

SELECTION AND SOCIALIZATION EFFECTS OF
GREEK AFFILIATION ON HEAVY DRINKING
ACROSS THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE AND INTO THE COLLEGE YEARS:
THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND DRINKING NORMS

Aesoon Park

Dr. Kenneth J. Sher, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Although heavy drinking among fraternity and sorority members is well documented, it is less clear whether the Greek environment facilitates heavy drinking or whether heavy drinkers select into Greek environments. Moreover, mechanisms underlying the relation between Greek environment and drinking rarely have been studied. Selection and socialization effects of Greek affiliation on drinking and the effects of personality traits and peer drinking norms on those associations were investigated using longitudinal data throughout the transition to college ($N = 2,376$). Latent growth models supported both selection and socialization effects; individuals who involved in heavier drinking at precollege were more likely to join Greek organizations and in turn Greek members increased heavy drinking more than nonmembers, even after the selection effect was controlled. Extraversion was associated with Greek affiliation independent of precollege drinking, whereas the effect of novelty seeking on Greek affiliation was partially mediated by heavier precollege drinking. Peer drinking norms mediated the effect of Greek affiliation on drinking only during the first semester of college. These selection and socialization processes were largely invariant across gender. Theoretical and clinical implications are discussed.