

BEYOND THIS PLACE:

Documenting the Visual History of African American Fraternities and Sororities

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes portrayals of Black Greek Letter Organizations in both print and video and the effects these portrayals have on students' perception, knowledge and understanding of Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO) culture. Utilizing visual elicitation methodology, this project reports responses from eight students; four Greek and four non-Greek. This project will explore the portrayal of BGLOs in mass media using Spike Lee's popular film *School Daze* as a cultural artifact of study. More specifically, it examines how the use of visual elicitation as a research methodology can lead to more insightful and accurate representation of the BGLO community while demonstrating the importance between defining, more clearly, representation and stereotypes in media. I found that it is nearly impossible to talk about representation without talking about stereotyping. Students responded by confirming their strongest senses of cultural understanding were based in stereotypes and in some cases even were informed by stereotypes. As a result, this research helps show the important of informing visual work in areas where visual novelty exist.