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How American is the American College Fraternity? Examining the European Legacy Within the U.S. Greek System

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HOW AMERICAN IS THE AMERICAN COLLEGE FRATERNITY?
EXAMINING THE EUROPEAN LEGACY WITHIN THE U.S. GREEK SYSTEM

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The School of Education

by
Andrew T. Bell
B.A., Christopher Newport University, 2012
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ABSTRACT

In this study, a cultural dissemination model is used to identify the cultural markers a fraternalism across multiple educational environments all in an attempt to answer the question “How American is the American college fraternity?” Aspects of modern fraternities and sororities were broken down and their historical predecessors were identified in order to track cultural dissemination, or diffusion. “Diffusion is the spread of culture traits and, as Wissler (140,146) and Bartlett (7) have demonstrated, this spread may be either conscious or unconscious” (Willey & Herskovits, 1927, p. 263). Primarily systems the broad European Fraternalism, European Universities (German and English), American Universities were studied alongside the modern fraternity and sorority.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The American College Fraternity is frequently cited as one of the identifying qualities of the American Higher Education System. Since their inception in the early 19th century, Fraternities and Sororities have characterized some of the most infamous aspects of American culture, as well as magnified the most problematic aspects. Despite its prevalence through the American Higher Education and American popular culture, the Fraternity and Sorority system still remains an enigma to many professionals as well as college students who received their education abroad. Considering that the entire American Higher Education system is a direct result of European education models it seems to be counterintuitive that this is a system exclusively associated with the American Higher Education.

Statement of the Problem

The history of Higher Education institutions is one that has been heavily researched. Higher Education researchers have spent large portions of their careers exploring the founding stories and importance of Higher Education institutions. While researchers such as John Thelin (2011) have written extensively on the development of the university system within a fledgling United States, their research often neglects important cultural and societal factors in favor of more quantifiable data, such as economics or politics. Separate historians have found a penchant for writing about the specific histories of individual fraternities and sororities. While many of these authors are limited in their reach as their research is frequently limited to the stories of their particular organization or of their undergraduate campuses. Those restrictions led to that research being highly biased and largely unusable by most researchers of both Higher

Education and American History. Research has been exceedingly wanton in the areas of examining the cultural influences which developed within the American Fraternity and Sorority System.

Purpose of the Study

With knowledge of this problem and a desire to expand existing understanding of the history of Higher Education, texts were selected to highlight possible influences of European institutions on the American Higher Education system, the symbiotic relationship between the American college and the fraternity and sorority system, and texts which highlight student life in both European and American universities. Additionally, this study seeks to add to existing research surrounding the application of “the scientific method in an analysis of esoteric fraternalism” (Gist, 1940, p.10) by looking into the cultural markers of these collegiate fraternal organizations.

Research Questions and Design

The purpose of this research study is to explain the presence of American college fraternities and discern any potential European legacy in their structure, operations, continued existence, or future trajectories. This question arises as many consider Greek Life to be a unique experience on the American college campus, and it has quickly become a hallmark of a typical collegiate experience. By using comparative research juxtaposed against historical research models, the hope is to be able to examine existing literature and identify characteristics of these fraternal organizations which will then allow for a more in depth search for European influences and even potential counterparts. As with any historical topics, there are a number of sources from which a perspective may be developed and study might be conducted. In order to present the most

comprehensive study of these collegiate organizations a variety of primary and secondary texts from a number of nations will be analyzed. To address the full breadth of the research questions, the study will take on a linear approach beginning with the most accessible question and becoming successively deeper in analysis. Through analytic comparison of historical texts, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What characterizes an “American college fraternity” and what differentiates it from other social organizations?
2. What aspects of the American college contributed to the formation of these organizations?
3. In what ways did European models of Higher Education shape the American university?
4. How did the transmutation of Fraternalism across these environments shape American fraternities and sororities?

In order to address these questions, a qualitative research design was necessary. Qualitative research methodology is but one method used in historical inquiry, but allows for a greater weight to be given to historical accounts which make up a majority of source documents. Due to the historical and retrospective aspects of the research questions a quantitative study would not have been useful in isolating cultural markers or their importance to their respective organizations. The researcher made an intentional choice to position the fraternity and sorority at the center of this study and methodically examine layers of influence upon that system.

Significance

While the history of these organizations has been researched independently, the greater context of their formation and the cultural markers inherent in their existence has been neglected. Seeing that the foundation of Higher Education throughout the United States is based off of a European system of education, the idea that certain European structures may be embedded with the organizations themselves is not farfetched. Research into historical, cultural and societal markers assists in not only gaining a more holistic understanding of the history of the American colleges and universities and the social fraternity and sororities which exist on those campuses, but allows for historians and educators to identify trends which may impact their operation.

Definition of Key Terms

Due to the complex and often interchangeable uses of terminology within the fraternity and sorority system and across years of research, it is important to establish set definitions for the terms used in this study.

Fraternalism – A cultural concept characterized by “a symbolic relationship, sustained by ritual and imagery as well as by the more concrete realities of everyday interactions, interactions which it, through its ritual, undertakes to interpret as well as create for its members.” (Clawson, 1985, p.689)

American - Since the term American can mean a variety of things depending on one’s geographic location, for the purpose of this study it will refer to the United States of America. Since this term is used by a majority of historical sources, the author has made the decision to use it in this study despite its ambiguous nomenclature.

Fraternity – A secret social organization for collegiate men. These organizations, with a few notable exceptions, are represented by letters of the Greek alphabet. These Greek letters represent secret words, revealed to members at some stage of the initiation process. This term was first used with the establishment of the first fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1776 at the College of William & Mary (Phi Beta Kappa, 2017).

Sorority – A secret social organization for women. The term was coined in 1874 by Gamma Phi Beta Sorority by Syracuse Latin professor Frank Smalley. Prior to this point, existing women's collegiate secret societies were simply referred to as "women's fraternities" (Barbee, 1921).

North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC)- This conference was established in 1910 to govern the national member fraternities. Since then the conference has grown to represent 69 national and international fraternities. (North-American Interfraternity Conference, 2017).

National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) - This governing conference represents all national sororities, of which there are 26 member organizations.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) - This council represents the five historically black fraternities and four historically black sororities, despite four of the five member fraternities also being members of the NIC. This council advocates for the interests of its member organizations and collective initiatives.

Chapter - An individual fraternity or sorority group comprised of students from a particular Higher Education institution. If the chapter is connected to a national organization, they will receive a Greek letter designation, usually allocated sequentially

(Alpha Chapter, Beta Chapter, Gamma Chapter, etc.). These chapters are established through charters from the national fraternity or sorority. Some fraternities or sororities who are not connected to a national organization may not have a chapter designation and are colloquially referred to as “local chapters” due to their lack of a national connection.

Fraternity and Sorority System - The greater collective community comprised of fraternity and sorority chapters on individual campuses as well their respective national organizations.

Greek - Shorthand for the Fraternity and Sorority System or for an individual member of that respective system. This is representative of the Greek letters the organizations use to differentiate themselves.

Dues – Membership fees assessed by both the local chapter as well as the national organization. These fees are generally collected each semester of undergraduate membership, and a large majority of the funds collected are utilized to finance chapter events.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Due to the highly interdisciplinary nature of this study, a number of frameworks were used. Through all frameworks, a historical method of written tradition and indirect observation (Fling & Caldwell, 1899) was used for context. Indirect observation relies on the use of “psychology observations” noted written text (Fling & Caldwell, 1899, p. 10). These observations are then used to validate the conjecture of the historian reporting on the event. Since a large section of the research on secret societies and fraternal orders incorporate other methodological techniques it was important to include those in this

study. Considering the attention given to cultural influence within this study's research questions it was important to incorporate theoretical frameworks from other disciplines. In an attempt to identify influencing factors, a theoretical framework as well as a conceptual framework were used in this study: Secrecy (Simmel, 1906) and Cultural Pattern (Willey and Herskovits, 1927).

Secrecy and the Secret Society

In 1906, the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel published in the *American Journal of Sociology* an article outlining the "sociology of secrecy and of secret societies" (Simmel, 1906). In his article, he wrote extensively about the individual's perception of secrecy and its relation to others and greater society. Simmel's work is exclusively theoretical and he did not seek to apply it to any secret societies in existence at the time of publishing. Since its release, historians and sociologists have utilized Simmel's work as a framework with which to process the importance of secrecy within interpersonal relationships and its social currency to secret societies. Within Simmel's theory, secrecy not only takes on different meaning based on environment but also in possession:

While secrecy, therefore, is a sociological ordination which characterizes the reciprocal relation of group elements, or rather about other forms of reaction constitutes this total relation, it may further, with the formation of "secret societies," extend itself over the group as a whole. So long as the being, doing, and having of an individual persist as a secret, his general sociological significance is isolation, antithesis, egoistic individualization. In this case the sociological meaning of the secrecy is external; as relationship of him who has the secret to him who does not have it. So soon, however, as a group as such seizes upon secrecy as its form of existence, the sociological meaning of the secrecy become internal. It not determines the reciprocal relations of those who possess the secret in common (Simmel, 1906, p.469-470).

In this way, secrecy will be interpreted with both personal and group significance, and the presence of traits inherent to secret societies will be examined with the same scope. While Simmel's theoretical assertions will be used to analyze the interactions between fraternal organizations and society, a reexamination of his work by American researcher Lawrence E. Hazelrigg—posited towards practical application—will also be utilized.

Cultural Pattern

The guiding framework for this study's conceptualization of fraternalism and its impact upon varying levels of societal interaction is cultural pattern. The study of cultural pattern utilizes understandings of the dissemination of particular cultural markers. One principle behind cultural pattern is the dissemination of cultural markers. W.D. Wallis (1926) writing on proximity stated: "the culture shows its wisdom by acquaintance with environment and by making the most of it" (p. 708). As illustrated by Willey and Herskovits (1927), diffusion "introduces the subject of culture pattern, for the acceptance of a diffusing trait or complex (and either may spread) depends on the possibility of adjusting it into the pattern of the group to whom the trait is spreading (p.263). This spread of cultural value can either be conscious or unconscious. Willey and Herskovits (1927) also explain that there must be a positive environment for the trait to be properly inherited:

This again introduces the subject of culture pattern, for the acceptance of a diffusing trait or complex (and either may spread) depends upon the possibility of adjusting it into the pattern of the group to whom the trait is spreading (Bartlett, 7; Willey and Herskovits, 134). Each trait gained from a foreign group is absorbed so as to conform to the general pattern of the society taking it, and if the trait is not adaptable to the pattern it will in all probability be rejected (p. 263).

This understanding of cultural patterns and positive environments for culture dissemination of traits will guide this study's discussion of aspects of fraternalism. This technique has been used to some extent in other examinations of collegiate culture:

In terms of these approaches, the patterning of culture is to be thought of as characteristic of human culture in the large, encompassing various aspects which, in a broad sense, are present in every civilization; second, as that particular configuration of institutions which marks off a given body of traditions from all others; or, in the third place, as the reflection in individual behavior of determining components in the traditions of a given social aggregate and has been applied to humanity as a whole, to a give group of human beings, and to the forms of an individual's behavior in terms of his culture. (Gist, 1940, p.5)

Delimitations and Limitations

Since this study is designed to investigate potential influences on the fraternity and sorority, the choice was made to focus exclusively on social fraternities and sororities. This decision excludes service organization, honorary fraternities and sororities, and any other Greek organization not explicitly identified as a social fraternity or sorority. Another delimitation of this study is the exclusive focus on European influences on fraternities and sororities rather than influences from other sources. One limitation of this study is the reliance on exclusively English sources. While these sources may come from the records of many European institutions, all sources used were either written in English or previously translated into English. This may not lead to explicit bias, but it does require the researcher to rely on accurate and unbiased translation of primary sources. A final limitation on this study is the time frame which will be examined. Since the study is specifically on the European influence on American fraternities and sororities, the study will primarily examine the years leading up to the foundation of the first American fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1776. This timeframe restricts the study to the study of male fraternal organizations as women were not able to

enroll at colleges or universities, and thus were unable to join or form societies. Since the characteristics of a sorority are not fundamentally different from a fraternity, sororities will still be included in the analysis.

Subjectivity Statement

While historical research compared to other branches of qualitative analysis is less likely to be influenced by researcher bias due to the inability of the researcher to ask any direct questions of the subjects or material being studied, there is room for bias in the interpretation of the existing research. With this in mind, it is an important note that the researcher conducting this study is a member of two national fraternities. While there is not inherent researcher bias, it will be impossible to give an entirely unbiased account of the history of these organizations without disclosing that information. One area where there will be inherent bias is in the treatment of “secret” information to the respective organizations mentioned in this study. While other researchers may be comfortable disclosing the details behind a particular organization’s ritual or meaning, or if that information is accessible through various secondary sources, as a member of an organization this researcher will not be disclosing any such information.

Concluding Thoughts

By relying on the work of previous historians and researchers, the study hopes to provide a greater insight on the legacy of European Fraternalism and its lingering influence on an American collegiate staple- The fraternity and sorority system. While the inspiration for various cultural developments may not be implicitly stated, it is believed that by examining historical and spheres of cultural influence, the path of dissemination will be identified.

CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL MARKERS OF FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

Before attempting to identify any possible influence on the American fraternity or sorority system, it is first imperative to identify the cultural markers which make it unique. In order to break down the culture of fraternity, through an anthropological perspective, Wissler (1923) states one must first make a comprehensive list of the “traits” of that culture. Additionally, Benedict (1923) purports that:

it is, so far as we can see, an ultimate fact of human nature that man builds up his culture out of disparate elements, combining and recombining them; and until we have abandoned the superstition that the result is an organism functionally interrelated, we shall be unable to see our cultural life objectively, or to control its manifestation. (p.84-85)

This requires an in-depth evaluation of what differentiates a social fraternity or sorority from other organizations on an American college campus. Beginning with the example set by the first American fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa, there are certain characteristics which many deem essential to a Greek organization: “an oath of secrecy, a badge, mottoes in Greek and Latin, a code of laws, an elaborate form of initiation, a seal, and a special handshake” (Phi Beta Kappa, 2017). This chapter will provide a brief overview of some of the key characteristics of an American fraternity or sorority and their importance to their respective organizations.

Ritual and Oath of Secrecy

Perhaps the most notorious signifier of a collegiate fraternity or sorority is their use of a private and secret ritual of initiation. While the degree of secrecy may vary based on organization, campus and level of involvement, at their core every organization will have some organizing ritual. The esoteric importance of these rituals is known only to members would likely not be disclosed to non-members, even for the purpose of

scholarly study. These rituals of initiation are intended to mark a transition in the lives of prospective members from *neophytes*, or novices of the organization's practice, to full-fledged members possessing the secrets of that particular organization. While the rituals are protected through vows of secrecy and loyalty, there are some disclosable trends with regard to these rituals of initiation. Many organizations' rituals take the form of some sort of dramatic reenactment, whether of a Biblical or Classical story, intended to impart moral lessons, to those observing, or engaging, in it. It is customary that once a new member has gone through their ritual of initiation, they will not engage in that aspect of it again, but rather take on the role of a member for subsection initiation ceremonies. These ceremonies also heavily feature costuming, frequently robes of some sort, and material symbolism connected to that specific organization's values or history.

These rituals of initiation serve as the single most important binding aspect for members of a fraternity or sorority as it will be the same ceremony performed at every chapter of that organization, regardless of time or location. Many of these rituals of initiation have remained intact since their organizations' 19th century founding. These rituals are written in books issued to the individual chapter by the national organization and frequently omit important information, notably the meaning of the Greek words for which the name of the organization stands, which must be passed down orally between members. Should a chapter of a fraternity or sorority cease to exist at a university, whether through lack of membership or disciplinary action, it is the responsibility of the chapter to return the ritual regalia and memorabilia to the respective national organization (though frequently in the case of disciplinary action, these items are retrieved personally by an organization representative).

Organizational Symbols

One unifying aspect of the fraternity and sorority system is the penchant for symbols. Nearly every Greek organization, and every Panhellenic sorority, has a representative symbol. Many organization's symbols are relatively common, such as a heart or star, these symbols represent certain organization values to members of that particular organization. Additionally, the representation of that symbol can become extremely important to the organization. For example, the public symbol of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority is a five-pointed crown, while the symbol of Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority is a four-pointed crown. To a casual observer, these crowns may be interchangeable, but members of these sororities would be expected to identify and differentiate between them.

Organizational Colors

After organizational symbols, each fraternity and sorority, regardless of council or conference has identifying colors. These frequently make an appearance in the marketing, symbolism or attire of their respective members. As with all symbolism, the degree of transparency regarding the meaning of the colors to the organization varies. Some national sororities, such as Alpha Delta Pi, explain their meaning openly on their websites:

Azure blue and white are the official colors of Alpha Delta Pi. Blue is symbolic of friendship, the basic spirit upon which Alpha Delta Pi is founded. White symbolizes sincerity and truth. Alpha Delta Pi seeks these qualities in all its members (Alpha Delta Pi, 2017).

Many organizations are not as forthcoming with this information. Perhaps at the apex of secrecy regarding organizational colors are the members of the NPHC organizations. These organizations hold a unique distinction in that their colors are

legally incorporated with their identity and as such the organization cannot be represented by any other colors. This commitment to uniformity has created a culture where a woman's sorority member can be identified by something as small as a pink and green bag, despite the item not actually making any explicit reference to the organization.

Organization Crests

In addition to a fraternity or sorority's identifying colors and symbols nearly every organization utilizes a crest, or coat of arms, to represent their national organization. These crests frequently incorporate organizational symbols and colors in a manner that is representative of both esoteric and exoteric meaning. These crests typically feature elements of classic heraldry and may be used formally and informally. In addition to organization symbolism, these crests feature mottos, usually in Greek or Latin, which espouse public values of the organization. While crests are prevalent throughout the Fraternity and Sorority system there is one notable exception in the Alpha Omicron Pi Sorority. In the place of a crest Alpha Omicron Pi uses a rose, also their primary symbol, since crests and coat of arms are a feature of medieval and English symbolism rather than Greek tradition.

Membership Badges

Beyond organizational colors and symbolism there are physical items connected to an individual's membership in a social fraternity or sorority, and perhaps the most traditional is a member's badge. As described in Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities (Baird, 1905):

The distinctive badges of the fraternities are of three kinds. First, a shield or plate of gold, displaying upon it the fraternity name, together with symbols of general or peculiar significance. This is worn as a pin, as a pendant from a watch chain, or as a watch key. Secondly, a monogram of letters composing the name; these are

the handsomest of all badges, and are usually jeweled. Thirdly, some symbol representing the name of the society or some of its degrees, as a skull, a harp, a key. (p.3)

These badges remain an important representation of fraternity or sorority membership though they rarely take the form of pendants or watch keys. The membership badge is especially important as it is given to members after their formal initiation into the society and often replaces their new member, or pledge, pin. This new member pin is given to members upon their invitation to membership and is meant to represent their commitment to their future organization as well as claim them as soon to be members. These pins frequently have esoteric symbolism to the organization but are much less elaborate.

Handshakes

Perhaps the most challenging characteristic of American fraternities and sororities to objectively research is the organizational handshake. This is since not only are handshakes a physical expression, but organizational handshakes are inherently exoteric and would be shielded from the prying glances of non-members. These handshakes, although elusive, have served important purposes during the early history of American fraternities and sororities when membership rosters were notoriously hard to secure. In order to verify fraternity or sorority membership, a member might issue a “challenge” to an alleged member before disclosing any potential secrets. Many of these organizational challenges also involved highly detailed verbal exchanges that dramatically reduced their discretion and thus limited their ultimate usefulness in a modern setting.

Organizational Laws and Constitutions

In order to establish legitimacy and control during the early years of fraternity and sorority, organizations created organizational by-laws and constitutions to govern their membership. These documents established things from the reporting hierarchy of the membership of the organization, to the protocol associated with the recording of organizational business and the issuance of invitations to membership. Constitutions also established governing power through the creation of chapter officers, and even judicial boards (Baird, 1905). These officers frequently had titles which were unique to that organization, such as Pi Kappa Phi fraternity's president being called "Archon" (Greek for "Chief Magistrate") or Sigma Chi fraternity's use of "Quaestor" for their treasurer (Sigma Chi, 2016).

These organizational constitutions also exist autonomously outside the control of their host institutions, with many organizations refusing to submit a complete copy of their governing documents to their universities. Many of these regulations that were formulated out of necessity as communication between members at different college campuses, nevertheless across state lines, were notoriously precarious. Through these documents it was also established that there would be a central body that would serve as both the decision maker, as well as the governing agent. These governing bodies served as the precursors to today's national fraternity and sorority headquarters which retain control over the governance of their respective chapters, although cooperation between host institutions and headquarters has greatly increased.

Fraternity and Sorority Housing

One aspect of Greek Life that may play an extremely important role in the operations of a fraternity or sorority chapter is the presence of a chapter facility (e.g., fraternity or sorority house). At many larger institutions these facilities house thousands of students who hold membership in their respective organizations. Unlike traditional campus housing options, these houses are exclusive to the organization and organizational membership is required for residency. Surprisingly, fraternity and sorority housing has been a part of the American fraternity and sorority system since the first fraternity house was acquired by the “Alpha Epsilon chapter of Chi Psi at the University of Michigan – an abandoned log hut hidden away in the woods so that members might not be discovered” (Birdseye, 1907 p.211). These houses have served as both a refuge for members seeking a home away from home as well as social venues for organizational events. Houses may belong to a number of entities with some belonging to the university or college where the chapter is housed and subsequently rented to the organization, owned by the alumni of that particular organization, or owned and managed by the national organization. The difference in house ownership might also greatly affect policies regulating member conduct in the facility. Many chapters were not able to secure entire facilities for the fraternity, and thus would rent rooms in town or at local clubhouses (Syrett, 2009). Soon these facilities served as status symbols, both on their respective campuses as well as for their national organization, with the most successful fraternities having the largest chapter facilities. These facilities also served a purpose to the host institutions as they struggled to find space to house university students “To this extent the fraternity lodge represents a considerable proportion of the endowment of the

colleges, and where the fraternities are strongest the latter have substantially ceased to build new dormitories” (Birdseye, 1907, p.213). Historically many sororities did not have chapter facilities with the frequency of the men’s organizations. This is due in part to the limited number of institutions at which women were allowed enrollment, with the majority of sororities beginning at female state normal colleges, and the total size of their membership being lower than their male counterparts.

Recruitment of Members

The recruitment of new members is one characteristic which differentiates fraternity and sorority chapters from other organizations on the American college campus. Unlike other campus organizations membership is restricted and only extended by the fraternity or sorority to a new member. This process is frequently called recruitment, or “rush”, and this process is as old as the organizations themselves. In the earlier years of the fraternity system membership was reserved for the most elite members of the senior class (Baird, 1905). As competition grew between rival organizations, the need for increasing membership arose which allowed for junior males to be considered and “so on down, until at some colleges it scarcely stops at the academy” (Baird, 1905, p.13). This relaxation of the restrictions upon membership also greatly affected the way in which new potential members were identified. “Fraternity members were free to pursue new students in any way they saw fit. This might have meant approaching them in their hometowns or as they arrived in the college town by train or carriage.” (Syrett, 2009, p.41) The urgency of being the first fraternity to receive a potential member as he arrived into town led to fraternity men “rushing” to the station, thus creating the term for the recruitment process. At some older and more prestigious

colleges, this “undignified scramble for members” (Birdseye, 1907, p.218) by the fraternities led to community coalitions and agreements regarding recruitment decorum. For example, at Amherst College in 1903, the eleven fraternities which existed on campus came together to develop a collective policy outlining recruitment expectations (Birdseye, 1907). These requirements mirror many of the recruitment policies governing fraternities today. Their policies covered the acceptable amount of time before a fraternity was allowed to contact a member, how many members of each fraternity would be permitted to speak with new students as they arrived into the college town, barred any fraternity from disparaging another, and prevented fraternities from stealing a recruit from another fraternity (Birdseye, 1907). These restrictions were observed on a honor basis because there was no formalized governing body at that point in time. Since then the North-American Inter-Fraternity Conference has taken over the role of governing fraternity recruitment guidelines.

The active recruitment of new members was not something exclusive to men’s organizations. Sororities also found themselves scrambling to win the best women at their colleges and in order to control this process developed a much more structured process. This was partially thanks to a greater sense of cooperation between women’s organizations and a desire to eliminate women joining more than one sorority. The sororities then issued a “basic mechanism used to process the rank-orderings submitted by students and sororities called the ‘preferential bidding system’ (PBS), and it remains in use today.” (Mongell & Roth, 1991, p.441). This allowed for interested women to meet with and rank the sororities on their campus in order of their preference to join, and the

sororities would rank the women they would like to join their chapter. If there ranking matched, then that woman would receive an invitation to membership within that chapter.

While still relying on a recruitment process, member organizations of the National Pan-Hellenic Council retain their own structure which heavily relies on the involvement of alumni and members of the national organization in the recruitment of student members. This process is generally referred to as “intake” and is handled with much more discretion and ambiguity than their NIC and PHC counterparts. The intake process takes potential members from their status as interested parties, through their fraternal education, all the way to their initiation into the organization. One unique aspect of NPHC organization’s intake process is that it is generally a secret to all non-involved parties, including friends and family member of the new member. This secret is then revealed to the Greek community and campus as whole and the newly initiated members are revealed in a show known as a “probate”.

Some institutions also implemented policies regulating at which point in their collegiate career interested student may pursue fraternity or sorority membership. These proved problematic as “they are made by the wrong authority, the faculty, instead of being made and enforced by the students themselves.” (Birdseye, 1907, p.222). This ownership by the student members, rather than faculty, is important because for students to join a fraternity or sorority chapter, the organization must agree as part of the mutual selection, and a prospective member cannot become affiliated with a chapter unless a bid, or extension to membership, is extended.

CHAPTER 3: EUROPEAN FRATERNALISM

Secret fraternalism in the early days of this country was chiefly an importation from England. Within a decade after the formation of the first grand Masonic lodge in London in 1717 the order had spread throughout the United Kingdom and Continental Europe, and by 1730 has been introduced to the American colonies. (Gist, 1940, p. 31)

Guilds

Perhaps the first tangible proof of presence of European fraternalism is within the trade groups, or guilds, which existed throughout Europe in the medieval and early-modern periods. These groups brought men together to focus on the development and advancement of a craft. Part of the fraternal aspect of these organizations also came from the rearing of apprentices in the craft. Young apprentices were selected by guild masters to study under a guild member with the express purpose of learning and eventually mastering that particular craft. This mentorship was dual purpose in that it ensured the continued existence of the trade and also created an expectation that the apprentice would become a full-fledged member of the guild. Epstein and Prak (2008) in their text *Guilds, Innovation, and the European Economy 1400-1800* refer to this investment as the “training of human capital” (p.7). This introduction of new membership in the form of apprentices extended the reach of the organizations in their communities and ensured their future membership. The guilds additionally passed down the technical knowledge of the craft that would have been difficult to obtain without the guidance of guild masters. Guilds were frequently distrusted by their contemporaries for the perceived mystery, or secretive nature, surrounding their operation and transmutation of their craft. This was an incorrect perception of the organization’s mission as “this ‘mystery’ was precisely the tacit knowledge that was impossible to articulate with any precision and hence had to be transmitted in person” (Epstein & Prak, 2008, p.14). Despite the incorrect assumption

that inherently secretive information was being passed from master to apprentice, this stereotype would remain with the guild system for the remainder of its existence.

Freemasonry

All fraternal organizations, to some extent, owe their existence to the freemasons. The Freemasons hold a unique contradiction as they are likely the most famous secret society in the world, and yet have managed to retain their secrecy for hundreds of years. As Elliot and Daniels (2006) write “Despite being probably the most pervasive and influential form of secular voluntary organization in most English towns from the 1720s and inspiring a multitude of imitative, derivative and parodic fraternal organizations, our knowledge of Freemasonry remains cursory”.

Freemasonry is one of the most ancient and longstanding examples of fraternalism. Its history is a mix of documented trade training, that of Masonry, and of lore tracing back to the Temple of Solomon. While Freemasons claim that their organization has existed in some form since the time of the Egyptians, the modern, and documented history, truly begins with the 1717 establishment of the Grand Lodge of England in London. This lodge seemed a direct response to the Enlightenment beliefs of the day as is illustrated in David Hackett’s (2014) text, *That Religion in Which All Men Agree: Freemasonry in American Culture*:

Some of the men behind the founding of the modern Grand Lodge, in 1717, reflected their time of cultural change, when the Enlightenment emphasis on order, rationality, and science existed within an older longing for the deeper truths of ancient knowledge. (p.28)

The lodge of 1717, while a part of the same Masonic tradition, represented a new direction for Freemasonry. Prior to the Enlightenment, Freemasonry had been primarily an organization centered around the technical teachings of the Masonic craft, similar to

the way that European guilds operated in early-modern Europe, but the Enlightenment allowed Freemasonry to change its course. In line with the mission of the Enlightenment, “Freemasonry of Stuart origin turned its attention to the emancipation of the people from the oppression of Feudalism, and from the yoke of Religion, which naturally upholds the de facto government and the reign of law” (Ratton, 1913, p.258).

One factor differentiating Freemasonry from other guilds was their mystic tradition which stressed the history and “importance of their craft, held banquets on their fraternity’s patron saint’s day, initiated new members into their fictive brotherhood, and limited entry to the trade to men who had been properly trained in its mysteries, its skills and techniques” (Hacket, 2014, p.19). With the introduction of Enlightenment thought, the Freemason’s membership shifted from a society of primarily “operative” tradesmen skilled in the craft of Masonry to ‘non-operative,’ ‘accepted,’ ‘admitted,’ or ‘speculative’ noblemen and gentry” (p. 15). This shift meant that Freemasonry was now able to admit men outside of the craft, introducing a new branch of ideas and mode of fraternal thought. Though more accessible, membership remained restricted to only those who sought out Freemasonry and were “prompted by a favourable opinion conceived of the institution, a desire of knowledge, and a sincere wish of being serviceable to [their] fellow creatures” (Preston, 1887, p. 211) and could secure a member to vouch for their character. Freemasonry became a tool to elevate the everyday man to a new moral height from which he became a benefit to both his family, community, and country.

These men met within lodges, such as the Grand Lodge of England, generating collaborative and innovative thought under the pretense of brotherhood and the transmission of wisdom. While Masonic lodges did become great centers of European

thought, they still served the purpose of initiating new members via the Masonic ritual. This ritual initially featured two “rites” which were designed to recognize the new member’s induction to the order, but as the induction of members who were not practitioners of the craft of masonry the ritual was expanded. This expansion consisted of three “degrees” of Masonry: “Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craftsman, and Master Mason—collectively known as Craft Masonry” (Hacket, 2014, p. 86). These degrees each featured their own dramatic initiation ritual that was held in complete secrecy to all who had not become masons themselves. The refusal to disclose information to non-members created a general distrust of Freemasons. To combat this scrutiny, Master Mason William Preston authored a text in 1772 designed to explain, in an allowable fashion, the moral and ethical lessons taught during Freemason initiation ceremonies. Preston (1887) writes in his remarks regarding the necessity for degrees on initiation:

Masonry is justly considered as an art equally useful and extensive. It must be allowed, that in all arts there is a mystery; which being discovered, requires a gradual progression of knowledge to attain to any degree of perfection in them. Without much instruction, and more exercise, no man can be skilful [sic] in any art; in like manner, without application to the various sections comprehended in the different lectures of masonry, no person can be sufficiently acquainted with its true value.” (p.52-53)

These degrees of Masonic initiation involved not only the man being introduced to membership, but all members of that lodge who watched the ceremony from the side. Every person involved with the ceremony was clad in specific garb “convenient to their powers and degrees” (Conder, 1894, p.97) which signified their status as a member and what degree they completed within Masonry. The leaders of the lodge would be responsible for explaining, through the initiation ceremony, the importance of Masonry and the meaning behind their orders’ symbolism.

In addition to directing life within the lodge, Freemasonry also informed the personal lives of Masons. This can be seen in the “Charge on the Behaviour of Masons” which is also disclosed in William Preston’s (1887) explanatory text:

When the Lodge is closed, you may enjoy yourselves with innocent mirth; but you are carefully to avoid excess—You are not to compel any brother to act contrary to his inclination, nor to give offense by word or deed, but enjoy a free and easy conversation. You are to use no immoral or obscene discourse, but support with propriety the dignity of your character.(p.43)

This charge to Masons also forbade members from exposing any conversation within the lodge, or disclosing information to non-Masons. While Preston’s text did not completely eliminate skepticism by the general public on the nature of Freemasonry, it did keep it at bay long enough for Freemasonry to expand its membership, and thus its influence.

Freemasonry’s International Reach

While an inherently European system, Freemasonry did have international appeal and thus was able to cross national boundaries. This expansion led to the creation of lodges in Ireland, Scotland, France, and even the American colonies. Lodges were frequently found in larger cities capable of generating enough members to fill a lodge. According to a roster of lodges in the English register by Masons Hughman and Lane, (1895) prior to American Revolution, 15 Masonic charters had been issued for lodges throughout the American colonies. While these lodges were primarily in seaport cities, there is one notable exception: Detroit, Michigan. Interestingly, the charter for the “Zion Lodge No.1” (Hughman & Lane, 1895, p.184) in Detroit was being issued one year after the British took control of the colony from the French. This rapid extension, creating a lodge after only one year of regaining the territory through war, speaks to the importance

with which eighteenth century members viewed Freemasonry and its role in establishing a communal bond.

Freemasonry also had an affect when it came to the inspiration for other fraternal societies. These organizations frequently mimicked aspects of Freemasonry. On the spread of the fraternal concept Gist (1940) wrote:

In 1745, less than three decades after the founding of the Masonic order in England, the Ancient and Honorable, Loyal Odd Fellows was organized in Great Britain, but it was not until 1819 that the Society was established in the United States as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.” (p. 31).

The Society of Odd Fellows served as an alternative to the Freemasons and allowed for membership to be recruited rather than relying exclusively on outreach by interested members. These organizations would end up serving as a blueprint that many subsequent organizations would use for their formation. In addition to their structure, certain aspects of their societies soon became a standard:

The fondness for animal designations in devising titles for societies, the importance of the concept of knighthood, and the like, afford further illuminating instances on how a group, free from conscious pressure from the outside, responds to the demands of an existing pattern. (Gist, 1940, p.7-8).

While none are individually definitive, the collective existence of these symbolic elements in various societies formed in the eighteenth century prove the pervasive and influential nature of fraternalism in the early modern world. In order to gain a more comprehensive appreciation for these influences, we must examine the affects of European fraternalism in a more concentrated setting, specifically within the organizational stronghold of the European university.

CHAPTER 4: FRATERNALISM AND THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Whenever bodies of young men have been gathered together, more or less permanently, they have tended to separate into groups based on kindred tastes, aims, interests or other causes. This was so even in the mediaeval universities, where the students were separated into 'nations,' as they were called, drawn together by race or clan ties. In German universities, it takes the form of various associations: in Oxford and Cambridge, of the fellowship of the Common Room. In this country, it early developed through various kinds of societies, the most permanent of which have been the college secret societies or fraternities. (Birdseye, 1907, p. 208)

With their centuries of organized systems for Higher Education, the European university was the perfect breeding ground for collegiate fraternalism. After sorting out the remnants of the pugnacious medieval period, European nations sought to establish themselves as formidable educational forces, educating the brightest and most capable scholars. These students were nearly exclusively trained in theology due to the centralized control of the church at the time, but there did exist an opportunity for the development of a fraternal spirit: the collegiate residence. In the earliest years of their existence, institutions were not able to lodge their students in exclusive university facilities, and as such they sought out "*hospitia* or inns" (Sheldon, 1901, p.8) surrounding their campuses to serve as student housing. These hospitia quickly began to show the first signs of a fraternal spirit as noted by Sheldon (1901) "the scholars in the hospitia formed an independent democratic community, which elect a principal and invested him with certain limited powers" (p.8). Following the English civil war of the seventeenth century the hospitia became less important to Oxford which then had the funds to establish their own residences, but the spirit of student engagement would remain.

The Collegiate Model

“An American observer has said that nowhere has the art of social intercourse been carried to such perfection as in some of the Oxford colleges” (Sheldon, 1901, p.44). These colleges—which housed, fed, entertained and educated its students—are one of the most unique aspects of the English education academic model, especially when compared to American systems. These colleges provided their own clubs, choirs, rowing teams and tutors who would ensure that the years that students spent under their tutelage was properly utilized. Every student admitted to Oxford or Cambridge would be assigned to one of the academic colleges based on their initial application. Each Oxbridge college also featured its own initiatory ceremony, referred to as “salting” (Bowers, 1942), at which senior members of the house regaled incoming freshmen with tales of their times in the college all while consuming extraordinary amounts of alcohol. Within the college, social stratification existed not only in terms of academia, but also in terms of financial dependence. In examining the financial requirements associated with study within Oxbridge colleges in the eighteenth century, three student classifications emerge—scholars, pensioners, and “*sizars*”. The first status was a “scholar,” or a student whose full university tuition of 2 pounds and 10 pence tuition was supplemented with “considerable financial help from their college” (Searby, 1997, p.70). The second classification is that of a pensioner. These students were also expected to pay a full tuition, but often found their own financial support outside of the university to cover these fees. Finally, the third and lowest of the three student statuses is the “sizar”, an abbreviation of the term *sizarius*, which meant “a student who obtains commons free, and pays only for his sizings; and ‘sizings’ mean the supplied from the kitchen” (Mahaffy,

1905, p.315). In exchange for the reduced tuition, sizarers “acted as servants in college” (Searby, 1997, p.70) primarily assisting with food service as waiters or servants. Even with the inherent servitude associated with sizarship, there was not any apparent social stigma isolating these students from their peers.

The proximity to one’s friends and fellow students was one of the espoused values of the collegiate model. These informal meetings within the academic colleges, were viewed as some of the most important interactions at Oxford or Cambridge:

...such a meeting was not a formal “wine” but a mutual smoke and talk, or perhaps a regular symposium with cards and music intermingled. In either case it contains that which is the kernel of college life—the pleasure of being together and discussing with one’s friends whatever is nearest one’s heart, whether athletics, literature, or social philosophy. (Sheldon, 1901, p.45)

In addition to the collegial nature of the Oxbridge colleges there also remains a fierce rivalry. While Oxford and Cambridge themselves are storied rivals, there is an additional level of competition, and that is between the colleges at the same university. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in bunting, or racing barges. Each team has a crew which is responsible for swiftly and effectively navigating their team down the Thames. Each barge is “colored and carved and gilded and decorated with coats of arms, and with a brilliant flag flapping above it of silk and gold, as large as a campaign banner” (Davis, 1894, p. 112). These dramatic displays of collegiate pride characterized student life at Oxford and Cambridge.

Town Versus Gown

Despite their national and international reputation, Oxford and Cambridge were not without their issues. While each university possessed the funds required to establish private buildings for their students, their location in the center of their respective towns limited their construction and forced students to interact with locals. These exchanges

between the Oxbridge (Oxford and Cambridge) collegians were colloquially called “town versus gown” and rarely ended beneficially to either party. This tension was due, in part, to the fact that the Oxbridge students did not refrain from showing their distaste regarding unfavorable administration decision made by the university or the local government, and partially due to the impunity that student that the students received for offenses beyond their walls. “At Oxford and Cambridge, students were completely outside the city's authority altogether. Crimes of which they were accused, even those involving ordinary citizens, were tried before the universities' own courts and usually treated more leniently” (Brockliss, 2000, p.154). This pushed the townspeople to frequently lash out against students at Oxford and Cambridge.

English Collegiate Social Life

Aside from the occasion encounter with the enraged local townspeople, the majority of English collegiate life was pretty relaxed. The student experience on campus became less puritanical and more accepting of new ideas, noted as being closer to the “social atmosphere of the coffee-house and the club began to be felt within college bounds” (Sheldon, 1901, p.39). This open-mindedness led to a new wave of student organizations on the Oxbridge campuses. Of the new club types which appeared on campus, the political clubs, were of the most importance to students (Sheldon, 1901). “As the eighteenth century was pre-eminently the age of politics and party strife in England” (Sheldon, 1901, p.39-40) many of the campus political clubs quickly made a name for themselves. One such club was the True Blue Club of Cambridge, an organization named in open defiance to King William II’s trademark orange (Sheldon, 1901). The Tory Club

at Oxford expanded its social reach by also hosting an annual ball in addition to its political aims.

The number of societies on the Oxford and Cambridge campuses began to rapidly expand as literary, debate, and poetic societies were founded. In addition to weekly events, some English clubs embraced showmanship as a part of their society, such as one club at Cambridge:

The twelve members of the group appeared in coats of bright green, lined and bound with buff silk, with buttons made expressly for them upon which ‘*Sans Souci*’ was elegantly engraved; the waistcoat curiously adorned with frogs was of buff material; the knee-breeches were the same colour (Sheldon, 1901, p. 41)

These organizations had no permanent aim, but rather served as social tool for students pursuing leisure through organization membership.

German Collegiate Societies

In stark contrast to the levity associated with the English college social system, the German system seem plagued by corrosive division. Following the lead of the University of Paris, the German institutions divided their students into four nations—representing the nationalities of the region—“Southern, Saxon, Bohemian, and Hungarian” (Hartson, 1911, xxx-xxx). Despite its success in France, this division amongst the Germans only encouraged factional quarrels (Sheldon, 1901). The German institutions established *bursae* which were dining facilities taken by force and served as a communal space for German students (Hartson, 1911). During this time of transition the German students decided to return to the concept of nations established by the earlier German universities and distort it into a network of secret student societies:

The seventeenth century nations were secret societies of irresponsible student formed in the teeth of the authorities. The new system of secret societies was the common possession of all the German universities; the nations in the different academic centers were in league with each other; a notorious members expelled

from one university was immediately welcomed by his brothers elsewhere (Sheldon, 1901, p.12-13).

Incoming students were met by society representatives and actively pursued to become members of these student nations, often with threats of retaliation if they did not. If these threats did not work the society members would make a personal appeal by espousing “the love and friendship to which, after the manner of the ancient Epicureans, the nations are devoted” (Sheldon, 1901, p.13). New members quickly learned that this was an illusion as they were plunged into vicious hazing, called *pennalism*, by the members.

Organizations managed to sustain themselves throughout the seventeenth century despite governmental decrees banning their existence before their ultimate dissemination in the mid-seventeenth century (Sheldon, 1901). With the disappearance of the previous nation groups, the eighteenth century saw the appearance of a new German student group, the *Landsmannschaften*. Unfortunately for the German universities, this was simply a new interpretation of the previous nation societies with some new Masonic influences (Sheldon, 1901). The *Landsmannschaften* reveled in debauchery and university disapproval, and as such maintained a nefarious reputation to non-members, of which there were few. The early *Landsmannschaften*, for their love of excess and deregulation, made a surprising decision and established the *Komment*, a sort of governing body over the *Landsmannschaften*. The *Komment* was the only body able to establish new *Landsmannschaften*, and alternatively was the only body authorized to close a *Landsmannschaften* (although this required the unanimous agreement of all member *Landsmannschaften*). The *Komment* was also the final step in the *Renoncen*, or new member’s, path to full membership. After the “catechization of the *Komment* and

the principles of life, and the principles of the association, the attaching of a ribbon, the communication of the cipher of the association, and the kiss of brotherhood” (Sheldon, 1901, p. 18), a Renoncen became a *Burshcen*, or full member. As a Burschen, members were able to join in the most anticipated aspect of membership, bello, or honor duels. These could be at the defense of the individual or the entire Landsmannschaften, but as organizations based off of the concepts of feudal honor, it was always addressed with a bello. The Landsmannschaften involved could always be easily identified as the Burschen would wear a scarf specific to his group during his duel (Strang, 1836). It wasn’t until the mid-eighteenth century that secret student organizations who were able to challenge the Landsmannschaften would appear.

CHAPTER 5: FRATERNALISM AND THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Now that we have discovered the identifying characteristics of Greek organizations, it is imperative to examine their historical connection to the American college and university. Since these organizations may only exist within the context of colleges and universities, it is important to examine the relationship between the two. The chapter will examine how potential interactions with American colleges and universities may have shaped the fraternities and sororities into the organizations we know today.

Foundation for the Colonial Colleges

The foundation of Higher Education in the United States is an undeniably storied one. With the founding of Harvard University in 1636, the United States received its first institution of higher learning. While the purpose of this institution differs greatly from the educational institutions we know today, and even the Harvard University we know today, its importance to the Higher Education movement and to Higher Education researchers and professionals cannot be understated. Harvard College was established by the Massachusetts Bay colony for the purpose of educating young men in theology. Despite the challenge of being the only educational system of its kind in English America, educational researchers have been able to identify certain strengths which benefitted the fledgling Harvard:

(1) the leading men of the Colony were themselves graduates of, or connected with, British universities; (2) these men and many of the lesser citizens believed that it was essential to have a source of trained civil Service and an educated ministry; (3) all sought understanding of the Bible, and for that, education in the classics and even Hebrew was desirable; (4) influential and wealthy persons in England felt that this College in the Puritan colony was perhaps the only place in the world where the truth was taught; (5) one of the objectives of the supporters of the Colony was "propagating the Gospel to the Indians," and to accomplish this objective both Indians and teachers of Indians must be educated. (Foster, 1962, p.3)

This collective belief in the importance of the university to a developing America is one of the reasons that more universities began appearing throughout New England over the next 133 years. These institutions, known as the colonial colleges, hold a rich history and each reflect a unique aspect of the early years of American Higher Education. These institutions were all founded and developed based on the educational systems of the British universities, namely Cambridge and Oxford. “From their English models, Harvard and Yale inherited a strong ecclesiastical bias, a curriculum tinged with scholasticism and a system of almost monastic common life and discipline.” (Sheldon, 1901, p.81)

Another important aspect to these new American institutions was their status as residential colleges. This meant that students at the university would live together in university residences, study together, as well as consume their meals with faculty in the university commons (Birdseye, 1907). This observation by faculty led to the development *in loco parentis*, a theory which allowed faculty to act in the place of the students’ parents, both in their education as well as their discipline. At Harvard, the first residents lived in basic homes consisting of “five Chambers, eighteen Studyes, a Kitchen cellar, & three garrets” (Bunting & Floyd, 1985, p.2) with the university faculty. The first structure to be built for the explicit purpose of educating students was begun in 1638 and upon its completion became the largest building built in the English colonies (Bunting & Floyd, 1985). This allowed for Harvard to conduct lectures, religious ceremonies, and college events all in one central location effectively solidifying Harvard Hall as the center of their educational lives. In 1671 Harvard’s overseers wrote a letter petitioning potential donors who remained in England to give in order to better serve students stating, “it is well

known to your selves what advantage to Learning accrue's by the multitude of persons cohabitating for Scholastical [sic] communication, whereby to acuate the minds of one another." (Bunting & Floyd, 1985, p. 16). For nearly the next 100 years the school would continue to build new buildings, some out of necessity due to damage, and some to board an increasingly large student number, but they all were built with a similar plan—a quadrangle (Bunting & Floyd, 1985). This was an extremely important aspect to the early colonial colleges as it reinforced the all-encompassing nature of a residential college.

Student Classes at the Colonial Colleges

While fraternities were not in existence prior to Phi Beta Kappa's formation in 1776, there was still social classification occurring in colonial colleges. Student life at these early colonial colleges was highly regimented, likely due to their purported purpose of educating and training future clergy. One of the earliest recorded classifications of a student association is Harvard's 1647 governing laws, which acknowledge the presence of a "class" (Sheldon, 1901). This classification of students into a "class" had a two-fold meaning: primarily the term was utilized to refer to the grouping of students all studying the same scholastic coursework but it was eventually extended to refer to students of a certain entry year. The classes soon fell victim to stratification based on social class as noted in Dexter's 1894 evaluation of social distinctions:

the catalogues of graduates of Harvard College down to 1772, and in those of Yale down to 1767, the names of the students in the successive classes are places – not alphabetically, as now, and not as at Oxford or Cambridge in the order of application for admission, or according to scholastic merit, but – in an order supposed to indicate the rank of their respect fathers of families. (p. 3)

These stratifications are purported to be a direct result of the observations of Harvard's administrators and founders during their time in England. This ranking quickly established a complex social power dynamic especially thanks to its transparency. One

factor regarding the economic ranking of Harvard students that complicated this process is that this information was reported to be self-disclosed:

The students themselves, on entering, defined their own status by the fee which they paid. That they themselves paid fees according to their means and social position was quite different from any such distinction being insisted on by the College. (Dexter, 1984, p.5)

This not only places a physical indicator of the social structure which divided students based on privilege and influence, it proves that there was a cognizance by the students that this was important and their honest disclosure was needed. This somewhat grim, or perhaps simply realistic, acceptance of the realities of the collegiate social life may help to explain the willingness of the lower class to tolerate lesser treatment. In the colonial colleges, members of lower social classes, notably freshmen, were required to assist higher classes in various manners (1901). This custom became regarded as “Freshmen Law” or “Freshmen Servitude”. Historian B.H. Hall presents an abridged copy of the “Ancient Customs of Harvard College, Established by the Government of It” outlining the restrictions on freshmen (Hall, 1851). Some highlights of the Freshmen laws are as follows:

3. Freshmen are to consider all the other classes as their seniors.
4. No freshmen shall speak to a Senior with his hat on, or have it on in a Senior’s chamber, or in his own, if a Senior be there.
6. All Freshmen shall be obliged to go on any errand for any of his Seniors, Graduates or Undergraduates, at any time, except in studying house, or after nine o’clock in the evening.
9. No Freshmen, when sent on an errand, shall make any unnecessary delay, negly to make due return, or go away till dismissed by the person who sent him.
13. When any person knocks at a Freshmen’s door, except in studying time, he shall immediately open the door, without inquiring who is there.
16. The Freshmen shall furnish bats, balls, and footballs for the use of the students, to be kept at the Buttery. (Hall, 1851, p. 139-140)

These laws, while not issued by the administration, were not rebuffed by the administrations of most colonial colleges – Dartmouth College did abolish the custom in 1797, ironically immediately after the freshmen class had completed their freshmen year – and thus maintained a certain legitimacy. At Yale, the “laws” were expanded to reduce freshmen even more by requiring to automatically relinquish right of way to any upperclassmen whom they encounter in any confined space, such as a stairwell or gate, until the upperclassman has passed. Of interest, these laws extended to the entire city of New Haven, not simply campus (Hall, 1851). These restricting laws are credited with establishing a camaraderie through servitude within the freshmen classes.

The class also encouraged strong friendships through proximity:

This class bond became one of the distinctive features of American college life, and later developed all manner of athletic and social rivalries. At Harvard it has outlasted the elective system of studies, the multiplication of clubs, and a vast heterogeneous enrolment. (Morison, 1935, p.84)

Due to the restrictive puritan policies which governed not only Harvard’s campus, but all of New England at the time, social interaction outside of the college was forbidden, limiting a Harvard student to interact with his fellow students, tutors and university fellows. This affection can be seen in the writings of some of the Harvard students at the time. Samuel Sewall, a 1671 graduate of Harvard, kept a detailed journal which documented his daily interactions whom he affectionately referred to as his “brothers,” rather than classmates, including an instance on July 3, 1674 when Mr. Nathaniel Gookin, Jr., a junior sophister “was gone a fishing with his brothers” (Sewall, 1878, p.4). Activities of this sort, those without an explicitly scholarly or religious benefit, were regarded as a “waste of precious time” (Morison, 1935, p.112), so this passing remark really is quite telling. The Harvard Laws of 1655 outline the extent to

which the Puritans expected students to apply themselves to their education: “No undergraduate upon any pretence [sic] of recreation or any other cause whatsoever, (unless allowed by the President or his Tutor) shall be absent from his studies or appointed exercised in the Colledge” (Green, 1876, p.5).

The Rise of Debate at the Colonial Colleges

In addition to the “class” organizational structure, new debating groups began to emerge on the colonial college campuses (Sheldon, 1901). This is perhaps due to the pugnacious nature of the religious denominations which controlled the colonial colleges as well as the general lack of permanent local governance. Even without a controversy, these debating societies allowed future members of the clergy to practice addressing a large group while delivering a targeted sermon. Students were “apportioned, usually by lot or by alternate names, to these societies, which were really the literary and forensic arenas of the college and were in many respects among the most important educational features connected with them.” (Birdseye, 1907, p.68)

“Literary and debating societies also helped facilitate the flow of Whig ideology on campus ... [and] ... were popular with the boys because they provided a social release from the rigorous daily academic regimen and a ‘meaningful’ educational experience.” (Tucker, 1979, p. 25). While many of the records regarding the earliest debating societies have been lost there are a few which have survived the test of time. “The oldest society...was the Crotonian Society of Yale, which had a brief existence and made way for Linonia, the oldest permanent society, and the Brothers in Unity (1798)” (Sheldon, 1901, p. 92-93). These organizations clashed publicly and frequently with the debating societies of Princeton, exchanging both oration as well as printed materials to argue their

point. These organizations set the stage for the American Whig and Clisophic Societies, two debating societies at Princeton, to gain prominence. (Sheldon, 1901). While debate societies were present at other foreign institutions, none existed with the fervor and attention as those in America. The groups became so prominent on their respective campuses that many historians consider them nearly symbiotic. This can be seen in Gist's (1940) text on American fraternal organizations where he wrote that "many of the orders are so characteristically American and so much a product of the times that they may be said to be indigenous to the American milieu" (p.32).

Phi Beta Kappa

Perhaps the most important event for the spread of fraternalism, in terms of this study, occurred "“on Thursday, the 5th of December in the year of our Lord God seventeen hundred and seventy-six, and the first of the Commonwealth’ with the purpose as stated ‘of attaining the important ends of Society’” (Phi Beta Kappa, 1926, p. 255)—the establishment of Phi Beta Kappa fraternity. This society, established at William and Mary, within its first year of existence picked up the hallmarks we associate with a modern fraternity: a Greek letter name, grip, badge, symbol, constitution and laws, membership process, admission standards, an initiation ceremony, and membership recognition events (Phi Beta Kappa, 1926). The speed with which Phi Beta Kappa was able to acquire all these characteristics proves that elements of these must have been inherited from some aspects of their collegiate culture and that a cultural dissemination must have occurred.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussing the magnitude and rise of fraternalism in the United States, Gist (1940) states,

Fraternalism and the notions pertaining to it have penetrated almost every segment of society, influencing alike old and young, male and female, rich and poor. In its totality it represents one of the major patterns of American civilization— a vast complex of material and non-material traits which have been woven into a distinctive cultural scheme (p.9).

This quote begins to identify the multifaceted aspects of Fraternalism and speaks to its prevalence in American society, but in order to fully address Fraternalism's influence on the establishment of the American Fraternity and Sorority, we must examine each of its cultural factors.

The Cultural Dissemination of Fraternalism

This chapter will utilize the Cultural Dissemination theory (Hazelrigg, 1969) in order to examine the pervasive elements of fraternalism across various environments. This analysis of the dissemination of cultural markers across time relies critically on Hazelrigg's (1969) interpretation of Simmel's (1906) "*Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies*". As defined by Hazelrigg (1969) the secret society is "an interactional unit characterized in its totality by the fact that reciprocal relations among its members are governed by the protective function of secrecy" (p.324). In addressing the dissemination of the values themselves, it is important to note the conditions for their adoption by organization members "members of the interactional unit are concerned with the protection of ideas, objects, activities, and/or sentiments to which they attach positive value (i.e., which are rewarding to them)" (Hazelrigg, 1969, p.324). Thus, in order for a value to be effectively disseminated within a particular environment, both the

environment and those living within it must be favorable towards that value. If the individuals or culture as a whole interpret the value as unimportant, or hostile, the likelihood is that the converse will happen and the society will adopt a negative permutation of the value.

To examine the impact of conceptual Fraternalism on the eventual formation of the American fraternity and sorority, we must first examine its impact on each of the historical environments and ecosystems which contributed to its formation. The following values were identified as general values connected to fraternalism as an overarching structure: Affiliation, Financial Requirement, Camaraderie, Environmental Response, Regalia, Classification, Structure, Ritual, Proximity, Pageantry, and Admission. Utilizing the cultural dissemination theory (Hazelrigg, 1969) each marker will examine within the context of an environment which special attention given to any iteration of that particular marker which may have developed within that system. These environments examined have been consolidated to the following categories: European Fraternalism, European University (though this is a two-fold category comprised of the German and English systems of Higher Education), the American University, and finally the American Fraternity and Sorority System. In order to examine the factors which contributed to the formulation of the American college fraternity, a conscious decision was made to only examine influences which occurred prior to 1776.

Affiliation

The primary marker of fraternalism is the proof of a fraternal organization. While these groups may take a variety of forms, to some extent they are a collection of like-minded individuals supporting a common goal or purpose. This purpose causes them to

affiliate with peers and thus form a larger communal organization. This interpersonal affiliation is the basis of societies, secret or otherwise. Beginning in the medieval period the first assembly on individuals around a mutual cause were the trade guilds. This structure was unique in Europe as it crossed boundaries previously instituted, such as nationality or religion.

Furthermore, European Fraternalism must be examined through the affiliation with Freemasonry and its subsequent lodges. This iteration of affiliation is two-fold as members became affiliated with both the overarching belief and system of Freemasonry, as well as with a local lodge of Masons. The expectation that once a Mason joined a Masonic lodge they would remain with that lodge shows that even at its inception, loyalty to one's affiliation was tantamount.

Within the European Higher Education sector there is, similar to the greater European Fraternal movement, a great emphasis on the need for students to affiliate. The difference appears when one addresses the way by which the two major university systems' students, the German and English, affiliate. At the German universities, there was the development of a particularly boisterous affiliate group, the *Landsmannschaften*. As mentioned in Chapter 4, these organizations represented the home regions from which the students hailed and as such were fixed at each institution. This allowed for the German collegiate interpretation of affiliation to differ from their Masonic predecessors as members of one *Landsmannschaften* could easily, and inoffensively, transfer his membership to another *Landsmannschaften*. This flexibility can be explained by looking at where the affiliation lies—with the home region. Since the affiliation was based on

where members were from, rather than any personal characteristics, it loosened interpersonal affiliations and anchored regional ones.

Within the English collegiate system, affiliation must be addressed two ways: first through the scope of college membership, and second through involvement in purely voluntary organizations like the political clubs. Since membership in a university college was an automatic component of attendance at Oxford or Cambridge, measuring affiliation to these groups would be unfair as a cultural marker, thus to identify areas where affiliation may have disseminated, we must look at the political organizations housed with the colleges. These organizations were extremely important to university life as they represented a new kind of organization, one that required explicit action to join. These organizations serve as important cultural markers as a student's affiliation with an organization not only marked their involvement with a voluntary organization, but the specific organization they affiliated with implied their own personal ideologies. Since these voluntary organizations were housed within the greater university colleges, a transference of affiliation to another political club would be impossible. This is also an important aspect when looking at how affiliation operated in the English college—once a decision to join was made, it was usually set, and the likelihood of a student being able to join a society of a differing political party was low.

Within the American Higher Education system, the need to affiliate appeared early at the colonial colleges. Two important variations of organization quickly spread across the college campus, debate clubs and literary society. These organizations, while structurally similar to their European sister organizations, served different purposes and the need for students to affiliate with them had different motives. While there was still a

large social component, membership in a debate club or a literary society was the best way for an early American college student to supplement his coursework as these organizations were able to assemble their own educational resources outside of the purview of the university. Since membership in a debate club was determined by faculty, the affiliation of students in these organizations must be judicious, but by examining membership in literary societies, we can see affiliation as a cultural force guiding both social and academic development.

The final interaction of affiliation as a cultural marker is within the fraternity and sorority chapter as seen in Figure 6.1. These groups combine many of the formative aspects of the previous iterations but in a purely voluntary manner. Since American fraternities and sororities are exclusively extra-curricular organizations, the decision by any member to affiliate with one is significant. While the voluntary nature of affiliation may resemble the English and American iterations, the modern fraternity and sorority acts as an amalgamation of the Masonic and German structures. Fraternities and sororities enjoy the transference privileges found in German Landsmannschaften while still being bound by the affiliation structure of Freemasonry. As a full member of a Fraternity or Sorority chapter, a student has the ability to transfer to a school where their organization exists and petition for membership within that chapter. This ability to relocate while still maintaining an affiliation requires the regional recognition of the organization, which was an inherent aspect of the Landsmannschaften. Despite this ability, if the same member transferred to an institution where there was not a chapter,

they would not be able to join a different organization and thus are bound by lines of affiliation.

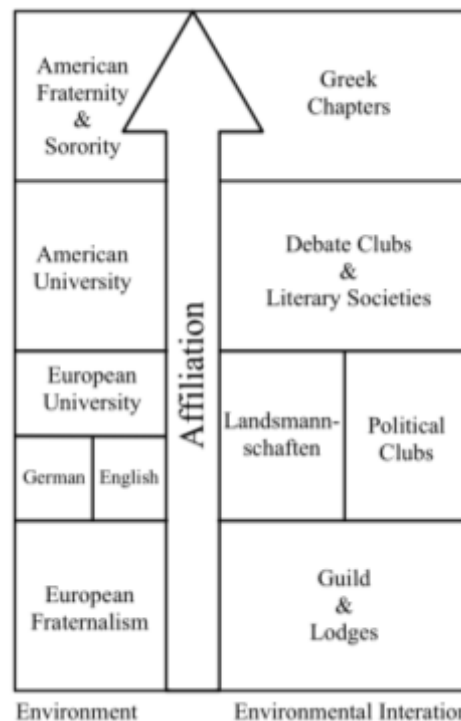


Figure 6.1: Dissemination of Affiliation

Admission

After establishing a fraternal organization with which to affiliate comes the process of pursuing admission to the group. This process of obtaining membership will serve as the next cultural marker studied using the dissemination model as seen in Figure 6.2. While each fraternal structure has its own precise method for the admission of members, there are some transferrable qualities which mark the process.

Freemasonry, despite its exclusionary reputation employs a relatively accessible method of admission. As stated in Chapter 3, Masonic membership could only be pursued by an interested party. This forbade the organization from seeking out members for their order and also allowed for a more “everyday” man to pursue Freemasonry.

Mason George Smith (1866) in his text on the value of Freemasonry writes “altho' it is a

maxim with us to solicit none to enter into our society, yet we shall be always exceedingly glad to enroll such worthy persons in the honourable list of our numerous members” (p.135).

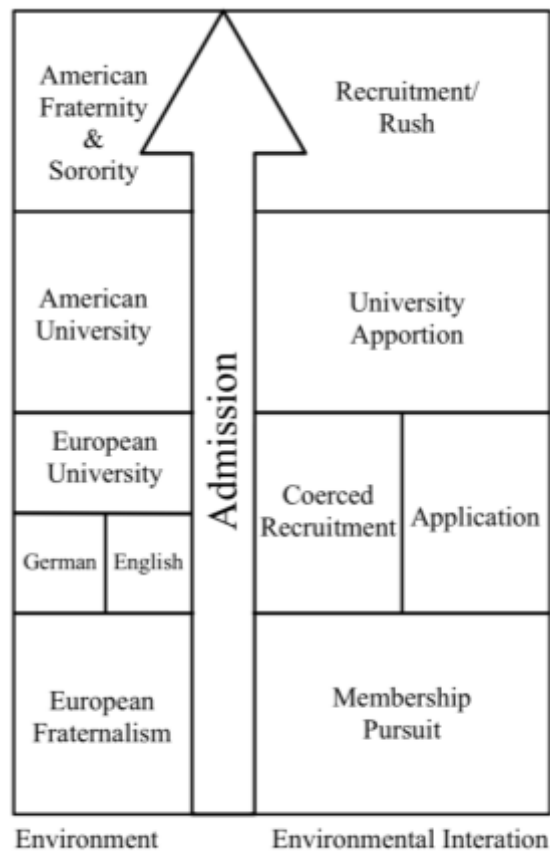


Figure 6.2: Dissemination of Admission

This reputation of accessibility attributed to the rapid spread of Freemasonry across Europe and the world. As Hazelrigg (1969) explains “As the members of a secret society increasingly emphasize universally valued ideas, objects, activities, or sentiments, the secret society tends to change in the direction of nonsecret forms of organization”

(p.329). In this case, the “nonsecret” form of organization was the open nature of their admission. The establishment of interest and individual action as the first step of admission would prove to be a powerful force for fraternalism as a whole.

As stated in the cultural dissemination theory (Hazelrigg, 1969), in order for a trait to be effectively disseminated it must be amicably received and if not there may be a complete rejection or distortion of the particular marker. This is what occurred in the German social societies. Since membership within Landsmannschaften was restricted to those from the same home region, membership in these organizations varied between socially mandated and coercive. Members of the Landsmannschaften would either threaten or lie to prospective members to ensure their participation and eventual admission into their society. Since participation in the societies was not seen as voluntary by organization members, the process for admission became equally permutated.

Perhaps the polar opposite of the forceful and strong-armed German system was the English mode of admission. Again, due the mandatory nature of participation within the university college system, initial university application was a determinant on one’s social opportunities. Once admitted, a student would be limited to the organizations within their particular college, so a great deal of foresight was required in college selection. While straightforward, this process of informed choice would eventually play a large part in the fraternal admission.

Within the American colonial colleges, membership in debate societies was also compulsory. Upon entry to the American colonial college students would be apportioned by the university to one of the debate societies at the university. This apportionment was driven by the faculty’s acknowledgement of the beneficial aspects of debating club

membership. This process effectively negated any personal preference when it came to admission to clubs, but ensured entire university participation.

Admission as a marker has disseminated to the American Fraternity and Sorority in a very clear manner—recruitment. This emphasis on actively acquiring new membership draws upon elements of all previous cultural iterations of admission, even the problematic German method. Depending on the council affiliation, each fraternity or sorority has its own process for acquiring membership. Beginning with the admission methods of the National Pan-Hellenic Council we can see a Masonic influence. Within these organizations an interested party must petition the national organization for the opportunity to pledge that chapter. This is clearly a modern interpretation of the Masonic pursuit of membership by an interested man. While the NPHC organizations may host “recruitment” events they are in reality no different than public affairs put on by the Freemasons in that any member attracted by these events must still follow the established procedure. The next admission procedure to examine is that of the National Panhellenic Conference, or the governing council of the national sororities. These organizations feature an interesting combination of the English application and American apportion. Within NPC recruitment a woman must first sign up for recruitment, similar to the English collegiate application, before she is able to enter a multiple day recruitment process which ends with a ranking process. This ranking is finally determined by the Panhellenic Council and the potential new member receives a single offer to membership issued by the council. Potential new members are dispersed relatively equally across the available campus sororities to ensure “total” or relative equality in the size of sorority membership. While this method incorporates personal preference, its deference for

community totals in decision making strongly resembles a university apportion of membership. Finally, there are the men's organizations of the Interfraternity Council. While there may be some formalized process for recruitment, predominantly fraternity membership acquisition strongly resembles the first-come-first serve nature of the German system. This a clear indicator that the dissemination of admission for the fraternity and sorority system has been a mix of beneficial and problematic systems.

Classification

Once individuals have been made aware of the options with which they may choose to affiliate, and are given some opportunity for admission, they fall subject to classification. Classification, while not an exclusive to the system of Fraternalism, finds a captive audience with the fraternal organization. Classification is also an interesting cultural marker to track dissemination as there are often physical signs of figurative status levels of members within an organization as seen in Figure 6.3. Classification is also an important marker to track as the negative adoption of it within an organization might create widespread cultural issues.

At its core, classification simply creates a more straightforward and pragmatic way of referring to, and identifying the needs of, organization members. This may be seen in the process of guild apprenticeship. Within a guild there were a varying number of levels, or classifications, which a member might achieve, but they all began with apprentice. The levels after apprentice were correlated to the amount of craft information and skill an individual possessed. These levels quantify both intellectual and practical requirements for certain each organization classification.

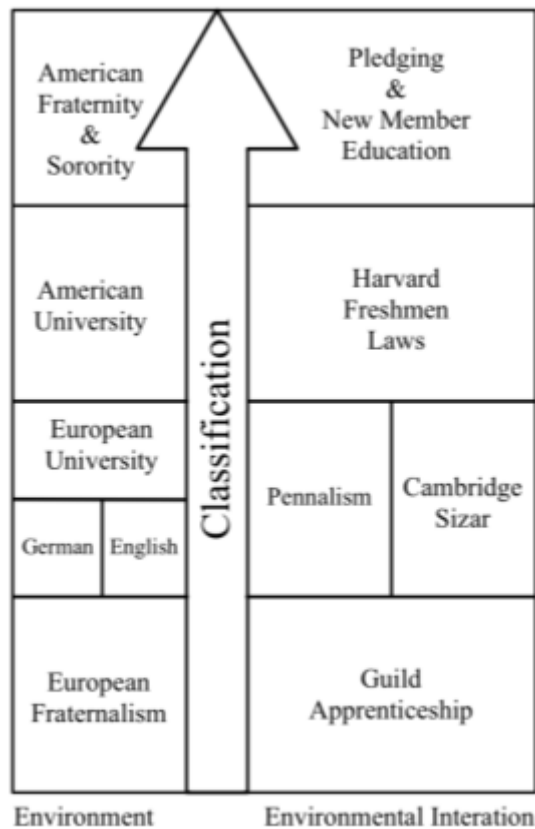


Figure 6.3: Dissemination of Classification

Within the German educational system there is another negative permutation of classification. The culture at the time was extremely militaristic, and thus students saw each other with the same exacting standards. In an attempt to establish a stratification of students a process called *pennalism* appeared. This consisted of new members of the Landsmannschaften being forced to endure all kinds of physical and psychological abuse in order to obtain full membership. These tasks included sitting with intoxicated members throughout the night so that he is never alone, often playing music upon request (Sheldon, 1901). These acts of pennalism were acknowledged by the universities, but the challenge of eliminating the system was beyond their abilities. Since the environment as a whole

was largely focused on the brutalities of war, it is unsurprising that the iteration of classification as a cultural marker would also take a negative turn.

Within the civilized Oxbridge institutions, classification took a much different route. Again, membership within a university college was compulsory, thus, there was an automatic stratification of students based on entry year. While this was technically a form of classification, since it did not meet any cultural needs, it will not be identified as the dissemination marker. The proof of the dissemination of classification occurs through examination of the three statuses of students: 1) scholars, 2) pensioners, and 3) sizar. While all three of these classifications referred to the degree of financial assistance a student was provided by the university, their impact on social stratification may not be initially apparent. When the duties required of these roles are viewed through social interaction, financial classification became increasingly important. Sizars were effectively institutionalized student servants to their more affluent classmates. This served to quickly institute the belief that those students of a lower-economic status were literally not their equivalent and did not need to be treated as such. Although initially a positive iteration of classification, its interpersonal implications show that this stratification was ultimately a negative version of the larger cultural value with similar, and often parallel, microsystem implications.

In the American colleges, there emerged a clear desire for status and classification of students. Within the early colonial colleges, much of the structure was being determined as the need emerged, and this would have felt extremely unstructured to the students raised in the Puritanical tradition. In order to establish a sense of classification, colonial college students established an iteration of classification which not only

classified students based on their academic year, but established acceptable forms of conduct for those students and monitored relationships between those students and upperclassmen. These were the “Freshmen Laws” which flourished at the colonial colleges (Sheldon, 1901). These laws were clearly negative iteration of classification, but since the students yearned for status differentials, any iteration would have been readily accepted, no matter how potentially problematic. Some early historians still held the belief that freshmen servitude served the purpose of polishing otherwise wild colonial students. Birdseye (1907), in writing on freshmen servitude, stated that colonial students “could not reflect honor upon themselves or their alma mater unless they received this rough rounding of the corners which would fit them for the further polish of later years.” (p.12). Birdseye (1907) continued by stating that freshmen servitude “has evident educational value which was appreciated by the authorities, and likewise it was a valued privilege to the upper classmen, who had gone through it themselves” (p.12). This is a useful example of the bias which may affect the dissemination of a cultural marker. Since Birdseye believed that freshmen servitude was ultimately a positive construction he assigned positive value (Hazelrigg, 1969) to the iteration seen in American colonial schools.

These historical iterations disseminated ultimately into the modern practice of “pledging” or new member education in Fraternities and Sororities. During this process, new members receive a probationary status after receiving an extension to membership. This probationary status outlines behavior that is acceptable to the organization and that which is not as a part of their induction into the organization. Depending on the fraternity and sorority’s perspective on the purpose of the new member education process, the

dissemination of classification might either be received positively or negatively. In positive interpretations of classification, the new member education allows for new members to be treated in a manner similar to guild apprentices. These members received a conditional status which directly correlates to their knowledge of the organization and their level of preparation in becoming full members. Contrarily, when the Fraternity or Sorority does not correctly interpret the purpose of classification, the result is a negative iteration, closely resembling the Freshmen Laws, or in a worse-case scenario the pennialism of German organizations. This may be seen through the presence of hazing within the Fraternity and Sorority system. While never sanctioned by the university or the national fraternity or sorority, when a local organization has inherited the belief that classification within their order must take a degrading form, the potential for hazing activity greatly increases. This negative interpretation of classification is almost always treated with a level of secrecy as to avoid punitive action by their campus or national organization. This aligns with Hazelrigg's (1969) theory on "the tendency of a secret society to separate and isolate itself from the larger society leads to anarchical conditions within the organization, since in their isolation from the outside the members are free of external normative constraints" (p.326). In this case, the forced secrecy behind the obfuscation of their education process separates the fraternity or sorority chapter from their campus, reduces normal constraints and encourages anarchy or abolitionism.

Financial Requirements

The next cultural marker associated with Fraternalism is a financial requirement as seen in Figure 6.4. This was almost always connected with the maintenance of a fraternal structure.

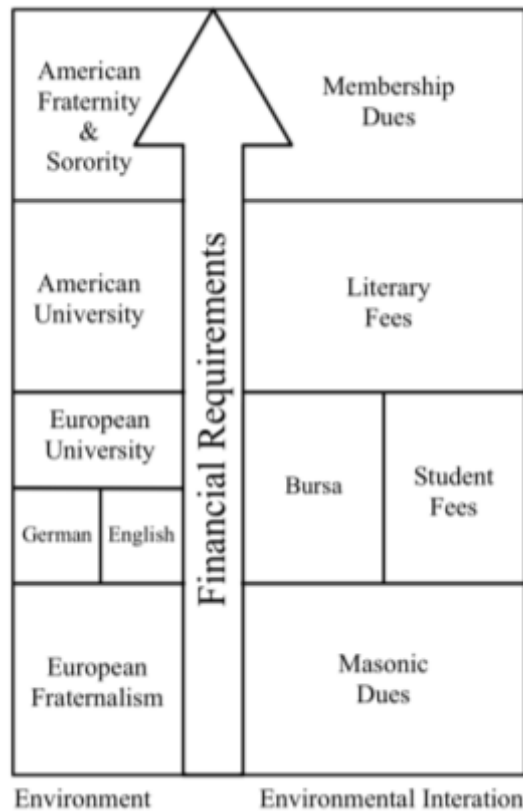


Figure 6.4: Dissemination of Financial Requirements

Beginning with the largest of the environments examined, financial requirements appear in the form of Masonic Dues. These fees contributed to the expansion of the order, as well as funded events for the brothers of the particular lodge.

Within the German system of education student organizations developed a *Bursa*, a term derived from the Latin word for coin-purse, or an individual responsible for the collection and allocation of finances within student organizations. Since these German organizations were loosely based on Masonic structure, it is feasible that the levying of independent fees was an inherited idea.

Within the English system of collegiate education, the financial requirements were intimately connected with their university tuition. These fees did play a part in the social lives of students as illustrated in the section on classification of students. The Financial Requirements of enrollment created a binding relationship for sizars since their decreased tuition was based around continued work on behalf of the university. This create a closer bond between the sizar and the organization since they were indentured to the institution in a way.

Within the Colonial College the financial requirements for membership in a literary society were integral to the functioning of the society. Literary societies supplemented the educational resources provided by the university and these resources must be purchased using literary society fees. This iteration show financial requirements as a largely communal value and its existence supports the future success of both members, as well as the organization as a whole.

The dissemination of Financial Requirements as a cultural marker may be the most pure and direct of the qualities associated with fraternity and sorority life. Since each environment relied on the financial contributions of their membership, the reception of these funds was always viewed in a positive manner and thus this marker was disseminated without issue. While the financial requirement of some particular fraternities or sororities may prove to be restricting and serve as a barrier to potential involvement, as a whole it remains a crucial aspect of fraternalism. The contribution of individual funds to a group account strengthens the connection that the individual may feel with the organization due to an increased personal investment.

Ritual

The presence of a meaningful and secretive ritual is perhaps the most well-known aspect of the fraternal movement. Despite the difficulty surrounding the identification of individual aspects of the ritual of various orders, the presence of a transformational ceremony, which marks a shift in organization classification, is fairly pervasive across most societies.

To examine the nature of Ritual within greater European Fraternalism, a great deal of attention must be given to the Freemasons. While architects of many of the hallmark aspects of fraternalism, the Masonic Degrees of Initiation stand out as a particularly impactful legacy. Prior to the Freemasons, there was not a formalized or secretive initiation associated with guild membership. The Freemasons introduced a formalized ritual to impart their members with a certain lesson that “launches into the subject by presenting the “worthy Craft of Masonry” as rooted in “Geometrye,” which is the foundation of “the seven Liberrall Sciences.” (Hacket, 2014, p.24). This initiation was intended to provide new Masons with a worldview that would apply to Masonic functions but also their broader lives outside the lodge. The introduction of multiple degrees of initiation also says something important about the dissemination of ritual within European Fraternalism—some knowledge is important and complex enough that it must be earned progressively.

Expanding upon the foundation laid by the Masonic tradition, the European collegiate societies embraced the concept of ritual in a way that was unique to their particular environments. The German system, for all of its anarchistic tendencies, embraced a very traditional process for initiating *Renoncen*, or new members. For

Renoncen to become *Burschen*, or full members, a number of steps were required. The primary step was an assembly of the Kommit, or governing body for the Landsmannschaften. This delegation would decide on the worthiness of candidates and those who were approved for membership would receive “a ribbon, the communication of the cipher of the association, and the kiss of brotherhood” (Sheldon, 1901, p.18). This initiation combines the transference of esoteric information with the bestowing of physical markers of membership.

Within the English colleges, there also existed a form of initiatory ceremony. This is peculiar since membership in university colleges was automatic, yet there was still a ceremony to mark full membership into the college. These initiatory ceremonies were called “saltings” and were conducted by senior members of the university college. During these banquets, seniors would—in between frequent beers—add salt to the water of new members of the house while giving performances espousing the greatness of their college. This iteration of ritual shows that even in environments where members are already incorporated into a certain cultural system, there is still a value associated with a ritualistic ceremony. While no esoteric meaning or secrets were transferred to the members, the desire to have an aspect of commonality with all members created a benevolent environment where the dissemination of ritual resulted in an initiation. The practice of performing a ceremony and its annual recurrence was more important than any particular aspect of the ritual itself.

In the American colonial college, the primary social outlet for students were the debate clubs. These clubs placed members in direct competition initially with each other, but eventually against members of other debate clubs, to practice and perform skills

deemed necessary by the university. Members were trained in debate techniques and skills by older and more experienced members of the club. This mentorship and training was very reminiscent of the training provided by guild masters to their apprentices. Unlike the guilds, there was a ritualistic component to the cultivation of debate club members. After the club determined a new member had received sufficient training, they would make initiatory performances in front of the university community. While these “rituals” did not convey any esoteric information about the club, they did imbue inductees with a skillset possessed by members which might only be received through the experience. This experience aligns with Simmel’s (1906) theory regarding characteristics of members of societies:

Human intercourse rests normally upon the condition that the mode of thought among the persons associated has certain common characteristics; in other words, the objective spiritual contents constitute the common material, which is developed in its individual phases in the course of social contacts. (p.447)

Thus, these debut performances by members of the clubs acted as a unique iteration of ritual.

Initiation may arguably serve as the most important element of a collegiate fraternal experience. This ceremony teaches moral lessons to new members, explains esoteric aspects of their organization, and provides them with a worldview from which to view their society membership and their collegiate career. The structure of fraternity and sorority ritual most closely resembles that of the early Freemasons. This is a clear marker of cultural dissemination and the transference of ritual as a cardinal organizational element. Additionally, for NPHC member organizations, their ritual process also involves a public display aspect, the probate, which is reminiscent of the American debate clubs. At these probates, new initiates reveal themselves to their community and display the

knowledge and pride they have for their organization. From a cultural dissemination perspective, this is not too distant from the initiatory debate performance in the American colonial colleges. Those performances also highlighted the knowledge a student had acquired through their organization and displayed it in a public forum. These different forms can be seen in Figure 6.5.

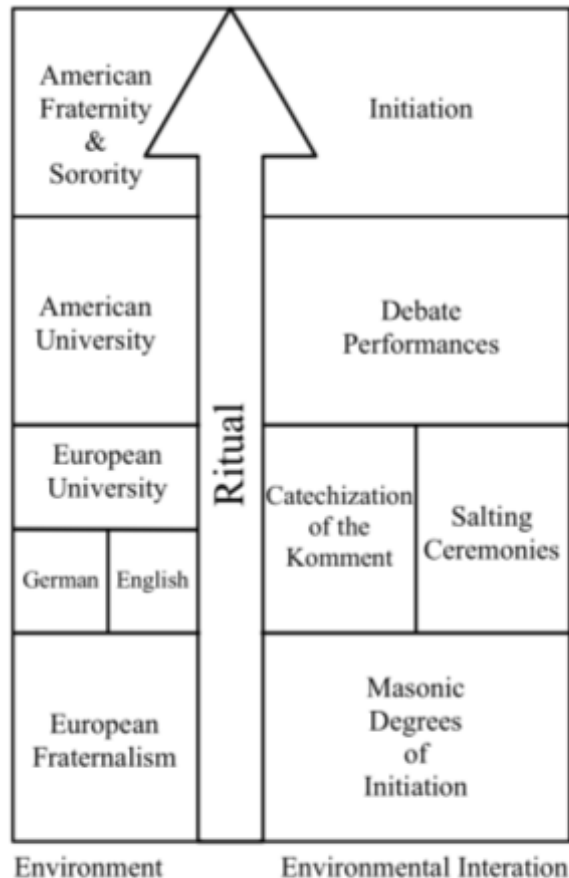


Figure 6.5: Dissemination of Ritual

Camaraderie

Camaraderie, or the mutual trust and friendship inherent between organization members, is one of the critical components of a society. This guiding force of most social organizations is the development of a convivial spirit between members.

Friendship within Freemasonry was viewed as one of the foundational tenants of the order, and thus was mentioned frequently in their writings and speeches. Within

Masonic tradition this was characterized by the concept of “*True Friendship among Persons*” (Anderson, Franklin, & Royster, 1734, p.48). This friendship was intended to bridge the socio, political, cultural, and religious divides which plagued early modern Europe. The central importance of friendship as a value can be found in the script for the establishment of new Masonic lodges:

This principle is the bond of peace, and the cement of true masonic affection. Freemasons esteem it as a virtue of the most diffusive nature, not to be confined to particular persons, but extending to the whole human race; to administer assistance to the needy is their highest pride and their utmost wish, establishing friendship and forming connections, not by receiving but by conferring benefits (Smith, 1866, p.6).

The view of friendship as a recognition of mutual humanity and desire to connect would eventually lead to Freemasons adopting the tenant of philanthropy and service to community.

Within the German collegiate environment, the genuine development of community and interpersonal relationships was not as valued as was individual honor, and thus created a hostile environment for cultural diffusion. This environment caused a system that normally brings people together to turn vitriolic and embrace an iteration which pitted members against each other. Within the *Landsmannschaften*, dueling became the central characteristic which connected all members. *Renoncen*, the new members, were frequently hit in the face with sabers in order to build up tolerance for the physical pain associated with dueling. This abuse became conducive with organizational membership and was thus normalized. Despite its status as a cultural event, dueling as the primary mode of expression between members indicated that traditional models of communication had either dissolved amongst the organization, or were devalued by the majority of the membership.

Within the English system, camaraderie remained an integral part of the function of social organizations. Normally an individual's social network is comprised of those individuals around them with whom they share a commonality, but in the case of mandatory and assigned residential communities, the search for modern social networks must be expanded. With the structure surrounding academic organizations, developing a purely social aspect was crucial. This development occurred via political clubs which existed on campus. These clubs provided students with an opportunity to engage academically in a setting that was not restricted by academic year or financial status, as a majority of their social interactions were. At Oxford, one of the most prominent political clubs was the Tory Club, a student group comprised of members of the Tory political party. While this club's primary focus was supporting political initiatives of that party, the club also instituted exclusively social events, namely the Tory Annual Ball. This was a large event at Oxford and served purely social purposes. While this is just one example, it is a sign that even for organizations with a specific and expressed purposes, collegiality and camaraderie were important organizational elements.

For an early American college student, life was largely regimented with little time allocated towards social outings. Class, prayer, and individual study characterized the day-to-day activities of a colonial college student. To augment this, the debate clubs—of which every student had apportioned membership—focused on imparting a skillset which could be harnessed for public speaking events. After making their debate “debut” and becoming full members of the club, students were free to engage in debates on a variety of topics. While still academic in nature, these debates became large shows of intellect, and organizational merit. As such, participation in these debates became a social

experience for members of both debating teams. This developed camaraderie within an established system is an example of a positive cultural dissemination. If the colonial colleges had not created such a positive environment for cultural dissemination, the permutation of camaraderie would likely have led to the public debates being scathing and malice driven.

Finally, camaraderie has disseminated to the modern Fraternity and Sorority. The fraternal organizations which exist on college campuses are largely social, often to their detriment, and the iterations of camaraderie within the system can be mixed. Camaraderie within a fraternity or sorority may lead to a productive social outlet for chapters, or a distraction which replaces class as the primary purpose of a student's enrollment. Those students whose chapters embraced a positive iteration of camaraderie describe the social skills they have gained by being surrounded by students of various backgrounds, and that the chapter gave them a forum with which to dialogue and establish relationships. Conversely, a chapter that embraced a negative iteration is often plagued by internal criticism of members and members' social lives stunting their academic and personal development. Figure 6.6 shows both the positive and negative iterations of this marker of fraternalism.

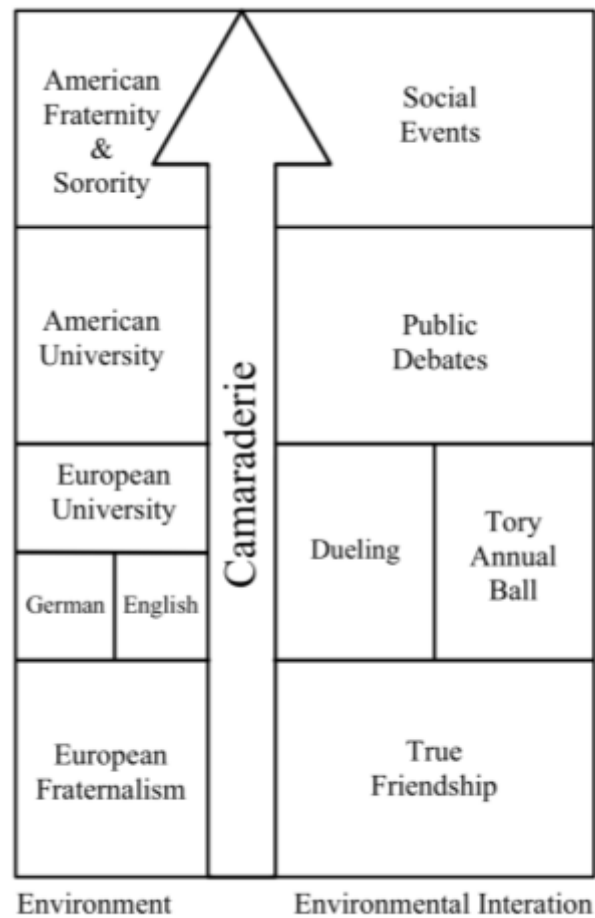


Figure 6.6 Dissemination of Camaraderie

Structure

The next cultural marker of fraternalism is a unique organizational structure. This marker's influence is not as noticeable on an individual level, but when viewed from the perspective of organizational operation, might show a great deal about the values of an organization. Fraternalism, as a broader force, embraces structure in a variety of ways and each different adaptation has an impact on the strengths and sustainability of the organization. This aligns with Hazelrigg's (1969) theory on secrecy as he wrote that "The more extensive the secrecy of the secret society, the greater the tendency toward centralization of authority" (p.328). This "tendency" would result in a pervasive trend of organizational autonomy which would directly affect the formation and operation of all

subsequent fraternal organizations. As a cultural marker, structure may either be disseminated in the form of essential organizational values that inform the group's philosophy, or the tangible creation of an organizational structure (for example, delineation of powers or the creation of committee systems) which guides the work of the organization. This can be seen in Figure 6.7.

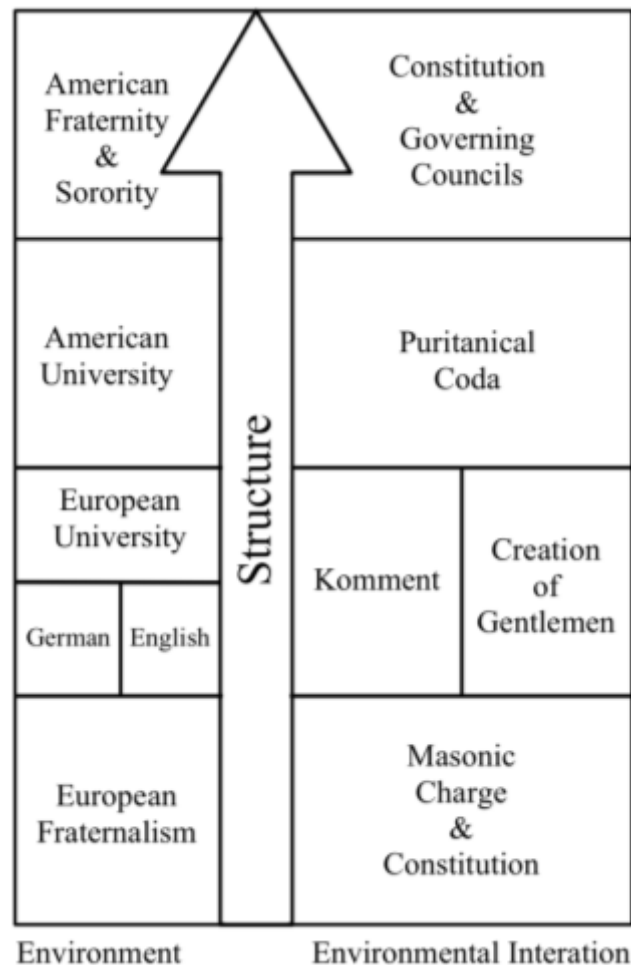


Figure 6.7: Dissemination of Structure

One of the most enduring elements of Freemasonry is the Masonic Charge. This document outlines the expectations for membership and the rules by which each Mason is to live. The charge is given to members upon their initiation into Masonic membership.

The charge specifies that Masons are to not only follow the laws of the lodge, but of their community and country while also upholding moral guidelines. Each expectation of members revolved around the cultivation of a better man and thus a better society.

Freemason George Smith (1866) explained that:

If we examine the laws and regulations of Freemasonry, it will appear that the end and purpose of it is truly laudable, being calculated to regulate our passions, to assist us in acquiring knowledge of the arts and sciences, and to promote morality and beneficence, as well as to render conversation agreeable, innocent, and instructive; and so to influence our practice, as to make us useful to others, and happy in ourselves. (Smith, 1866, p.142)

These laws of Freemasonry developed from the organization's insistence on structure and accountability between members. This desire for beneficial results of organizational membership created a positive environment in which structure could be disseminated and constructed in a beneficial way. In addition to the Masonic charge, Freemasons also developed a full constitution which delegated powers through the lodge and cemented certain organizational procedure. Both the charge and constitution would have been something Freemasons were very familiar with as it was posted and recited frequently at Masonic events. With the creation of these codes, a precedent was set for the structural integrity, as well as degree of organizational autonomy for societies centered around fraternal ideals.

The climate of the German educational system led to many unique interpretations of various fraternal values. German students saw a fractured political system at the national level and this created an intense desire for a centrality of government and a uniform system of control. This desire shaped the development of the *Komment*, or the council which oversaw the actions of the *Landsmannschaften*. In developing the *Komment*, students allocated powers which otherwise may have remained with the

individual Landsmannschaften to the Komment. This act stands out within the German system as unique since the system as a whole is centered about individual liberties and the Landsmannschaften often acted in their own self-interest. The Komment facilitated the establishment of new Landsmannschaften and regulated the honor code which drove them. One example of the regulatory reach of the Komment may be found in the recollections of Friedrich Meinecke (as cited in Zwicker, 2011), a member of a Landsmannschaften:

On my way home on Leipziger street, my sleeve accidentally brushed a student coming towards me. After it happened, we both held ourselves honor-bound to turn around, hold our ground, and stare. He demanded my card and gave me his [the ritual that declared the challenge to a duel], but the next day it was politely returned because his fraternity did not have a dueling contract with mine. Just one example of the student Komment in those days. (p.60)

This interaction shows that while an interaction as inconsequential as sleeves brushing could spur a duel, the Komment had the power to decide if it would actually be permitted. While honor was a key value of the German student experience, so was respect for structure.

At Oxford and Cambridge, structure was a public virtue. Students were sorted, classified and categorized with a degree of precision that was unmatched by other systems. This existing regimentation of students meant that structure was not needed within the social organizations and thus structure was interpreted as the values inherent to the organization. Although not needed, the environment remained positive and, therefore, the iteration of structure which developed was positive as well. This development would be the guiding principle behind life at Oxford and Cambridge. The Oxbridge colleges were all committed to a process they called the “creation of gentlemen” (Kerr, 1963, p.35), or the refining of their students into men who would positively affect their

communities. This desire to create well rounded, broadly educated, and culturally engaged graduates became a central aspect of an Oxbridge education.

America in the early seventeenth century was deeply vested in religion, and specifically throughout New England, Puritanical code guided the actions of citizens. As mentioned previously, life at the colonial college was heavily regimented in an effort to ensure that students were able to remain chaste and pious while pursuing their education. Unlike Oxbridge colleges, which were similarly organized, the impact of religion within the education community was pervasive. This puritanical code guiding their appearance, time, behavior and education would become the structure for students in the colonial colleges. Since there was an inherent distrust of what students would do without religious mandate, it created an environment where structure was disseminated and interpreted to be binding and restrictive.

Within modern fraternities and sororities there exists central governing documents: the constitution and bylaws. While many organizations on college campuses possess these documents, they do not have the organizational impact of Greek documents. This is due to the fact that many fraternities and sororities clearly outline expectations for chapter functioning and the role of individuals within that greater picture throughout their constitutions. They establish the policies for recruitment and education of new members, guide the performance of ritual, outline financial expectations and authorize certain members to make decisions on behalf of the entire membership. The extent to which these documents inform member's lives earn the constitution and bylaws the cultural marker of structure. As Hazelrigg (1969) states, "in any organization the members engage in activities and entertain interests that are incidental to the organization

itself. ...[where] the incidentals must also be encompassed by the organization, if the protective function of secrecy is to be maximized.” (p. 324). These documents are reminiscent of those of the Freemasons, though they do not make as wide-sweeping statements regarding the individual morality of members, or mandate behavior outside of their involvement with the fraternity or sorority. This is what makes the current constitutions and bylaws unique rather than simply an update on existing organizational documents.

Regalia

Pomp and circumstance are no stranger to fraternalism and the development of specific recognition items for groups has become an expectation. Here, I examine how the cultural marker of regalia as an aspect of membership was disseminated across various organizations. Regalia is unique within the cultural markers traced across the societies in that its iteration was always positive. This may be due to the lack of individuality inherent in early modern and university life, or simply a desire of the members to stand out—either way, it shows a particularly positive dissemination path. This path is illustrated in Figure 6.8.

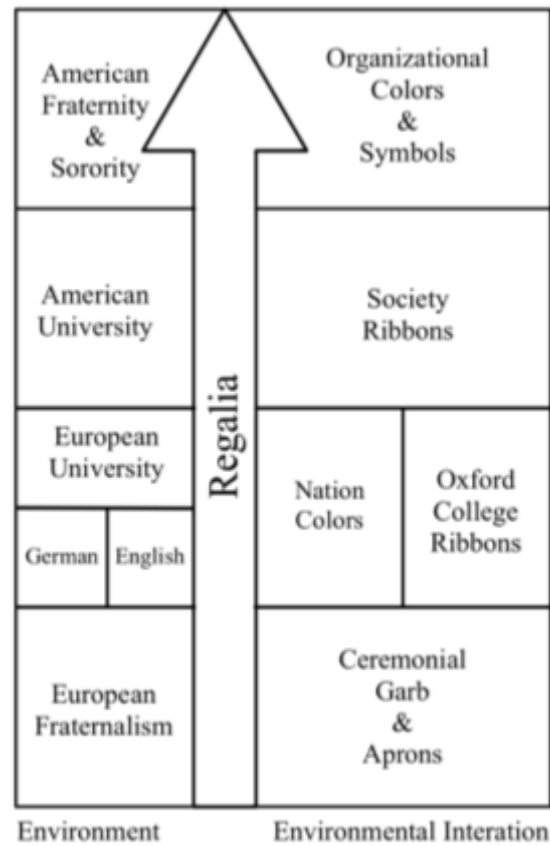


Figure 6.8: Dissemination of Regalia

Masonic tradition embraces regalia in a grandiose manner. Freemasons, as a broad entity, combines the symbolism from many great traditions, including Christian, Jewish, Greek, Egyptian and Druidism. These symbols are comprised of esoteric and exoteric meaning, though many of their most identifiable symbols are explained in documents available to the general public. Apart from the use of symbolism, the first cultural aspect of Fraternalism in regards to regalia within Freemasonry is the use of ceremonial garb. Every man pursuing initiation into the Freemasons begins his initiation by dressing in a white robe. “Masons, as one of their first principles, profess innocence: they put on white apparel, as an emblem of that character, which bespeaks purity of soul,

guiltlessness, and being harmless” Smith (1866, p.156). Smith continues his writing on the importance of not only ceremonial garb, but the significance of its color by stating:

The Druids were apparelled in white, at the time of their sacrifices and solemn offices. The Egyptian priests of Osiris wore snow-white cotton. The Grecian, and most all other priests, wore white garments. As Masons, we regard the principles of those who were the first worshippers of the true God, imitate their apparel, and assume the badge of innocence. (Smith, 1866, p. 158)

This is affection for white garments is mirrored by the white aprons worn by all initiated members who are present for the ceremony. These aprons are embroidered with symbols representative of their order and of their status within that order. This affinity towards adornment may be seen in Morgan’s (1879) article where he writes, “There is no limit to the delight they take in arraying themselves in gorgeous Masonic raiment and wearing a profusion of Masonic jewelry” (p.292). While many of these garments were only to be worn for Masonic ceremonies, which would have been conducted in the privacy of the Masonic lodge, there were many symbols, such as rings, which could be worn during a Mason’s day-to-day life.

The importance of regalia is also seen in the German nations and Landsmannschaften. Within both of these social organizations, “nation colors” (Sheldon, 1901, p.17) were selected to represent the different regions from which their membership was comprised as well as to sort their membership. These colors would frequently appear in the uniforms of members in subtle ways, such as a trim or tassel. Since organizational disputes were so easily initiated, there was a need to be able to differentiate members of one organization from another. This need created an environment conducive to the dissemination of regalia.

In the English universities, regalia also served a unique purpose. In addition to the broadly used institutional colors and symbols, each college would choose their own colors, symbols and crest. This allowed for each college to be recognizable not only to other institutions, but unique within their own university. These colors were frequently incorporated into a student's daily life through college ribbons. These ribbons would be affixed to countless items of clothing, including lapels, hats, and robes (Davis, 1894). Additionally, these colors and college symbols played an important role during intercollegiate sport, namely rowing. Each boat would be decorated in the unique colors and symbols of that college and student supported would mirror the decorations to show their affiliation with the college and with the team. This illustrates a positive dissemination of regalia within a system that already had methods of identification in place.

The concept of ribbons to identify an organizations membership did not remain with the British. Shortly after the establishment of the literary societies, society ribbons began to make an appearance. This was noted to be true of the American Whig and Clisophic societies of Princeton with their respective blue and pink. Each society would take ribbons of their respective color and wear it as a membership badge. The use of these identifying ribbons became so widespread that the university began applying them to the graduation diplomas for members of the societies beneath the seal of Princeton (Lane, 2015).

Within today's fraternities and sororities, organizational colors and symbols remain an integral part of society life—although often for different reasons. While there is still an appreciation for the aesthetics of the organization, with the ease of modern

communication, symbols serve as important marks which differentiate an organization from its competitors. The colors and symbols become almost as important as an external marketing tool as they do internally for members.

Pageantry

While many may see regalia and pageantry as the same cultural marker, their dissemination across organizations reveals different needs and thus different iterations as seen in Figure 6.9. Pageantry in this sense will refer to the dramatic display, or showmanship of organizations. While these displays may feature regalia, the cultural aspect is more about the publicity of the events, especially for majority “secret” societies.

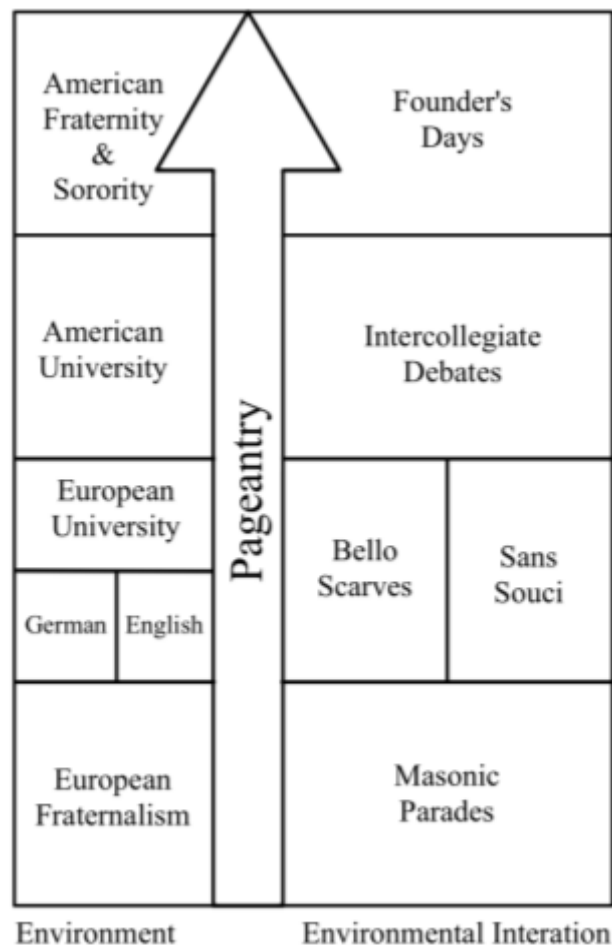


Figure 6.9: Dissemination of Pageantry

The Freemasons embraced pageantry in a manner that was uncommon for private citizens during their time. While nobility and clergy engaged in dramatic displays associated with their stations and roles, normal citizens did not live life with any sort of dramatic display. One of these notable displays of membership was the Masonic Parades:

First walked the Sword Bearer, carrying a drawn sword; then four Stewards with White Maces, followed by the Treasurer and Secretary, who bore each a crimson damask cushion, on which lay a gilt Bible, and the Book of Constitution; after these came the Grand Warden and Wardens; then came the Grand Master himself, bearing a truncheon and other badges of his office, followed by the rest of the Brotherhood, according to their respective ranks—Masters, Fellows Crafts, and 'Prentices, to about the number of fifty (Hackett, p.19-20).

This public display blurred the expectations of a secret society as the membership was nearly advertised. This set Freemasonry apart from other secretive societies in the fact that its knowledge was the esoteric element, not its membership. This was a new but positive iteration of pageantry and shows a beneficial dissemination to the organization.

In the German society system, there was also a great deal of pageantry. Some historians even consider the honor duels a form of pageantry themselves. This may well be true, but there is one element of the duels which clearly indicates the dissemination of pageantry—the *bello* scarf. Fitting of its name, the bello scarf was worn by Landsmannschaften members during their honor duels. These scarves were entirely decorative and for a men's organization whose entire reputation revolved around their performance during a duel, it seems peculiar that any non-functional item would be added to a dueling kit. This aspect of performance would have been exclusively for the benefits on lookers and spectators and thus qualifies it as pageantry.

Pageantry found a unique audience with the Oxbridge students. Partially out of organizational pride, and partially as an act of rebellion against a government which expected them to act with a degree of restraint, the English collegiate societies quickly

became known for their extravagance. One of note is the *Sans Souci*, a social club at Cambridge. In addition to their name translating as “no worries,” their proclivity for ostentatious dress, such as their green and buff satin frog outfits, speaks directly to their appreciation for pageantry (Sheldon, 1901). Since these displays were directly out of rebellion to cultural norms, it might be said that this was a “negative” iteration of pageantry as its intention was to mock and rib those in power.

The American colonial colleges, in their Puritan piety were not particularly fond of pageantry. Life was mainly confined within the walls of the home or the classroom, and dramatic display was seen as superfluous. This created an environment where pageantry would need to affix itself to an existing system. Within the colonial colleges, this iteration was intercollegiate debate. These debates between college students were boisterous, compelling, and most of all, public.

Pageantry may also be viewed throughout the modern fraternities and sororities, but one notable example are Founder’s Days. These celebrations mark the anniversary of the organization’s national founding and are often accompanied by a large party or social gathering. At the event, members don professional attire, the banquet room is dressed in organizational colors and the organization’s flowers make up the centerpieces. It is common for certain meals to be served that hold significance to the hosting organization, for example soft-shell crab is frequently seen at Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity Founder’s Days as this was the meal served at the first national Founder’s Day. These events are results of a desire to establish a form of pageantry on which members may rely, clearly noting a positive diffusion of pageantry.

Proximity

One of the greatest factors contributing to the formation of any sort of organization is proximity, or the physical closeness of members. To examine the dissemination of proximity as an aspect of Fraternalism, we will examine the physical space in which a fraternal spirit is cultivated. These different spaces are seen in Figure 6.10.

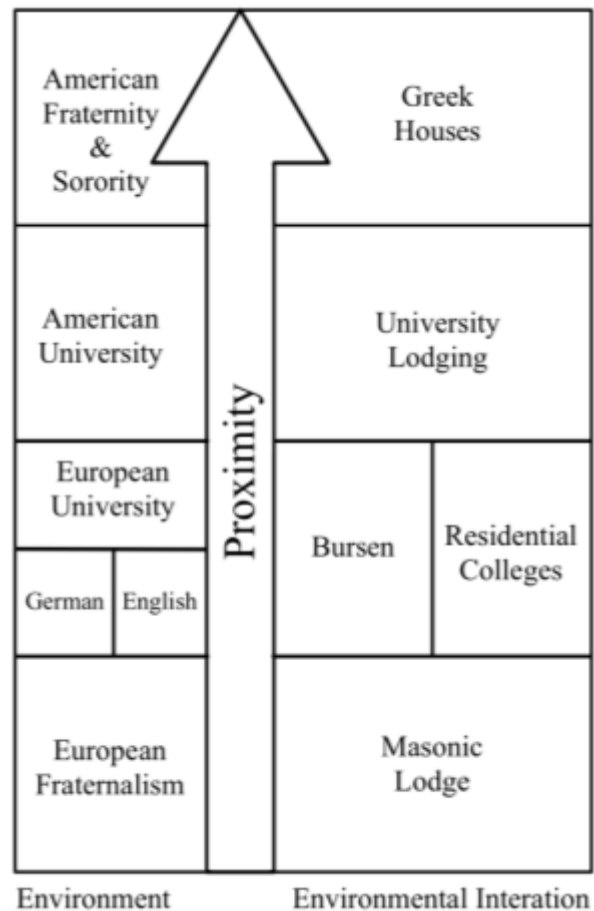


Figure 6.10: Dissemination of Proximity

The Freemasons have, since their 1717 foundation, placed a great focus on the affect of proximity on their membership. This may be seen through their insistence on a physical lodge where members may meet. In order to be granted a Masonic charter, there

must first be a Masonic Lodge. These lodges served a great deal of functions which can be seen in Mason Smith's (1866) excerpt;

A lodge is the place where all business concerning the society is transacted, and where masons meet to expatiate on the craft. When the lodge is revealed to an entering Mason, it discovers to him a representation of the world, in which, from the wonders of nature, we are led to contemplate her great original, and worship him from his mighty works ; and we are thereby, alio, moved to exercise those moral and social virtues which become mankind, as the servants of the great Architect of the world, in whose image we were formed in the beginning. (p.147).

These lodges, statuesque and ornate provided a centralized location for all Masonic brethren to meet and commune. Meeting, rituals, and banquets all summoned the Masons to the lodge, many of which were located directly in towns. Since the Freemasons positively valued community, they allowed for an easy dissemination of proximity as a cultural marker of their society.

Keeping organization members in close proximity was also important within the German collegiate fraternal system. Early into their formation, the German universities attempted to set up a residential system for students called a *bursae*. To do so, they rented out facilities in town and installed a member of the university staff to live inside and maintain order. This would have been a positive dissemination of proximity as a cultural value if the residences had remained within university control. The Landsmannschaften quickly acquired control of the residences where they met, ate and drank together. This shifted the influence of the *bursae* and the lodging quickly become a negative permutation of proximity. The Landsmannschaften controlled *bursae* also did not foster the same refinement that was found in the Masonic lodges. Members inside a *bursae* were likely to be intoxicated, engaging in pennialism, or fighting. One student who observed such a lodging described it this way:

I saw a great chamber, a common lodging room or museum, or study, or beer-shop, or wine-shop, or ballroom, or harlot's establishment. In truth, I can not say what it was, for I saw all these things. It was swarming full of students. The most eminent of them sat at a table and drank to each other until their eyes turned in their heads like those of a stuck calf. (Sheldon, 1901, p.14-15)

The debaucheries of this lodging likely perpetuated many of the other negative iterations of fraternalism within the German fraternal system.

Within the Oxbridge system of education, residential life was essential. Students, upon joining a university college, would move in and remain with that college for the entirety of their education. These college's administrators believed that this system was necessary so that "education became not merely a training of mind or a preparation for profession, but a comprehensive experience meant to develop character, to develop the whole human being in all its dimensions— intellectual, moral, personal" (Ryan, 2001, p. 37). This proximity allowed for the comprehensive development of students as well as the creation of friendships. This is noted in Shutte and Light's 1978 research where they stated:

This generally positive association [proximity and friend selection] is most often attributed to exchange-theoretic considerations (e.g., Berscheid and Walster, 1969); people who are in closer contact can acquire information about each other in less costly manner and, therefore, interact more easily (p.260).

This ease of contact also expedited the process for the establishment of social organizations within the university colleges. This residential system was a positive iteration of proximity as the university creation a natural environment for it to be disseminated through conscious administrative choices.

American colonial colleges attached directly to the Oxbridge method of residential colleges. Harvard's Governing board stated that it was widely known "what advantage to Learning accrues by the multitude of persons cohabiting for scholasticall

communion, whereby to actuate the minds of one another, and other waies to promote the ends of a Colledge- Society” (as cited in Ryan, 2001 p.36). These residences were some of the first building constructed at the early colonial colleges, and for institutions which were plagued with financial need the unquestioned choice to build residential complexes must be accounted for. In the same manner as the Oxbridge universities, this welcoming of residential colleges established a smooth dissemination of proximity as a cultural marker into the American colonial colleges.

Expanding upon the beneficial idea of communal housing is the Fraternity and Sorority house. These facilities are chapter run and allow for a large percentage of the membership to live together, at least for an academic year. Many fraternities and sororities make conscious decisions about who lives in the house—primarily underclassmen, who are members of the same pledge class—as a strategy for establishing rapport. This plan aligns with Hazelrigg’s (1969) theory on ideal fraternal structure: “The ideal is an interactional unit of which the interests and activities of all its members are totally encompassed” (p.324). By placing members in one facility, information can easily be disseminated amongst the group as well as a cultivation of fraternal spirit. Fraternity and Sorority houses serve as a positive iteration of proximity as a cultural marker.

Environmental Response

Finally, perhaps the most indicative cultural marker which is disseminated across time and educational structure is that of environmental response. This idea aligns with Hazelrigg’s (1969) theory that “Secret societies most frequently appear in larger societies that are characterized by political-religious oppression and totalitarian regime.” (p.326). This oppression takes various forms, but in some manner affects each of the

organizations studied as seen in Figure 6.11. In this way, the organizational response to factors in one's environment seems to be the conduit for the development of all preceding traits.

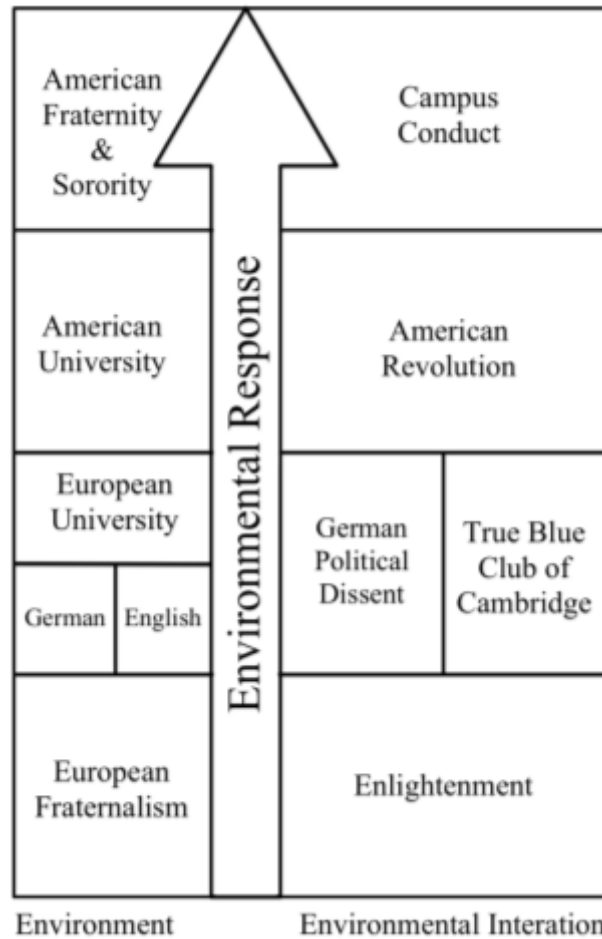


Figure 6.11: Dissemination of Environmental Response

One of the catalysts of Freemasonry was the response to the Enlightenment. Prior to this time, religious doctrine had mandated the spread of knowledge throughout Europe and ideas which did not align with traditional religious teachings would become sequestered. Thus, with the introduction of scientific reason and acceptance of free-thought, the Enlightenment encouraged the development of completely new cultural systems. One of these newly enabled systems was Freemasonry. While it had existed for

years as a craft society with a fraternal component, it became something new entirely with the freedom granted by the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment emphasis on the scientific method and logical reasoning combined with Masonic ideas of occult mysteries to a fascinating early modern idea which attracted notable minds like Isaac Newton and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Hackett (2014) explained the powerful combination of these two ideas as:

The seeming anomaly of Enlightenment thinkers embracing ancient wisdom can be explained by keeping in mind that Enlightenment thought emerged within older cosmic and theological understandings of the world. The Enlightenment effort to identify a finite field of inquiry accessible to the human mind took for granted that a larger field of knowledge lay outside human investigation.” (p.28)

This combination of secular sources of knowledge and traditional beliefs shows that the environmental response was an important part of European fraternalism, and that the modification and expansion of Freemasonry was a positive iteration of the cultural dissemination. The embracing of Enlightenment thought also aligns with sociological theory regarding secret society formation: “As the members of a secret society increasingly emphasize universally valued ideas, objects, activities, or sentiments, the secret society tends to change in the direction of nonsecret forms of organization” (Hazelrigg, 1969, p. 329). In the case of Freemasonry, this “nonsecret form of organization” was the relaxation on membership requirements to allow for the “every man” to become affiliated.

The effects the cultural dissemination of environmental response may be seen in the history leading up to the development of the Landsmannschaften. Germany during this time was almost constantly engaged in war, with a tumultuous political system in place. The German Landsmannschaften represented a conscious power grab by students and an attempt to bring some control back into their education. This political dissent can

definitely be credited as the stimulus for the rapid spread of Landsmannschaften throughout the German collegiate system. Again, since the greater German culture held negative views of those in power it instilled a sense of skepticism and thus what would normally have turned the Landsmannschaften into a group which supported the work of the national government, the negative shifted them to a group highly critical of authority. The development of the Landsmannschaften as a resistance group falls perfectly in line with Hazelrigg's (1969) theory that "the greater the tendency toward political oppression and totalitarian regimentation in the larger society, the greater the tendency toward development of secret societies within the larger society" (p.327).

Political response was not something that only existed within the German educational tradition. When examining the Oxbridge organizations, we quickly see organizations that credit their founding to an environmental response. One notable organization is the True Blue Club of Cambridge. This club "took its colour in opposition to the orange of King William III" (Sheldon, 1901, p. 40). This club, similar to the development of the Landsmannschaften, credits its origin with disagreement with the government of the time. Thus, the True Blue Club might also be considered a negative iteration, but since this group lacked the disdain for authority that characterized its German counterpart, it becomes a matter of perspective.

Finally, perhaps the most noticeable environmental response is that within the American college system and the response to the American Revolution. Phi Beta Kappa, the first American fraternity, was established a mere 6 months after the signing of the declaration of independence at a university established by a charter from the English crown. This sudden and dramatic severing of all governmental ties to England is perhaps

the most dramatic of any iteration of cultural response examined. This revolutionary spirit is even espoused by Phi Beta Kappa in their brief history of their founding “John Heath, fifteen years old, led five friends to the Raleigh, to foment revolution not against the crown but against the state of the college’s student societies ” (Phi Beta Kappa, 2017). This state of rebellion seems to serve as a continuing theme in the founding histories of the later fraternities and sororities which would develop in America. Birdseye (1907) in his text on working with college students writes that:

We shall be surprised at the enormous spread and power of the Greek-letter fraternities, which cannot have been accidental. Their very nature suggests that they must have grown up to meet a corresponding need. Their coincidence with those startling changes in our colleges which we have been considering must have some direct relation thereto. Their system, growth and power suggest that the fraternities may be put to some good use, and must be unless we wish to have them turn of themselves to such bad ends as may make it necessary to try to uproot them. But that would be practically impossible, and would seriously affect the whole of our educational structure. (p. 207)

Here, the understanding of fraternities and sororities as an environmental response is used to urge faculty and staff for cooperation. American Fraternities and sororities frequently earn the disdain of the administration on their respective campuses from their proclivity for rebellion. This rebellion may be against decisions that the administration has made, a response to greater political context, or simply unrest on campus. It is interesting to examine these examples of poor conduct simply as iterations of environmental response and a channeling of the fraternity’s genesis in revolutionary rebellion. One interesting connection regarding fraternities and sororities and their response to their environment can be found in Gist’s (1940) writing on secret societies:

If any one type of secret order may be said to be indigenous to American life it is the college society—the Greek-letter brotherhoods and sisterhood that have become such an important part of the collegiate picture today. Thriving in institutions which are at the same time products of democratic education and

defenders of democratic idealism, the fraternities and sororities have, perhaps quite unwittingly, produced, or at least reflected a form of social stratification on college campuses which, in the opinion of certain critics, is antithetical to the ideals of democracy. Be that as it may, the fact remains that this peculiar brand of fraternal secrecy has flourished in the atmosphere of higher learning, meeting certain social needs of population. (p.29)

As he illustrates the seemingly restrictive, aristocratic nature of these organizations is in direct conflict with the increasing accessibility goals of their campuses. Perhaps this is the most “natural” response to this newest phase of American Higher Education and the organizations cannot be entirely blamed for their historically predictable response.

How American is the American College Fraternity?

After a careful examination, both through a historically comparative as well as a theoretically significant lens, we are able to see the American Fraternity and Sorority for what it is: an amalgamation of cultural elements from the great educational traditions. Cultural markers appear to link the organizations we know today with their eighteenth-century predecessors, and the dissemination of those markers across the various systems which led to the establishment of fraternities and sororities provide an interesting genealogy of sorts. To answer the question of “how American” the fraternity or sorority is, we must take an objective look at its components which are fully displayed in Figure 6.12. The American fraternity is both an organization of star-spangled revolutionary gumption as well as an organization steeped in historic European systems of inquiry. The American college fraternity is both an organization of boisterous collegiate social life and an organization of staid European governance. For every characteristic which makes a

fraternity or sorority “American” it has another which connects to the broader European tradition. As long as American fraternities and sororities base their membership off of American college campuses, institutions which are direct descendants of European educational systems, they will never be completely American.

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VITA

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