

softball throw judgment task (Davis, 1970) and the pinball judgment situation (Rebouche, 1969) could both be used for socio-graming the group structure. In addition the pinball judgment situation could also be used for the study of the formation and persistence of norms particular to the group. The degree of similarity and persistence of individual norms may function as an operational definition of group stability.

Knowledge of group structure and its stability would be useful in evaluating individual differences in conformity to group norms. The more stable a group structure the greater the consensus on each member's role and status. The greater the group consensus on each member's status and role expectations the more consistent are their expectations for one another.

In matters that are important in the formation and/or maintenance of the group, differential expectations are established for different status members (Sherif & Sherif, 1964). The high status members have a much more narrow latitude of acceptable behavior in matters of importance to the group. However, they are allowed more room to deviate in matters of less importance to the group than lower status members. The lower status members, on the other hand, are not bound by the same narrow latitudes for acceptable behavior. They are allowed to deviate more in matters of importance to the group than the high status members. Since conformity to group norms under social pressure is the critical measure in this research this information on differential expectations in relation to norms important to the group could be invaluable.

Having determined whether the group is a reference group for the individuals studied (in both field and laboratory) and identified the

status hierarchy and norms of the group, then the resistance to change of reference group attitudes under social pressure could be studied on an individual basis. An experimental situation similar to that used in phase II in this research could be employed.

These recommended changes should clarify the importance of the stimuli to the group members as well as the differential expectations of each member's role. Individual differences in displacement under social pressure could then be studied in terms of the specific structure and processes of the group observed. A more limited but better evaluation of displacement as an indicant of reference group membership might then be made.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED IN PHASE I

A Study of the Student's Perception  
of College Life

A Thesis Project  
for the Master's  
Degree in Sociology

Department of Sociology

OSU

Jerry P. Stratton

Directions:

Please judge the following statements on the scale provided below each item. You are to check the space that best describes the way you view each item. Simply ask yourself how you view the statement (i.e., whether you feel it is a very anti statement, an anti statement, a neutral statement, a pro statement, or a very pro statement) and then check the appropriate space. Remember, judge the statements as you really feel about them. Thank you.

Examples:

All college students are subversives.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

A college education is worth the effort it takes to acquire it.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

1. College helps people mature into adults.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
2. Dorms are the best place for students to live because the living conditions in dorms are supervised by the university.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
3. College athletics are necessary since they provide entertainment for most students as well as scholarships for the players.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
4. The few required courses outside of your major area help round out your education.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
5. The food in residence halls is terrible.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
6. College can provide one with good social contacts.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
7. There is nothing wrong with changing your major, even if it means the loss of a semester's credit, if you are satisfied in the long run.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
8. One of the best ways to have all the good things in college life is to belong to a fraternity.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
9. The system of grading in college does more harm than good.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
10. Residence halls are much better now that they are coed.  
Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

11. A college education is the best way for a young person to be exposed to the ideas of great leaders and thinkers.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
12. A college education allows you to find more personal satisfaction in life than you would without it.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
13. It would be worth the effort to start the school year early and finish the first semester final exams before Christmas.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
14. Life in the residence hall is impersonal and lonely.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
15. Being a fraternity man sort of helps to complete a student's education.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
16. Fixed college requirements often fail to take into account the interests of the student, as well as his previous exposure to courses in high school or other colleges.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
17. Black study curriculums should be a part of higher education.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
18. College classrooms should not be used to challenge the teachings that students have received from their parents.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_
19. The college system tends to make the student feel like he is a product on a production line.
- Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

20. It makes no difference if students never talk with their professors outside of class.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

21. The pass-fail system allows students to escape the pressures of competitive grading and learn what interests them the most.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

22. Student government is usually unresponsive to the wishes of the general student body.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

23. The more people who have an opportunity to have an education the better.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

24. The best thing about a college education is that a person's earning power is increased by receiving the degree.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

25. Living away from home while attending college is an experience that helps you to mature.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

26. All fraternities are just snobbish, conceited little groups.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

27. Only by living in a dormitory is a student able to meet a lot of people and make many friends.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

28. Large universities too often create a problem of alienation and loneliness in students.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

29. Student government is a lot to do about nothing.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

30. The percentage of college educated people in a society is a sign of progress.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

31. Student government is usually just a puppet organization used by the administration.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

32. The facilities, the food, and the hours in residence halls are all poor.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

33. In a fraternity it's sort of difficult to really be yourself.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

34. You should always live with a room mate that you can get along with.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

35. The worst place to live on campus is in a dormitory.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

36. A college education carries a lot of worthwhile prestige.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

37. The influences of dormitories on college students is usually pleasing to parents.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_

38. Colleges should allow all students to practice whatever religious beliefs are important to them.

Very Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Anti \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_\_\_ Pro \_\_\_\_\_ Very Pro \_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex (circle one) M F

Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
City State

Where is your home address \_\_\_\_\_  
City State

Present campus address \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had more than one major? If so, please list them below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How are you classified? Fresh \_\_\_\_\_ Soph \_\_\_\_\_ Jr \_\_\_\_\_ Sr \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you attended OSU? \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you graduate from highschool? \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED FROM A TAPE RECORDING  
IN PHASE II

1. Campus political organizations offer the most valuable learning experiences a student can have.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
2. Residence hall living is quite nice because many of the student's needs are supplied for him.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
3. Participation in a Black Studies program is useful and important for all students.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
4. The Student Councils in the different colleges on campus are trivial.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
5. Men's Residence Hall Association is a significant and valuable organization in which to participate.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
6. This campus is cold and impersonal.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
7. It's kind of hard to just be yourself when you live in a fraternity.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
8. OSU is one large university where it is very easy to meet people and make friends.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_
9. Even though you may get a few interesting courses, most classes in college are very boring.  
Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

10. The student body at OSU is generally unconcerned and lacking in involvement.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
11. Dorm living is stale and monotonous.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
12. The ROTC offers students a chance to prepare themselves for a satisfying career.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
13. The social atmosphere on this campus is warm and personal.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
14. Classroom lectures are dull and many times seem purposeless.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
15. Fraternity life is one of the best ways to experience the finer things in college life.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
16. College lectures are pointed and interesting.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
17. Participation in the Students for a Democratic Society is pointless.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
18. Dorm life gives students the greatest opportunity to meet and learn about people different from themselves.  
Very Negative\_\_\_Negative\_\_\_Neutral\_\_\_Positive\_\_\_Very Positive\_\_\_
19. Campus ministers provide valuable advice to students searching for a better understanding of their spiritual beliefs.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

20. It's absurd to be a student politician when you only get insignificant responses to your suggestions or criticism.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

21. The ROTC is senseless because it attempts to turn men into robots that respond to orders without question.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

22. The only committed group of students on this campus are the Students for a Democratic Society.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

23. Legitimate student protests are meaningful and worthwhile acts.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

24. College curriculums that require students to take courses that are of little value to their area of interest are pointless.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

25. Student government is not worth participating in if both student body and administration ignore it.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

26. A student's education is more complete if he has lived in a fraternity.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

27. The ROTC is only playing soldier.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

28. It is nonsensical to belong to campus political organizations.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

29. If your life were in immediate danger you could expect people on this campus to become involved.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

30. Participation in religious student unions is pointless for most students.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

31. Living in an apartment is an individual and valuable experience.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

32. It's silly to participate in such a meaningless activity as student government.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

33. On every campus the most self-centered, stuck up cliques are always fraternities.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

34. College is a sacrifice that is worth the effort.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

35. The competition for grades, created by the "college curve" makes the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake impossible.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

36. College is a very lonely experience.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

37. Life in a residence hall is full of interesting and exciting experiences.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

38. Student government offers the concerned student an opportunity to get involved in meaningful campus activities.

Very Negative \_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_ Neutral \_\_\_ Positive \_\_\_ Very Positive \_\_\_

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN PHASE III

What is your general opinion of OSU?

What do you think of the way the administration runs things at OSU?

What about the physical structure of the campus? Do you feel like it has been designed with your needs in mind?

Do you think that the administration should change its ways of handling things at OSU?

Did you have much occasion to visit OSU before you enrolled to go here? What were the occasions?

Who did you learn about OSU from before you came here?

Well, why did you come?

Did some of your friends come up here?

Do you ever see many of those people around anymore?

How long have you been going to OSU?

Well, that means you have been here almost \_\_\_\_ years now. How do most of the students look to you? I mean, what differences do you notice in the student body?

How do you feel you have done so far in college?

Well, when you judge your progress like that, what do you think you are comparing yourself with--past experience, the people around you, or what?

What do you think about the course curriculum at OSU?

How about the campus itself? What do you like best about it?

Do you spend much time on the campus each day? Just roughly, how much?

Generally, what do you do during that time?

Where do you live on campus? I see. Have you lived there long?



You know, I used to know some of your brothers about three years ago. I liked them. We used to cram for tests together.

Say, how come you decided to live there? (pause) You say that is how you felt when you pledged?

You know, fraternities are an institution just like all these other things we have been talking about. They have formal rules and rituals and everything, I know. I used to be an active member of a house on this campus. I got married about three years ago and haven't had much time for anything else since. I miss it some.

Has your house changed much for you since you moved in?

Say, I asked you how much time you spent on campus. Do you spend all the rest of your time back where you live? Well, how much time is that?

How about intramural sports? Did you play any this year? What sports? Just for the guys where you live?

How about organizations on the campus? They are sort of institutional. Do you belong to any of the campus organizations?

How about student politics? Did you take part in the student elections this year?

Did you campaign for anyone in the last election? Hey, that is pretty good. Did any of the guys in the house campaign for him also?

How about you? Do you hold any elected or leadership positions on campus? How about off campus?

Say, what do you think of the way Dr. Kamm has treated the student senate?

Do you see much difference in him and Dr. Holloman, the President at OU?

Hey, what do you think of Holloman saying he wanted to run the fraternity system off the campus at OU?

Do you think that the administration and the students here can avoid the problems that have occurred on other campuses around the country?

Do you think that the administration should make all the freshmen live in dorms if they can't fill up their residence halls? Why not?

Will you be going to school here next year? Where will you be living? Do you know?

You know, the image of the college student has changed somewhat in the last few years. What to you is the ideal college student like?

You know, college is many things to many people. When you picture college what are the first things that come to your mind?

Well, how about yourself? When you think of your own character, you know, whether you are a good person (pause), do you judge yourself with people here at college or elsewhere? Who?

VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF AN EXPERIMENTAL METHOD TO DETERMINE  
IF A MEMBERSHIP GROUP IS FUNCTIONING AS A REFERENCE GROUP  
FOR AN INDIVIDUAL

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