DECONFLATING BUFFOONERY AND HAZING: A TWO-FACTOR MODEL OF UNDERSTANDING MALADAPTIVE NEW MEMBER ACTIVITIES

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The current conceptual model of hazing is based on an assumption that low-grade hazing (buffoonery) serves as a gateway to severe acts of hazing. Consequently, the range of acts regarded as hazing is broad in scope and estimates of the rates and nature of hazing may be inflated. In the present study, the gateway assumption was tested and not supported. Further, in this study students clearly differentiate between buffoonery and hazing. The data supports reframing hazing reduction efforts, emphasizing potential for harm and educational efficacy in new member education. This approach aligns with student understanding and promotes internal regulation while encouraging the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and belonging.

The presently accepted construct of hazing appears to have evolved with surprisingly little empirical investigation or formal scholarship in support. Indeed, the overall hazing literature is comparatively impoverished given the magnitude of consequences stemming from the act. The construct of hazing, as is it understood in the Fraternity and Sorority context, appears to be a series of cobbled together acts of behaviors that over time universities, inter(national) Fraternity and Sorority organizations, and insurance companies have deemed harmful (or simply bothersome). Allowing the explication of hazing to evolve by default, rather than through scholarship, has produced unintended and unhelpful consequences. First, it has led to distortion and misestimates of the rates and nature of inappropriate new member activities. Second, to conflation of merely inappropriate and misguided new member activities with those that are harmful. Third, poor alignment of language with student understanding. This in turn alienates students on the topic and produces messages that are off target. Fourth, it has led to interventions based on rules and extrinsic control of students rather than fostering intrinsic motivation. The present investigation explores student understanding of hazing and recommends adopting an approach in communicating about new member activity s that aligns with student perspectives.

Physical and emotional harm resulting from hazing is of concern in many arenas of American life, including higher education (Adler & Adler, 1988; Allan & Madden, 2012; Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2002; Davis, 1998; Hoover & Pollard, 1999; Nuwer, 2000). Fraternities and Sororities, athletic teams (Hoover & Pollard, 1999), bands (Ellsworth, 2006), and academic clubs (Allan & Madden, 2012) alike have come under increasing societal scrutiny for the behavior senior members of these groups direct toward new members. Consequences borne by new members include lasting interpersonal resentment, psychological harm, physical injury, and death (Finkel, 2002; Leslie, Taff, & Mulvihill, 1985; Nuwer, 2001, 2004).

Insufficient and poorly directed explanation of hazing as a construct has hindered development of effective hazing reduction programs with students, universities, organizations, and researchers holding divergent conceptions of what behaviors constitute hazing (Ellsworth, 2006; Hollmann, 2002; Owen, Burke, & Vichesky, 2008; Rutledge, 1998). Adequate explanation of hazing as a construct is essential to the development of an accurate and commonly held understanding of the phenomenon. Understanding what purposes — both individual and organizational — hazing serves is an essential

step in the formation of effective intervention strategies.

Legal, university, organizational, and student understandings of what behaviors constitute hazing have substantial overlap but still differ in meaningful ways (Rutledge, 1998). There is widespread agreement that hazing includes elements of harm, intent, and a power differential. Less agreement exists about such behaviors for example as being required to do everything together as a group and being forced to listen to loud or repetitive music. Hazing, as a matter of law, is regulated by the states (Rutledge, 1998). While variation in definitions exist, state laws generally identify hazing as being *reckless and willful acts* that result in psychological or physical harm. Students largely accept the broad legal conceptualization of hazing but not university definitions. Universities, Fraternities/Sororities, and their insurance companies' conceptualization of hazing — hereafter referred to as the Standard Model — differs from the standard legal definition and student understanding. The standard model is laid out in the Fraternal Information and Programing Group (2011) definition of hazing:

> Any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Such activities may include but are not limited to the following: use of alcohol; paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips or any other such activities carried on outside or inside of the confines of the chapter house; wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with fraternal law, ritual or policy or the regulations and policies of the educational institution.

The Standard Model is predicated on the observation that where severe hazing has occurred it was preceded by low-grade hazing and the assumption that low-grade hazing therefore plays a *causal* role in producing severe hazing. This assumption is hereafter referred to as the Gateway Hypothesis. The response to the Gateway Hypothesis by host institutions, Fraternities/Sororities, and insurance companies alike has been to issue a blanket prohibition to an extensive list of activities that may not, in and of themselves, be harmful.

Significant institutional effort is expended in suppressing these lower intensity activities, producing several unintended consequences. First, a broad segment of student life has been pushed out of the public eye. In making these activities surreptitious, the identification of groups engaged in high risk activities becomes more difficult. By one estimate, only 33 percent of hazing occurs on campus (Allan & Madden, 2012), suggesting student groups may be intentionally sheltering new member activities from university scrutiny. Second, by effectively criminalizing these activities, undergraduates who might wish to seek guidance in improving new member experiences are effectively cut off from advisory assistance as seeking that support would be tantamount to a confession of guilt leading to serious consequences. For example, when asked why they do not report hazing, 37 percent of respondents in one study cited not wanting to get "my team or group in trouble" (Allan & Madden, 2012). Third, because undergraduates do not agree that many of the low-grade hazing activities are hazing *per se*, stake holders-in insisting these activities are hazing; suffer from diminished credibility in the eyes of the students, weakening their influence as brokers of change.

Surprisingly, given the influence of the Gateway hypothesis, its soundness remains to be established. Testing the validity of the hypothesis is important for practical reasons. If the Gateway

hypothesis is baseless, no amount of reducing low-grade activities will result in elimination or serious reduction of harmful behaviors. If the gateway effect is weak, suppression of low-grade hazing may not be an effective approach to reduction of hazing related harm and, paradoxically, may be counterproductive due to unintended consequences of prohibition. For these reasons, only a strong relationship and persuasive case for causation merits accepting the Gateway hypothesis as compelling basis on which to formulate policy.

Since 2000, two large national scale hazing studies have been reported in the literature or otherwise publicly distributed (Allan & Madden, 2012; Hoover & Pollard, 1999). Both studies assessed hazing by listing a number of putative hazing behaviors/activities and asking survey respondents to indicate if they had ever been subjected to the activities. Any individual who responded affirmatively to one or more question was categorized as having been hazed. For the "overall count" no attempt was made to determine the frequency at which the activity was reported nor to discriminate severity. Consequently, a student required to do a pushup was not distinguished from one receiving a beating; both were counted as having been hazed. While calculation of hazing rates on this basis is legitimate if one accepts the standard model, conflating relatively minor acts with acts likely to induce severe harm has the methodological disadvantage of producing overall hazing rates that misrepresent the nature and magnitude of harmful new member activities on campuses. The distinction between buffoonery and assault is not trivial. Further, clearly assessing the rates of high-risk behaviors is an important first step in reducing harm and in monitoring the success of intervention programs. Further, conflating genuinely harmful acts and buffoonery might make it more difficult to recognize successful interventions. For example, it is plausible that a program could reduce the rate of buffoonery and not underlying physical and psychological activities and be hailed as a success. Conversely, a program might successfully reduce harmful activities — which occur at a low rate relative to buffoonery — while not impacting buffoonery levels. In such a case it is possible that the beneficial effects of the program would go undetected.

Following the hazing related death of a student athlete, researchers at Alfred University conducted a nationwide study of hazing of NCAA College athletes (Hoover & Pollard, 1999). Hoover and Pollard concluded that 79% of the athletes surveyed had been subject to questionable, alcohol related, or other unacceptable activity while joining their teams. Asked if they would report hazing, 60% of the students said they would not. Of those who said no, 26% said they "wouldn't tell on their friends, no matter what." The same students were skeptical that administrators would effectively deal with the issue--26% said administrators would handle the situation wrong and make matters worse; however, only 4% reported thinking retaliation by the team would be excessive. Allen and Madden (2012) surveyed students at 53 institutions nationwide asking about their experiences (if any) as new members of various student organizations and sports teams. Overall 55% of the respondents reported having been hazed (61% of males/52% of females). For those affiliated with sororities, fraternities, and sports teams, the overall rate was 70%.

Hazing has existed at least as far back as ancient Greece; Plato complained of hazing (Nuwer, 2001). It is noteworthy that he gave no indication in his remarks that this was novel behavior. Hazing persists in many societal domains: military services (Davis, 1998; Wegener, 2001; Winslow, 1999), medicine (Cousins, 1981; Shah, 2007) including nursing (Brown & Middaugh, 2009), and police (de Albuquerque & Paes-Machado, 2004). Why has hazing persisted so long and with such prevalence as a behavior?

Behaviors exist to satisfy needs (Deci, 1980;

Deci & Flaste, 1996; Glasser, 1985; Maslow, 1954), and any particular behavior that persists over long periods of time and across cultures does so because it serves some instrumental purpose. Identification of those purposes is a necessary first step in controlling the behavior. Although full consideration of what needs are being satisfied (both in the hazer and the hazed) is beyond the scope of the present investigation, a brief review of some proposed mechanisms is in order. Hazing has been agued to serve a variety of functions including: allowing the new member to show commitment to the organization, bonding and cohesion (Cornelius, Linder, & Brewer, 2007; Van Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, & Brewer, 2007), and rites of passage (Butler & Glennen, 1991; Chang, 2012; Winslow, 1999).

Whatever instrumental purposes hazing serves, it seems self-evident that a major reason new group members submit to such acts is a desire to avoid social exclusion. Because of our need for affiliation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1943), humans are especially vulnerable to social exclusion (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005; Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002; Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001; Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2002; Williams & Zadro, 2005). Social exclusion thwarts the basic psychological need of belonging and activates some of the same central nervous system (CNS) structures as physical pain (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003) and is felt even if the agent is a member of a disliked group (Gonsalkorale & Williams, 2007) or a machine/internet (Zadro, Williams, & Richardson, 2004). Understanding the role that social exclusion–and the fear of social exclusion--plays, both among new and established group members, in hazing will be essential in hazing reduction efforts.

The question of if the bulk of students involved in student organizations are supportive of hazing is largely unresolved. This question, when answered, will pose further important questions. If students are not supportive of hazing, why do so many fail to intervene? If students are supportive of hazing, why do they value it? Are their motives sincere or are they malicious? Understanding what the pro-hazing and bystander student hope to accomplish is essential in the attempt to persuade students to change behavior.

The primary goal of the present study is the development of a candidate framework for conceptualizing hazing that is both consistent with student perspectives and viable as a foundation for building intervention efforts. To be successful, the proposed framework must possess a number of features. Specifically, the proposed framework must have an organizing principle(s), be credible, concrete, and simple. An organizing principle permits combination of a wide array of observations into a more unified and simple structure. A unified and simple structure allows prediction, additional insight, suggests potential interventions, and allows identification of underlying motivations and utility. Credibility is derived from being empirically based and from mapping onto stakeholders' experiences. Concreteness results to the extent that the framework is not abstract, making it difficult to understand and apply. A useful framework must also be simple enough for student use, easy to teach, and functional within the environment of high repetition interactions with students.

A second purpose of the present study was to assess student experiences with behaviors categorized in the Standard Model as hazing--specifically to assess the frequency and intensity of these behaviors and student attitudes about the usefulness of these activities. This assessment serves as the basis of the proposed framework for working with students in the attempt to reduce harm related to new member activities.

Methods

Undergraduate fraternity members (N=

10,863) of a large fraternity were invited to take part in an online survey with respect to their fraternal experience. Data were collected over a two week period with up to three reminders sent. Responses from 1,203 students representing 191 campuses of varying size, residential setting, and sponsorship are reported.

In order to reduce deceptive and spurious responses, participation was noncompulsory and uncompensated beyond being informed that responding would help in understanding the fraternal experience. Because participation in the study was voluntary and uncompensated the response rate was anticipated to be in the range observed. To assess if a representative sample was obtained survey items with known population values (e.g. suicide ideation rate and sexual orientation) among college students were included and the results were found to be consistent with our observed values.

Survey items were developed on the basis of previous research and needs of the current study. Students were asked a variety of questions about their fraternal experience including which aspects of membership they consider most valuable, and the importance these aspects place on being part of a group that shares their values. Students were also asked to report whether they had been subjected to various activities universities define as hazing and, if so, how often the exposure occurred (see Table 1). Members were asked to assess the extent to which they view hazing to be a problem both in their own organization and in general on their campus (see Table 2). Finally, members were asked to rate how useful/harmful they view various behaviors identified in the Standard Model as being hazing (see Table 3).

To identify if there is an underlying structure to how students identify various new member activities as being hazing or non-hazing in nature, the items comprising Table 1 were explored using principle component analysis (PCA) with Oblimin rotation and Kaiser normalization. A two factor solution was predicted *apriori*. To determine the relative strength of the item loading, a measure of absolute distance was computed from the loading scores (|Component 1- Component 2|).

On the basis of the PCA, further analysis was conducted using the resultant derived component structure. To evaluate how strongly exposure to activities identified by students as not being hazing predict being subject to activities widely recognized as hazing, intensity and frequency scores for the broad categories of student defined hazing/not hazing were compiled and subjected to analysis using Pearson's Coefficient. Using the same PCA derived schema, a relative risk analysis was conducted to determine the risk of being hazed based on exposure to the activities identified by students as not being hazing.

This study examines hazing within a single, nation-wide organization of largely white males. Caution is warranted in externalizing to groups substantially differing in terms of gender, racial makeup, or organizational purpose. Individual campus cultures vary considerably and should be taken into account when considering hazing. Further, non-fraternity groups were not studied and no inferences about those groups are supported by this data. This report is a single study, inclusion of other Fraternities, Sororities, and student organizations in future iterations would strengthen confidence in the results. Finally, given the paucity of reliable hazing literature to build on any findings must be considered tentative.

Results

To the question "How important is it to you to belong to a community of people who share your values and beliefs?" 89.9% said somewhat or very important; whereas, 11.1% said not at all or not too important. When asked to rate the importance of friendships as an aspect of membership, the mean response was 4.84 (SD = 0.44) on a 5 point Likert-like scale with 5 signifying the most importance. Friendships

Table 1
New Member Experiences with Various Activities

As a new member were you required to	Never	Once	Twice	Three times	Four Times	Five to ten times	More than ten times
Perform physical exercises (beyond normal workouts if a sports team).	87.53	4.21	1.54	2.27	0.73	2.02	1.70
Listen to extremely loud or repetitive music during pre-initiation or initiation events.	60.57	18.70	5.67	3.56	2.59	5.67	3.24
Required to do everything together with new member class when not in class	62.25	9.70	5.34	4.53	2.99	7.92	7.28
Undergo individual or group (lineups) interrogation.	81.49	7.31	3.08	2.11	1.46	2.52	2.03
Perform acts of servitude for active members.	83.60	4.55	2.52	2.52	0.49	2.76	3.57
Required or encouraged to drink alcoholic beverages by active members.	**79.30**	**5.52**	**4.71**	**2.11**	**1.22**	**3.90**	**3.25**
Required to consume unpleasant foods.	**93.59**	**3.73**	**1.14**	**0.73**	**0.24**	**0.49**	**0.08**
Perform sexual acts.	**99.35**	**0.08**	**0.16**	**0.08**	**0.00**	**0.08**	**0.24**
Steal an item.	**94.17**	**4.13**	**0.73**	**0.57**	**0.24**	**0.08**	**0.08**
Be struck by an object.	**95.79**	**2.59**	**0.57**	**0.41**	**0.08**	**0.41**	**0.16**
Be totally nude at any time.	**97.09**	**1.86**	**0.40**	**0.24**	**0.16**	**0**	**0.24**

Note. New member experience with various activities defined as hazing in the Standard Model displayed as percentage of subjects reporting exposure to the activity during their new member experience. Bolded text indicates Type I hazing, plain text indicates Type II.

were rated much higher than parties/social activities, which yielded a mean response of 3.82 (SD =0.98).

Respondents were asked to report whether or not, and how frequently, they had been exposed to a list of 11 activities (see Table 1) considered hazing under the Standard Model. When a single episode of any of 11 activities was counted as hazing, 53.2% of the respondents reported having been hazed. It is noteworthy that very few of the behaviors in Table 1 represent either inherently dangerous or otherwise harmful activities. Further, these activities occurred at a relatively low frequency. Exposure to activities that are inherently dangerous or psychologically harmful was reported by 32.2%. With the exception of alcohol-related activities, which had a more complex pattern, reported incidents were largely limited to one or two exposures.

Attitudes about hazing within the student's organization and campus are summarized in Table 2. Most respondents reported that hazing is not a serious problem in their organization (95.85% vs. 0.82%) or campus (59.2% vs. 17.43%) and that it is worse in other organizations than theirs (70.6% vs. 14.25%). Most (65.39% vs. 13.27%) disagreed with the statement that hazing is acceptable on their campus. The small number of students who stated the belief that hazing is a problem on their campus and within their

Table 2

Respondent's Rating of Campus Hazing Culture

Hazing is…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Error
Is a serious problem on my campus	23.13	36.07	23.37	15.15	2.28	2.37	0.031
Is a serious problem in my organization	81.83	14.02	3.34	0.49	0.33	1.24	0.016
Is more serious in other groups than mine	9.77	4.48	15.15	40.88	29.72	3.75	0.035
Is socially acceptable on my campus	34.45	30.94	21.34	10.91	2.36	2.15	0.031

Note. Respondent's ratings of campus hazing culture. Mean and standard error values derived from a five point Likert scale (5 SA-1 SD). Subjects reported their assessment that hazing is not a problem in their organization and that it is worse in other groups than theirs. Subjects report that hazing is not acceptable or a serious problem on their campus.

organization is consistent both with previous reports and the relatively low rate at which activities likely to result in harm were reported. While the majority of students reported that hazing is not socially acceptable on their campus, a large minority either disagreed or were unsure.

Student attitudes about the instrumental function of hazing are summarized in Table 3. Respondents overall reported negative assessments regarding the utility of hazing. Most (74.72% vs. 10.2 %) disagreed with the statement that hazing makes new members better members. Similarly, most disagreed (74.15% vs. 11.83%) with the statements that hazing is an important way for new members to show commitment, that is expected by new members (66.39% vs. 17.21%), and that it is desired by new members (68.76% vs. 11.09%). Most agree that hazing causes resentment among the members (57.78% vs. 23.81%) and creates cliques within the organization (57.83 vs. 23.46).

Student rankings of their perceptions of 11 behaviors as being hazing are summarized in Table 4. When these rankings were analyzed using PCA, a two factor solution emerged, hereafter referred to as Type I and Type II hazing (Table 4, Figure 1). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was performed yielding a value of 0.933 exceeding the minimum value of 0.6. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant $p< 0.00$. A parallel analysis was conducted to confirm the component specification. The items loading onto each component are presented in Table 4.

Behaviors contained in the Type I hazing component included physical abuse, physical harm, humiliation, and embarrassment. Behaviors contained in the Type II hazing component included those behaviors less likely to be interpreted as being likely to cause harm to the individual. Three items-being required to perform acts of servitude, being encouraged or required to consume alcohol, and individual or group interrogation-did not load distinctly onto either component indicating a lack of consensus among the members as to the degree to which the behaviors are likely to cause harm.

To evaluate the Gateway Hypothesis, the relationship between exposure to Type I and

Table 3

Student Ratings of Utility of Hazing

Hazing…	SD %	D %	N A/D %	A %	SA %	M	SE
Makes new members better members	49.84	24.88	15.09	7.75	2.45	1.89	0.031
Is an important way for new members to show commitment	50.41	23.74	14.03	9.14	2.69	1.90	0.032
Is expected by new members	46.57	19.82	16.39	14.68	2.53	2.07	0.035
Is desired by new members	48.86	19.90	20.15	9.30	1.79	1.95	0.032
Causes resentment among the members	10.72	13.09	18.41	33.88	23.90	3.46	0.037
Is the reason I quit an organization	49.26	8.60	36.36	2.55	3.55	2.02	0.032

Note. Student responses to questions about the utility of hazing as an educational tool for new members reported in percentages selecting strongly disagree (5), disagree (4), neither agree or disagree (3), agree (2), strongly agree (1), mean (M), and standard error (SE). Students report being skeptical about the utility of hazing as a member development tool and concerns that hazing causes resentment and the formation of cliques within the organization

Table 4

Principal Component Analysis

	Component	
	1	2
Perform physical exercises (beyond normal workouts if a sports team)?	.493	.746
Listen to extremely loud or repetitive music during pre-initiation or initiation events?	.368	.776
Do everything together with your new member class when not in class?	.249	.817
Undergo individual or group (lineups) interrogation?	.540	.780
Perform errands or other acts of servitude for active members?	.638	.723
Required or encouraged to drink alcoholic beverages by active members?	.724	.550
Be totally nude at any time?	.761	.453
Perform sexual acts?	.852	.237
Steal an item?	.826	.393
Be struck by an object (fist, paddle, etc.)?	.884	.384
Be subjected to public embarrassment humiliation?	.863	.457

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Note: Principal component analysis of behaviors considered to be hazing by fraternity men revealed a two factor structure. Bolded values indicate which factor the item loaded onto. Factor 1 (Type I hazing) was characterized by activities likely to cause physical or emotional harm whereas Factor II (Type II hazing) included those behaviors that are not intrinsically harmful. These results demonstrate that fraternity men's understanding of hazing is in alignment with legal, but not standard model definitions of hazing. Shaded items did not load distinctly onto either factor indicating confusion or disagreement among the participants. Two of the poorly loading factors (lineups and alcohol consumption) are common factors in many harm-related incidents suggesting a need for further emphasis on discouraging these activities.

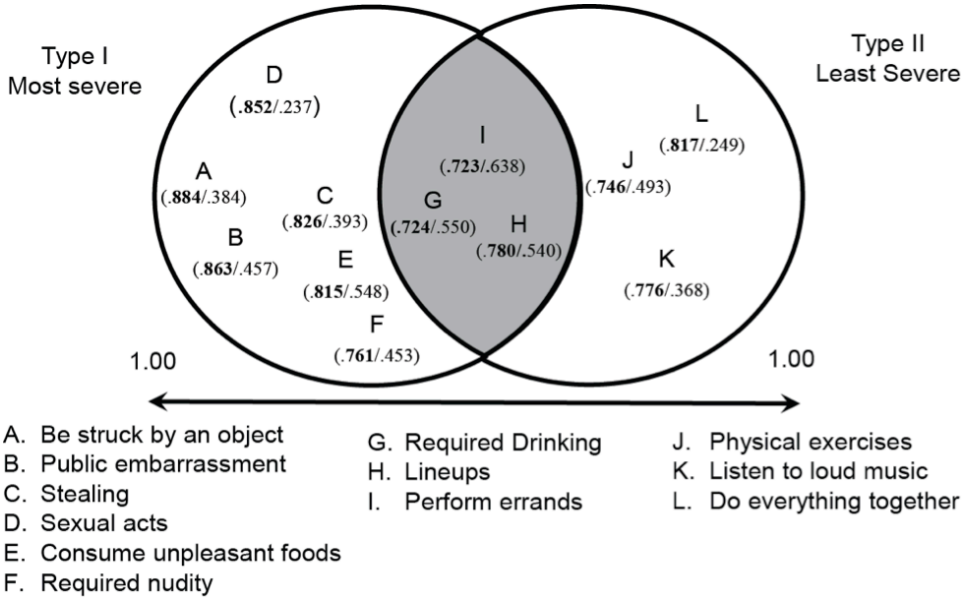

Figure 1

A two component structure of hazing derived by PCA from fraternity members reported perceptions of activites that they view as hazing or not hazing. Items loading most stongly onto the Type I component were those behaviors, that to the students, were most likely to result in physical harm or humilation. Items loading most clearly onto the Type II component were behaviors less likely, to be percieved by the student as not being likely to cause harm. A few items did not load clearly onto either component indicating that students views about the behaviors are unclear. Behaviors like encouraged drinking should be considered TYPE I hazing because of the actual (vs. percieved) risk, whereas acts of servitude which are inappropriate but not likely to cause harm should be treated as Type II hazing.

subsequent Type II hazing was explored by Pearson's moment coefficient ($r = 0.41$).

Discussion

The results from the questionnaire indicate several interesting points: First, students appear to regulate their behaviors related to new member activities on the basis of perceived risk of psychological or physical harm. Second, belonging may represent a powerful tool in developing hazing interventions. Third, students are skeptical about the utility of hazing as a tool for producing better members and strengthening bonds of brotherhood. Fourth, the standard model does not present a sufficiently powerful explanation of the relationship between buffoonery and severe acts of hazing to justify the either confidence in the model or continuance of policy based implicitly upon that model. Finally, a framework for discussing new member activities that aligns with student experience is proposed.

Students Regulate Behavior on the Basis of Perceived Harm

The low rate of Type I compared to Type II behaviors when paired with the high value placed on friendships and belonging can be taken as evidence that students regulate new member activities to reduce harm. That students fail to fully recognize encouraged or required alcohol consumption and lineups as harmful or questionable activities is a reflection of judgment rather than intent. That students naturally judge behaviors to be hazing/non-hazing in nature on the basis of harm suggests that conversations with students about hazing can productively be

framed in the context of potential for harm.

Belonging as a Tool to Reduce Hazing

Fraternity men highly value friendship and belonging to a group that shares their values, and the majority hold anti-hazing views. The high value placed on friendship and shared values represents a powerful leverage point for any proposed intervention intended to reduce harm. The perception that peers approve of hazing or are willing to tolerate it may act as an impediment to their actively opposing harmful behavior. Perhaps the most potent barrier to hazing is the extent to which there is a sense among the group that hazing is simply not done nor will those who haze be tolerated. Efforts directed at educating the anti-hazing majority about the attitudes actually held by their peers may help shift group dynamics. Conversely, just as the anti-hazing student's impulse to intervene may be impeded by the perception that he will not receive support from his peers, so too the pro-hazing student may be reluctant to act if he evaluates that peers do not support his plans and that acting on those plans may result in his being alienated from the group.

Students are Skeptical about the Instrumental Value of Hazing

Respondents overwhelmingly (approximately 75%) indicated skepticism regarding the argument that hazing makes new members better members, is an important way for new members to show commitment, is desired by new members, and that it is expected by new members. In comparison, less than 5% agree that hazing has instrumental value. Further, a majority (approximately 58%) reported they believe that hazing both creates cliques and causes resentment. In contrast, about 20% reported disagreeing with those statements. This skepticism about the instrumental value of hazing represents a potentially potent tool. Seventy-five percent of students are potential allies, allies who need to be educated that they hold the majority view.

There is a minority, but nontrivial, segment of the respondents who are either strongly supportive (10%) of or ambivalent (15%) about hazing. Together, when paired with students who misinterpret group attitudes toward hazing, these students represent a sufficiently large collation to permit unacceptable new member activities to exist as an endemic problem. Presumably, a segment of this group could be convinced through educational measures or social norms to alter its views or abstain from hazing. Likewise, another portion of this group for whatever reason — be it honest conviction or pathology — are likely not persuadable. Those who can be persuaded should be. Those who cannot be persuaded must be either socially isolated on this issue or removed from the organization.

Rejection of the Standard Model

The overall rate of hazing reported--as defined using the Standard Model--is consistent with that of previous studies of national scope. What is less clear, however, is if this number provides a useful representation of reality. Conflating all undesirable activities with inherently harmful ones has the effect of occluding the true nature of both types of activity.

Unsurprisingly, participants largely agreed among themselves and with the standard legal definitions — but not with the Standard Model — as to which behaviors are and are not hazing. The Standard Model of hazing does not map onto the cognitive understanding of undergraduates severely limiting its utility in harm reduction conversations. Students are the principal actors in new member activities, and any definition of hazing must be consistent with their understanding of the world to be functionally useful. Undergraduate students clearly have a nuanced perspective that separates new member activities from hazing on the basis of perceived risk of harm (although not necessarily actual risk).

The primary argument in support of the

Standard Model approach to defining hazing is that low intensity hazing activities, which do not necessarily cause harm per se, lead to increasingly more intense and dangerous activity--the Gateway effect. However, the foundational basis of the Gateway effect is dubious. Type II and Type I hazing activities were weakly to moderately correlated (r= 0.41) with Type II acts accounting for only 17% of the variance in Type I events. While it is true that correlation does not imply causation, weak correlations surely imply the lack of causation. Further, it is of note that only 13% experienced Type I hazing and less than 3% were exposed more than three times. Conversely, Type II hazing activities were much more common with 57% experiencing at least one exposure. Thus the evidence indicates that while Type II hazing is weakly to moderately predictive of, it does not cause Type I hazing (Figure 2). It is possible that Type II hazing contributes to a hazing permissive environment by desensitizing individual members to the potential ill effects of hazing and in which normalized low grade activities may escalate--particularly under the influence of alcohol. Even if true, given the weak causal argument, having Type II behaviors in plain view likely serve a more valuable function in the identification groups where hazing is occurring--identification that would be more difficult if the behavior were hidden.

A stronger argument is that both Type I & II hazing are caused by a third (or more) variable and that both forms may be more properly thought of as comorbid processes stemming from a common causal set. If the comorbidity hypothesis is correct, even complete elimination of Type II behaviors would not result in the eradication of Type I activities. A compelling

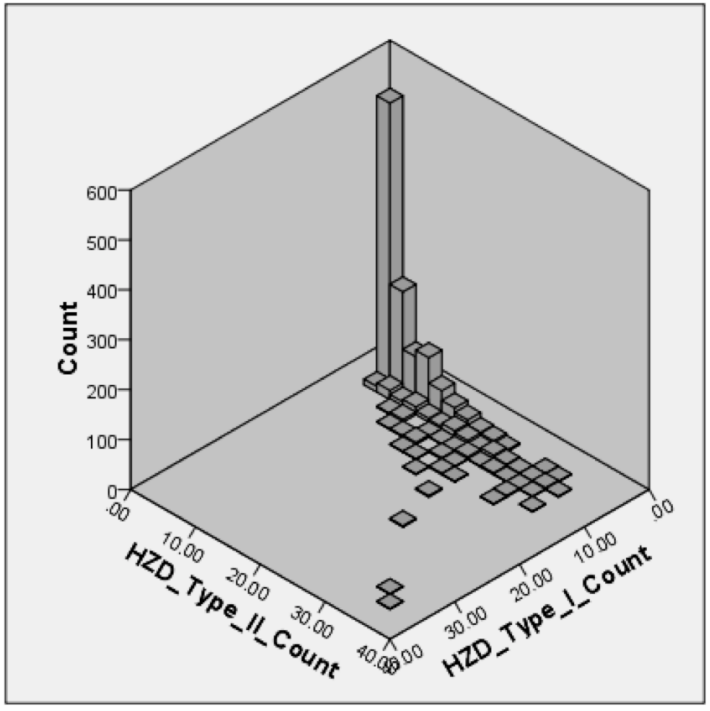

Figure 2

Relationship between the number of times a respondent was exposed to Type I activities based on his exposure to Type II behaviors.

argument can be made that rather than causing higher level hazing, Type II hazing may instead serve as a marker--not unlike a canary in a coal mine--by which groups potentially engaging in inherently harmful activities can be identified.

Conflating all undesirable new member activities under the category of hazing has resulted in an incoherent, unwieldy construct such that hazing as a term has lost meaning in student-advisor conversations. The Standard Model results in diffusion of anti-hazing efforts because treating low-harm and high-harm behaviors as equivalent results in disproportionate time/effort being spent on low-harm behaviors and other unintended consequences.

A Proposed Framework

I wish to suggest a structure for engaging students in new member activities along two dimensions: harm and utility. Behaviors likely to result in psychological or physical harm (i.e. Type I) should continue to be strictly prohibited. Type I behavior should be prohibited because it causes harm, not because it violates rules. Engaging students on the potential for harm to new members should be central to approaching new member activities, especially for activities that senior members do not fully appreciate the potential for harm (e.g. any drinking associated with new member obligations). Indeed, the ambiguity in the minds of students about alcohol-related activities represents the greatest single area of concern. Efforts to completely sever new-member specific activities from alcohol must continue to be a priority for all stakeholders, both because of direct harm from consumption by the new member and from impaired judgment in the initiated member. Alcohol will remain an ongoing challenge to the extent that social activities are permitted to mingle with any new member specific components.

Given the weakness of evidence supporting the Gateway Hypothesis, it is less clear that new member activities not likely to result in harm, but which are nonetheless undesirable (i.e. Type II), should be strictly prohibited. Discouragement of these activities may be a superior approach compared to prohibition. Such discouragement might take the form of engaging students on the basis of what they hope to accomplish with the activity (e.g. Is the goal a worthy one? Are there better ways to achieve the desired end?). Removing prohibition will have the effect of reducing the probability of these activities occurring covertly where they cannot be detected and addressed. Further, by reducing the evaluation of the activities from felony status to misdemeanor, a less emotionally charged environment for change can be achieved--also supporting an educational approach. Non-harmful activities can be treated as educational opportunities without the disproportionate label of hazing. Further, these conversations shift behavioral regulation from the host institution to the individual and further strengthening intrinsic behavioral regulation, an approach that has been demonstrated to be healthier compared to over extrinsic control (Deci, 1975; Deci & Flaste, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). An imposed rule, particularly one viewed as arbitrary, is perceived as an attack on personal autonomy and is met with resistance, whereas collaborative approaches are autonomy and competence supportive (Deci & Flaste, 1996; Glasser, 1985, 1995).

The proposed approach assumes that the student is sincere in his actions rather than pathological. It is an approach that supports healthy satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of belonging, autonomy, and competence (Deci, 1975, 1980; Deci & Moller, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2008, 2009; Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004; Glasser, 1985, 1994, 1995). Additionally, couching the conversation in terms of gain rather than loss is more likely to appeal to the student with high reward sensitivity; those sensitive to loss/punishment are likely already refraining from the undesired behavior out of fear of being punished (Carver & Scheier, 1998).

The Two Factor Approach Satisfies Framework Requirements

The proposed approach meets the stipulated requirements for a new framework. The two-factor solution is simple enough that students can readily understand and apply it within their organizations. First, it is concrete: students will readily grasp the utility of harm and usefulness over abstractions. Second, it is credible: it matches their understanding of hazing. Finally, it has utility: students and adult stakeholders alike can appreciate the desirability of reducing harm while achieving new member integration goals and the framework for accomplishing those ends.

In conclusion, fear of social exclusion is likely a potent force in hazing and may be a key to harm reduction. Further, the proposed intervention model represents a significant improvement in conceptualizing new member activities. In addition to mapping onto student cognitive understanding, the proposed approach further suggests potential strategies for the reduction of harm while building an environment that is supportive of healthy satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, belonging, and competence.

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