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A READER

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Fraternities and Sororities: Developing a Compelling Case for Relevance in Higher Education

James P. Barber, Michelle M. Espino, and Daniel Bureau

A Case for Relevance

With over 60 collective years of serving the fraternal movement as fraternity/sorority members, chapter[1] advisors, fraternity/sorority life advisors, and (inter)national fraternal leaders, we approached writing about the experiences of college students who participate in fraternities and sororities from an affirming and positive perspective. We believe these distinctive and intergenerational organizations can provide a forum for college students to create meaningful, well-rounded, and learning-oriented experiences. Deep and long-standing challenges continue to exist, but the juxtaposition of the best and worst actions of today's college students make fraternities and sororities among the most complex organizations on college campuses. In addition, there is a high level of interaction between and among students, the campus community, administrators, faculty, alumni, and external stakeholders such as parents and (inter)national fraternity/sorority headquarters. Such dynamic experiences can create shared and distinctive realities for students that are integral to student development. This chapter provides insight into the historical and modern-day complexities that affect students' experiences in fraternities and sororities and offers a framework for working with this population across contexts.

The Complexities of Involvement in Fraternities and Sororities

Today's members supersede conventional notions of what it means to be part of fraternities and sororities.[2] This student population faces challenges and experiences that reflect concerns about

values, inclusivity, and the institutional expectations of fraternity/sorority life (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009). In addition, as most collegiate members are of traditional age, these students are exploring and developing their personal identities (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). Their individual understandings of their race, ethnicity, social class, gender, spirituality, and sexual orientation, among other characteristics, are emerging while they are also managing being a "fraternity/sorority member." Identity is socially constructed, and what it means to be a member differs based on particular campus contexts, the values of a particular organization, and the historical legacy embedded within that organization. As suggested by Abes and colleagues' (2007) Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, each individual has a core identity surrounded by these multiple social identities, with certain dimensions of identity becoming more salient in certain situations. For example, a student's identity as a woman may be less important in interacting as a member of an all-female sorority than it is in her engineering course. However, the individual's identity is one element of a larger and more complex system.

As members of fraternities and sororities, college students move within individual, organizational, community, and institutional contexts. The role of student affairs practitioners is to understand how the fraternal experience affects student learning and development at various levels and to dismantle practices and behaviors at the individual, institutional, and system levels that inhibit student engagement and learning. For fraternities and sororities to remain relevant, meaningful, contributory, and trusted, those who work on college campuses must not only understand the issues but know how to manage and address the complexities found within these unique organizations and among members. This chapter aims to increase that understanding.

We begin with a brief history of the fraternal movement and the extent to which traditions developed through the years continue to affect long-standing opportunities and challenges that are part and parcel of the organizations. Following an overview of the fraternal community, we offer a case study to illustrate the complexities of the fraternity/sorority experience through the perspectives of fraternity/sorority chapter presidents who are attending a leadership retreat. Although the student participants are the presidents of their organizations and share similar identities as leaders, their priorities for change differ based on their personal and organizational experiences. The case study reveals the diverse experiences students have as individuals, as members of their organizations, and as part of the larger fraternity/sorority community and campus.

We conclude with recommendations for college educators working with fraternal organizations. To frame our recommendations, an interpretation of Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1986, 1994, 2005) ecological systems model is presented as a framework for examining how issues, opportunities, and challenges present themselves at different levels within fraternity/sorority experiences: the individual student, organization/chapter, fraternity/sorority community, campus, and the (inter)national organization.

Overview of the Fraternal Movement

The first Greek-letter organization, Phi Beta Kappa, was founded at the College of William and Mary on December 5, 1776. Phi Beta Kappa was the first college student organization to incorporate many of the hallmarks of present-day fraternities and sororities, including a secret handshake or grip, motto, password, oath of obligation, initiation ritual, and a public membership badge. In 1779, the William and Mary chapter authorized the establishment of two additional chapters at Harvard and Yale (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). Few Greek-letter

organizations that formed in the next 40 years took hold on college campuses. It was not until the Kappa Alpha Society was founded in 1825 at Union College in New York, followed by Sigma Phi and Delta Phi in 1827 (the three are often referred to as the "Union Triad"), that the fraternity system as we know it began to take shape (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). Thirty years later, women's fraternities were established when Alpha Delta Pi (1851) and Phi Mu (1852) were founded at Wesleyan Female College in Macon, Georgia.

As fraternities and sororities began to flourish on college campuses, secrecy and exclusivity were especially significant to the fraternal experience. Faculty members and administrators were particularly skeptical of secret societies, and many institutions prohibited student participation in fraternal organizations. For example, the "Fraternity War" instigated by faculty members at the University of Michigan during the 1840s and 1850s called for the expulsion of any men who did not renounce their fraternity membership (Tobin, 2008). Fraternal organizations were viewed as exclusionary, elitist, and anti-democratic—criticisms that linger today.

Such claims were not unfounded. During this era, college fraternities were frankly discriminatory in terms of race and religion and in some cases remain so today (Grasgreen, 2013). Early fraternities and sororities limited membership to White, Protestant students. Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, the first Jewish fraternity, was founded in 1903 in direct response to discrimination and sectarianism against Jewish students (Schreck, 1976). As Black students began to enter predominantly White colleges and universities, they were generally excluded from the existing fraternity and sorority chapters and began organizing their own fraternal organizations. The first Black fraternity to take root and establish chapters on multiple campuses was Alpha Phi Alpha, founded in 1906 at Cornell University. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, founded in 1908 at Howard University, was the first Greek-letter organization established by African American women. Other culturally based fraternities and sororities soon followed, including the first Asian American interest sorority, Chi Alpha Delta, founded at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1928 and the first organization for Latino men, Phi Iota Alpha, established in 1931 at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Kimbrough, 2003).[3]

Greek-letter organizations soon began to form (inter)national governing councils with those fraternities/sororities that shared similar membership demographics and historical roots. The Inter-Sorority Conference, which is now known as the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), was established in 1902 by historically White sororities that wanted to "advance their organizations in the face of restrictive social customs, unequal status under the law…[and faced] the same challenges as their male counterparts [such as] hostile college administrations and the threat of being outlawed by state legislatures" (National Panhellenic Conference, 2012, p. 4). The North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC, 1909) was formed by 26 traditionally White men's organizations. Historically Black fraternities and sororities formed the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) in 1930. With the proliferation of Latina/o-based and multicultural fraternities and sororities in the 1990s, the National Association of Latina/o Fraternal Organizations (NALFO) and the National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC) were both founded in 1998. The National Asian Pacific Islander American Panhellenic Association (NAPA) was created in 2004.

Dismantling the Vestiges of Discrimination and Elitism
Despite efforts to eliminate fraternities and sororities in the late nineteenth century, the majority of American colleges and universities host fraternal groups today. Unfortunately, criticisms

of the fraternity/sorority community as elitist and exclusionary persist and are rooted in institutions of higher education that also contend with elitist and exclusionary traditions and practices.

There are a number of perspectives to consider in terms of exclusivity, diversity, history, and identity, all of which are embedded in larger systems and structures that affect student behavior and development. For example, single-sex membership remains a defining characteristic of college fraternal organizations. Some coeducational groups exist and thrive, but the majority of organizations remain all male or all female. Single-sex as well as culturally based organizations can provide important contexts for college student identity development and exploration. Particularly for marginalized populations, fraternal organizations can become "counter spaces" where students can express themselves and socialize in groups apart from the dominant cultural spaces on campus (Cuyjet, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2011). As evidenced by the proliferation of culturally based organizations, some students seek groups that value and promote various cultural backgrounds and identities, something that is not consistently available through traditionally White fraternities and sororities. Racial/ethnic integration across chapters poses a significant issue that is difficult to resolve, because student affairs practitioners have limited input in decisions about who is invited to join each chapter, even if they empower fraternity/sorority members to have conversations about race and racism and other issues of difference. In addition, the fraternity/sorority life infrastructure on most college campuses offers separate options for membership, but not always equal access to resources and support such as a dedicated student affairs staff member, leadership development opportunities, or programming that focuses on unlearning issues of oppression.

Barriers to membership such as social class, gender expression, and sexual orientation also remain in place across fraternal organizations (Asel et al., 2009; Ryan, 2009). All fraternities and sororities have removed membership restrictions based on race and religion (although what results in practice may differ), and a growing number have established anti-discrimination policies regarding sexual orientation. Unfortunately, these policy changes at the (inter)national level may not reflect campus realities and practices. In addition, despite changes in membership restrictions, campus-specific governing council structures have remained relatively intact, grouping organizations by historical mission. There are limited interventions on the part of student affairs administrators and fraternity/sorority alumni/ae to shift undergraduate membership within individual chapters to more accurately reflect changing demographics as well as to develop specific policy implementation strategies based on (inter)national policy changes.

Although challenges remain, fraternity/sorority advisors can create significant opportunities for members and those seeking membership in fraternities and sororities to focus on the core values that served as the basis for the founding of these unique organizations. Members are selected for and expected to demonstrate espoused organizational values, and higher education institutions are holding organizations and members accountable to these values.

A Focus on Values and Values Congruence

A primary goal of colleges and universities is to help students develop the skills and competencies to enter into a global society, with specific consideration of personal value systems. Fraternities and sororities are one context in which a student can solidify, modify, and strengthen values (Matthews et al., 2009). According to Scott (1965), values clarification is a cyclical and dynamic process, with individual students determining whether the values they hold are

congruent with the values espoused by an organization. "[Members'] desire [to devote time and effort to an organization] will presumably be increased if they find colleagues who share their own values…and whom they can therefore admire and work for willingly" (Scott, 1965, p. 95). In turn, the organization reinforces or challenges those values, causing the individual student to decide whether to modify or strengthen his/her value system in accordance with the values of the organization.

Many have offered that the aspiration of developing and living one's values as a positive contribution to the betterment of a student and those around her/him has been a long-standing attribute of the fraternity/sorority experience (Clegg, 2010; Scott, 1965; Shalka, 2008). Although this may be true, it is also plausible that values, as a distinctive and vital niche within the fraternal movement, have been a point of emphasis, particularly over the last 25 years.[4] Two changes within the higher education landscape led to this focus. First, the promulgation of diverse activities on college campuses increased the perception that value-added student involvement and engagement did not occur only through membership in a fraternity/sorority (i.e., increased competition for members with other campus and community organizations). Second, increased concerns with risk management and hazing in the 1980s and 1990s led to a concerted effort by administrators, including university presidents, to challenge social fraternities and sororities to return to their values and promote more positive behavior (Shalka, 2008). These efforts have resulted in an increased emphasis on values development and alignment as primary outcomes of fraternity/sorority membership.

In 2002, a group of college presidents, executive directors from fraternity and sorority (inter)national headquarters, and the presidents of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges met in Washington, D.C., to discuss the need to focus on values congruence (Franklin Square Group, 2003; Grund, 2005). Called the Franklin Square Group, this body ushered in a galvanizing moment in the fraternal movement: focusing on values in order to remain relevant on today's college campuses (Clegg, 2010).

Rather than focusing solely on the consequences of negative behavior and discriminatory practices, the Franklin Square Group and leadership across the fraternal community argued for analyzing their root causes. Fraternity/sorority members would need to be challenged to uncover their own personal beliefs and values, determine if their values were congruent with the values espoused by social Greek-letter organizations, and then act in accordance with those internalized and espoused values (Clegg, 2010; Shalka, 2008). The process may seem reasonable, but helping students to identify their personal values and then contrast them to an organization's values is a tremendous and arduous challenge (Martin & Bureau, 2008). Maintaining values congruence from recruitment through one's life is the responsibility of individuals, chapters, the fraternity/sorority community, the university, and the (inter)national headquarters.

The Presidents' Retreat: A Case Study

West Coast University is a large, public state university located in a metropolitan area. The fraternity/sorority community is comprised of 45 chapters, four governing councils, and represents 15% of the total undergraduate student population. Every year, the Fraternity/Sorority

Life Office sponsors a Presidents' Retreat for all of the chapters and trains chapter advisors to serve as retreat facilitators. The theme for this year is "Managing Change."

As part of the retreat curriculum, Lisa, the Fraternity/Sorority Life Coordinator, has divided the presidents into nine groups of five participants with a trained facilitator for each group. The groups are randomly assigned, although Lisa has ensured that there is representation from each council in each group. Prior to a break-out session, she asks the students to answer the following questions as a small group: "What are the most important aspects of the fraternity/sorority experience to preserve? What are the most important to change?" After the group completes a few activities to learn more about each other, Thomas, the group facilitator, asks the students to share their thoughts on the questions provided.

Luis, a senior, is a member of an international Latino fraternity that was chartered on campus 3 years ago and is the first to break the silence. His fraternity, which is the largest of the culturally based fraternities, has 15 members and recently secured membership in the newly formed Multicultural Greek Council.[5] Luis's father is a member of a predominantly White fraternity, and his mother, who left college after her sophomore year, was active in a Latina/o-based student organization but did not join a sorority. Luis considered joining one of the Interfraternity Council (IFC)[6] chapters during his first year but declined the invitation and became involved in the Residence Hall Association. During his sophomore year his fraternity established a chapter on campus, and he crossed[7] in the founding line (i.e., the first group of new members). Luis offers a suggestion to the group: "I think we need to have more interaction across the four councils. Although I knew many of the guys in IFC during my freshman year, now that I'm in my fraternity, it seems that our chapters stay separated from each other."

Sara, a sophomore, is a first-generation college student. She was significantly involved in her synagogue during high school and has tried to maintain connections to her religion. As a result, Sara has struggled with the components of her sorority's ritual that have Christian overtones, including swearing on a Bible during initiation. Because she believed that the values of her Panhellenic[8] sorority matched her own, she was happy to become a member. Now, as chapter president, she is concerned that the most recent new member class is more interested in gaining popularity with one of the larger fraternities than enacting the organization's values. Sara wants the chapter to be run well, but she has encountered resistance from senior members who do not respect her as the chapter president. She is already feeling challenged to make any changes in the chapter, and many are making it hard for her to lead. "For me," Sara says, "the thing we need to change is helping our members understand the values and goals of the organization. If they only thought about how their actions reflect on the principles we say we believe in, maybe these new members would contribute more to the well-being of the chapter."

Krystal is an African American junior who joined a predominantly White sorority because she knew many of the women in the chapter. In high school, she interacted with a range of students from diverse backgrounds, particularly through her involvement on the volleyball and tennis teams. During sorority recruitment, she experienced two racist interactions at one chapter, but she still felt welcomed by many in the Panhellenic community. Krystal is the first woman of color in recent history to serve as chapter president. Her relationship with the alumnae advisor is very strong, but she has had experiences with the housing corporation president[9] who, from Krystal's perspective, does not know how to interact with people of color. "I'm not sure our fraternity and sorority community is a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds," she says. "We need to help our alumni understand how our chapters are different

now because we're not all 'girls' majoring in an MRS. Degree and our sisters aren't all going to look alike—no matter what the stereotypes say. We're smart, sophisticated, hard-working, goal-oriented women from different backgrounds and experiences and people need to get used to that."

Michael is also a junior. Serving as president of a popular fraternity on the campus with over 70 members, he joined during his first year for the parties and the drinking. The fraternity allowed him the rules-free environment that he sought. During the second semester of his first year, the chapter was placed on probation by the Office of Fraternity/Sorority Life because of hazing issues. After a membership review, the national headquarters removed 30 members. Nearing the end of probation, the chapter has made some progress, including revising a new member education program that had numerous components of hazing. While having to lead some of these changes, Michael also revealed to his brothers that he is gay, an identity he has yet to resolve for himself. Most members of the chapter have been very supportive; however, a few have not. Michael says, "Look, I agree with all that's been said so far—we need to collaborate more, we need to be more focused on our values, and we need to be more welcoming." He goes on to add, "But let me play Devil's advocate here. Things don't have to be so serious. I joined my chapter because being in a fraternity is fun. And I wish there was a way to keep having fun but in a safe manner so we don't get in trouble. Every time there's a hazing case, fraternities are blamed, but no one does anything about what's happening with the band or in athletics. I think there's a double standard here on campus in terms of who gets in trouble and who doesn't and that needs to change."

Clarice pauses before it is her turn to speak, continuing to collect her thoughts. She joined her National Pan-Hellenic Council[10] sorority last year as a junior, following in the footsteps of her mother and aunt. At first, she had no interest in sororities because she believed that they focused too much on underground pledging processes incorporating hazing. She preferred to demonstrate her leadership skills through involvement in the Black Student Union. However, a conversation with a graduate member of her sorority, who was returning to campus after a 3-year hiatus, changed her mind. Now, as president of the six-woman chapter, she is concerned about declining numbers. There are only about 90 members within the eight NPHC groups on campus, although the undergraduate student population is 20% African American. "Fun isn't enough, Michael," she says. "I'm worried that we won't have a place on this campus in the near future. Do we really add anything? My national organization is one big lawsuit away from closing because of all that 'fun,' and I wonder if my daughter will someday be able to also be my Soror.[11] I want to do something to help us be meaningful. I want to do something to help the chapter exist for another 100 years, but I'm lost. I'm a student. I have things to do other than my sorority. How can I make the difference I need to make while also doing well in school?" As the presidents continue to share, Thomas wonders how he will help the students address these various and complicated concerns.

Recommendations for Practice

Environmental contexts are important to consider when supporting the development of college students who are members of fraternities and sororities. Ecological systems theory is a useful framework to employ in considering the complexities of fraternity/sorority experiences because it identifies five levels embedded within and external to the college environment that

affect a person's development: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems (See Figure 1; Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986, 1994, 2005). These levels illustrate the interrelated effect of social contexts and processes on individuals over time. To demonstrate the utility of this framework, we draw from the case study to provide recommendations for practitioners like Thomas as they support student and organizational learning as well as development across the levels of ecological systems theory.
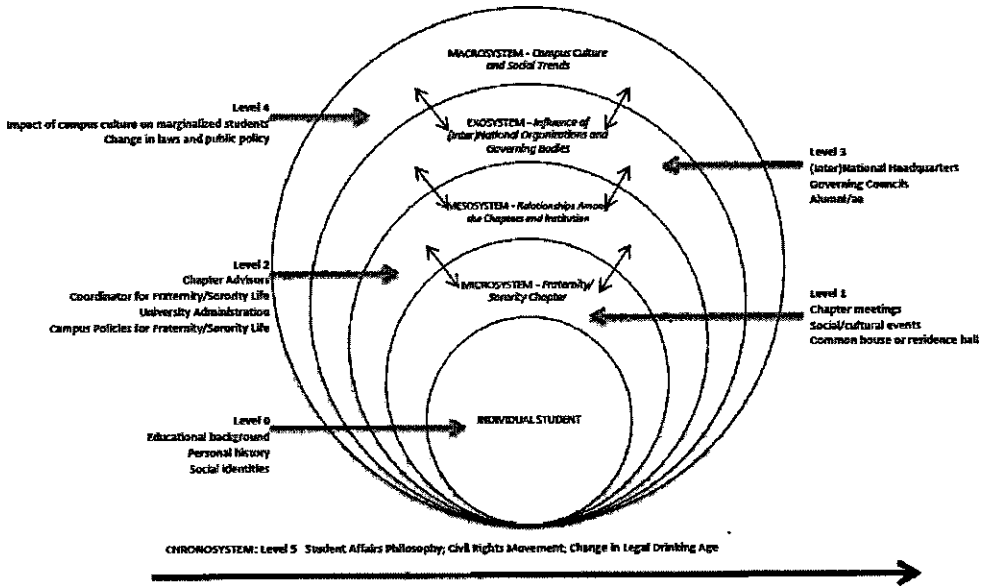

Figure 1. Use of Bronfenbrenner's framework in working with members of fraternities and sororities.

The individual is situated at the center of the model and is surrounded by the microsystem, which is the relationship between the person and his/her environment within a particular setting (e.g., the relationship between a fraternity member and his/her family, chapter, university, or neighborhood). Mesosystems include the relationships between these settings (e.g., the relationship among the campus chapters and the institution), and the exosystem is an extension of the mesosystem, including events and processes that indirectly affect the student (e.g., inter/national organization events, governing body policies, national economic trends, and changes in state/federal law). The macrosystem describes the attitudes or ideologies of a culture in which an individual lives (e.g., campus culture, patriarchy, White culture, Western culture). Across these systems, the chronosystem accounts for the change that occurs in the environment over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1994). All of the systems are interrelated, affecting one another and the individual; this interaction is represented by the arrows bridging the levels in Figure 1.

Level 0: Individual Student
At the core of fraternity/sorority experiences are individuals who are selected for membership and choose to accept. Each of these students comes to the institution and fraternal organization with a distinct educational background, personal history, and ways of seeing the world. The majority of those joining fraternities and sororities are 18–22 years old. Theories of college

student development based on empirical research document that individuals in this stage of life are at a formative period in cognitive approach, identity, and key relationships. For example, Baxter Magolda's (2001) work on self-authorship illustrates that many younger college students are heavily reliant on external authorities and are only beginning the journey toward a more internally driven orientation. Identity is a key domain of individual development, and students in college are at a critical point in the formation of personal values and self-awareness. This exploration can have interesting implications when played out in the context of an organization in which dependence on others is so pervasively promoted.

Practitioners should consider working with fraternity and sorority members on an individual basis, much as they would when approaching other students. Because of the size, scope, and typically large-group activities of fraternal groups, it may be difficult to see beyond the organizational facade. However, approaching members as individuals with unique histories, aspirations, and developmental trajectories allows for a greater implementation of student development theory as a framework for promoting personal learning and growth. In the case study, for example, Sara experiences her sorority as president, as a Jewish woman, and as a first-generation college student. Michael is leading a chapter in reform while addressing challenges as a gay man.

The individual frame and developmental journey of the student is important to consider in determining the most effective ways to connect with members of fraternities and sororities. The challenge at this level is that helping the individual student move through various developmental processes takes time and continues after college. Members of fraternities and sororities are contending with understanding their own identities and ways of seeing the world and also interacting with individuals who may or may not share the same values within the chapter, in the classroom, and in the larger environment. Practitioners must strike a balance between creating interventions that lead to higher-order critical thinking (i.e., values congruence) and simultaneously helping students manage their first stages of development as young adults (Martin & Bureau, 2008).

Level 1: Microsystem—Fraternity/Sorority Chapter

The individual members of a fraternity/sorority on a particular campus form the microsystem, or chapter. Members of the chapter hold regular meetings at least once per week and work in concert to recruit new members, plan social/cultural events, support one another academically, and volunteer in the community. On many campuses, chapter members may live together in a common house or residence hall, which may affect the quality of interactions among members and may silo members from interacting with informal groups and campus organizations external to the fraternity/sorority community. The chapter is a very fluid group, with membership turning over each academic year as students graduate and new members join. Alumni advisors are in frequent contact with the student leaders and may or may not support initiatives, goals, and interventions crafted by the campus fraternity/sorority life advisor. Because they are dedicated to the success of the individual chapter, they are a part of the chapter microsystem, along with the undergraduate members. In the case study, as a woman of color in a predominately White sorority, Krystal feels that she belongs, but her interactions with the House Corporation President, who seems to be uncomfortable with working with someone of a different race, become a frequent source of concern. By contrast, Michael experiences a mostly supportive chapter environment as he works through his identity as a gay man.

Scott (1965) explained that a chapter can be a stronger organization if it attracts members who already espouse the founding values of the organization. From a different perspective, an individual can be vulnerable to changing his/her values if he/she is seeking external approval from chapter members. The chapter as a whole has a responsibility to cultivate the development of individual students while also enacting the values that it espouses. Practitioners need to become familiar with the chapter structures and environments on college campuses, regardless of whether one is formally involved in working with this student population. Understanding how often and where chapter meetings take place can provide additional context for developing policies, curricula, and programming that chapters will find useful and relevant as student organizations. Attending chapter meetings to meet members provides an opportunity to see a chapter meeting in action and build rapport with the organization and its membership. Visiting chapter residential space, if applicable, or attending a cultural event is another excellent opportunity to learn about the chapter's culture, organizational limitations, and level of diversity awareness. Training chapter leaders, new members, and alumni advisors on values congruence is an important part of helping students to thrive within their chapters. The case study described earlier is a good example of practitioners providing opportunities to connect with students and for students to connect among themselves in an effort to examine these structures and identify areas to retain, modify, and dismantle.

Level 2: Mesosystem—Relationships Among the Chapters and Within the Institution

In applying Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1994) ecological systems model to fraternity/sorority communities, the mesosystem is comprised of the relationships among the individual chapters on a campus, and with the institution. The greater campus culture also figures prominently in the mesosystem. The practitioner responsible for oversight of fraternity/sorority affairs is generally at the nexus of the mesosystem, facilitating and negotiating interactions between chapters (often through advising local governing councils) and serving as the administration's representative to the students. Luis comments on this dynamic in the case study, pointing out that chapters are often divided along racial, cultural, and gender lines; these divisions are reinforced by the governing structures of the fraternity/sorority system and, perhaps unintentionally, supported through fraternity/sorority campus advisors. Practitioners must recognize meaningful opportunities to correct division (perceived and real) between the fraternity and sorority community and the greater campus community.

The mesosystem is also the area where conflict is most visible in the ecological system, especially with regard to adhering to regulations and implementing campus-specific policies that affect all chapters. The needs of a five-member Latino fraternity and a 150-woman Panhellenic sorority are quite different, although the chapters may be seen as the same by campus policymakers. Collaboration among key stakeholders and effective, timely, and transparent communication are ways to mitigate conflict, especially with regard to recruitment, new member education, and social activities that occur on or off campus.

The challenge that practitioners face at this level is the tension between managing and enforcing policies while also serving as advisors and advocates for these organizations. A balance between these two positions is crucial for ensuring that policies are followed and students are gaining meaningful educational experiences as members of fraternities and sororities. Although campus crises are unpredictable and require immediate intervention, working to

establish more robust relationships between chapters and the institution is valuable, necessary, and an ongoing process. Creating regular opportunities for fraternity/sorority members to meet with campus fraternity/sorority advisors and upper-level administrators (preferably in student spaces) is one way to institutionalize this relationship. Too often, interactions are limited to beginning-of-the-year welcome speeches at community-wide events and interventions in times of crisis. Likewise, opportunities for members to interact with others in different chapters are often limited to governing councils in which chapters are organized with other groups that are historically and demographically similar. Returning to the case study, Luis wanted interaction across chapters. Implementing fraternity/sorority community-wide educational and social programs, such as new member retreats or the NIC's campus-based Impact Weekend program, as well as smaller intergroup dialogues that tackle lingering discriminatory practices can assist in building better relationships across fraternity/sorority communities.

Level 3: Exosystem—Influence of (Inter)National Organizations and Governing Bodies

The exosystem is an extension of the mesosystem, with the distinction that the mesosystem directly includes the individual member, and the exosystem indirectly affects the individual. In our framework for understanding fraternity/sorority experiences, the (inter)national headquarters, governing councils, and alumni comprise the exosystem. Although most organizations have student representation on their (inter)national boards of directors and allow undergraduate representatives to legislate policy at (bi)annual conventions, these positions of authority are rare for students, and much of the political and day-to-day decision making among (inter)national organizations is carried out at the level of professional headquarters staff, elected alumni leadership, and/or alumni volunteers.

Since most chapters are part of a much larger organization, the actions of members on one campus can have implications for members across the nation. For example, an incident of hazing, such as the one that occurred in Michael's chapter, could result in policy changes within the institution and the larger organization. Decisions made by a governing body can have even more far-reaching implications. For example, policy changes implemented by the National Pan-Hellenic Council in 1990 in response to campus hazing incidents changed the way that the member organizations recruited new members (Kimbrough, 2003). Referred to as the Membership Intake Process, this legislation has helped eliminate the traditional pledging model in favor of a more formal application and interview process.

Changes at the (inter)national level have direct consequences for how students lead and manage their chapters at the local level, even if they did not directly participate in developing those changes. In most situations, campus-based practitioners are also not included directly in the (inter)national or governing councils' decisions. There are limited opportunities to interact with headquarters staff members and volunteers at annual professional association meetings such as those held by the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, which can be a valuable in-person time to build relationships. The ties among practitioners, (inter)national headquarters, and governing councils should focus on outcomes that serve campus chapters, as well as those that promote student learning, improve the undergraduate experience, and increase retention and graduation rates.

Level 4: Macrosystem—Campus Culture and Social Trends

The macrosystem is more complex and abstract than the exosystem. It includes the underlying culture, values, and social norms of the environment. Bronfenbrenner (1977) describes macrosystems as "carriers of information and ideology that, both explicitly and implicitly, endow meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and their interrelations" (p. 515). Macrosystems are often difficult to identify because they are part of the fabric of daily life; as such, they often become invisible in context.

A prime example of a macrosystem is how the campus culture relates to student demographics and dominant/marginalized groups. The campus culture will be different at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and the fraternity/sorority community will likely reflect those differing cultures. Likewise, broader national attitudes and societal norms influence the macrosystem such as systemic oppression and privilege.

For example, the societal shift toward favoring LGBT rights over the past 20 years has seen more openly gay and lesbian students join fraternity/sorority chapters on a number of campuses, as well as the establishment of Delta Lambda Phi, a fraternity affiliated with the NIC that is dedicated to supporting gay, bisexual, and progressive men. Michael's story at West Coast University in our case study is an example of the modern-day reality for most out gay members: many of their fellow members are supportive, but some are not. The issue becomes more complex when one considers the intergenerational ties of these organizations: approaches to how individuals with diverse backgrounds are to support the common values and goals of the organization often vary and can create conflict within the hierarchies of these organizations. Consider two other students from the case study: Sara, a Jewish woman, and Krystal, an African American woman, both presidents of their respective Panhellenic sororities. Shifting social attitudes toward inclusion have provided opportunities for these women to join and lead organizations that once would have excluded them, but they still may experience Christian privilege and racism within their organizations.

Practitioners are surrounded by cultural values and move through the campus environment in similar ways as students and may not always believe that they can influence the macrosystem. However, practitioners have valuable opportunities to raise awareness of cultural elements that may be difficult for others to see and can play an important role in drawing attention to larger institutional patterns of culture, privilege, and oppression. Practitioners should become aware of the prevailing campus cultures, beliefs, and values in order to better educate students about them. In some cases, practitioners may have a chance to influence culture through policy and procedure. Strategies for effecting cultural shifts on a campus include revising the campus alcohol policy to include all students rather than focusing solely on the fraternity/sorority community, updating governance structures to eliminate divisions between organizations, and promoting anti-hazing strategies across student organizations and athletics.

Practitioners should consider whether there is values congruence between fraternal values espoused within a particular campus context and prevailing cultural attitudes across the campus community. They should also interrogate the social structures they support by virtue of being part of the macrosystem that may unintentionally lead to values incongruence across the ecosystem. Frameworks for addressing these challenges and attending to vital aspects of learning and development that occur through membership are provided by the Association

of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors' (2013) *Core Competencies*, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (2012), and other professional associations.

Level 5: Chronosystem—Era of Undergraduate Experience

The chronosystem was added to the ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner in 1986 to include the changes and continuities over time in the environment; it is represented by a horizontal line at the bottom of Figure 1 to represent the progression of time in sociohistorical context. Some students join fraternities and sororities during times of great change; others join in times of relative stability.

Regulation of fraternities/sororities has shifted based on our philosophical stance as student affairs practitioners on the student as an adolescent, as an adult, and as a learner. Women, in particular, experienced greater degrees of freedom with changing times, moving away from curfew restrictions and "house mothers." The legal drinking age was changed from 18 to 21, which added a new set of concerns regarding serving alcohol to minors, binge drinking, and increased sexual assaults while under the influence. In the case study, Clarice highlights a few elements of the contemporary chronosystem: the increase in state and federal litigation against hazing in the 2000s and beyond, as well as the growing diversity of the student body. These two characteristics of college life in the mid-2010s affect the experiences of fraternity and sorority members and have a strong impact on chapter leaders as well as higher education administrators.

The growing prevalence of social media is another element of the chronosystem in the early twenty-first century. The increase in various social media outlets has been a good recruiting tool for promoting positive aspects of the fraternal movement, as well as the challenges that remain in holding students accountable for actions related to race and racism, misogyny, and hazing. Further research should examine whether social media are serving as a deterrent or as a means for pushing these issues further underground.

The chronosystem is the most abstract and long-ranging element of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. Due to the relatively short time of an individual's undergraduate experience (traditionally 4 to 5 years), major shifts in sociohistorical context are not often perceived in the moment. For example, Luis, Krystal, Michael, and the other chapter presidents may not see social media, a litigious environment, or the legal drinking age of 21 as notable to their experiences, because they have known nothing else. Campus administrators, chapter advisors, faculty members, and others who are involved in the fraternal movement across generations will have a broader view of the chronosystem than undergraduate members and, through the sharing of stories and experience through the years, can help students understand where they fit in the greater context across time and ecosystem level.

Conclusion

Since its inception in 1776, the fraternal movement has been a critical gauge for understanding the experiences of college students. Fraternities and sororities offer opportunities for student learning, engagement, and development. Members of fraternities and sororities should be considered as individuals who navigate multiple contexts and systems while also interacting within a unique organization that is rooted in leadership, service, culture, and scholarship. Fraternities and sororities are learning organizations that still contend with antisocial behavior,

discrimination, and elitism. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is a useful framework for illustrating the complex, interrelated levels in which the individual student lives his or her daily life.

Student affairs practitioners play an invaluable role in providing learning opportunities and resources to cultivate greater understanding about issues of difference while also understanding the complexities with which individuals enter their fraternal organizations. Our role as student affairs practitioners, regardless of our personal or professional involvement in the fraternal movement, is to first see these students as individuals who have similar needs and challenges as other students on college campuses, and then as members of organizations that have the potential to disrupt stereotypes and uphold their values. In order to best serve this population of students, we need to understand the intricate systems in which the individuals live and learn (see also Strange & Banning, 2001). Fraternity/sorority membership should be complementary to their lived experiences and development and enhance the student learning experience. We all have a responsibility across contexts and systems to help these students succeed.

Notes

1. A chapter is a local group that is connected to an (inter)national fraternity or sorority.
2. For the purposes of this chapter, we employ the terms *fraternity* and *sorority* rather than the phrase *Greek Letter Organizations*. Not all fraternities and sororities have Greek letters connected to their names—for example, the Farmhouse and Triangle fraternities.
3. Although many chapters have developed national headquarters structures and joined (inter)national umbrella organizations, there are fraternities and sororities that are "local," or found only on a single campus.
4. For a comprehensive review of empirical research on the fraternity/sorority experience between 1996 and 2013, see Biddix, Matney, Norman, & Martin 2014.
5. Multicultural Greek Councils are campus-specific governing bodies generally comprised of culturally based fraternities and sororities that are not (inter)national members of the North American Interfraternity Conference, the National Panhellenic Conference, or the National Pan-Hellenic Council.
6. Interfraternity Councils are generally comprised of men's fraternities whose (inter)national headquarters are members of the North-American Interfraternity Conference, a trade organization with 75 members (www.nicindy.org).
7. A common phrase used in culturally based fraternities and sororities: *to cross* is akin to *initiation* into a fraternity/sorority.
8. The National Panhellenic Conference is comprised of 26 women's fraternities and sororities (www.npcwomen.org).
9. Depending on the campus, some fraternity and sorority (inter)national headquarters own houses and have housing corporations that maintain the facilities.
10. The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., is comprised of nine historically Black international fraternities and sororities (http://www.nphchq.org).
11. The term *soror* is Latin for *sister* and is commonly used by culturally based sororities.

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