

ALCOHOL AND THE CHOSEN FEW:
ORGANIZATIONAL REPRODUCTION IN AN
ADDICTIVE SYSTEM

James Charles Arnold

Dissertation.com



1998

ISBN: 1-58112-032-X

Dissertation.com

1998

ALCOHOL AND THE CHOSEN FEW:
ORGANIZATIONAL REPRODUCTION IN AN
ADDICTIVE SYSTEM

James Charles Arnold

Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in Higher Education

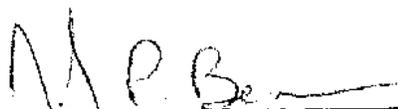
Indiana University
February 1995

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

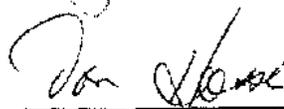
Doctoral
Committee



Thomas A. Schwandt, Ph.D., Director

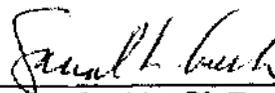


John R. Bean, Ph.D., Chair



Don Hossler, Ph.D.

February 10, 1995



Samuel Guskin, Ph.D.

ALCOHOL AND THE CHOSEN FEW:
ORGANIZATIONAL REPRODUCTION IN AN
ADDICTIVE SYSTEM

© 1995
James Charles Arnold
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

To Cynthia Ann Manning,
for her love, tenderness, and support

Your only obligation in any lifetime is to be true to yourself.

(Richard Bach)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This doctorate is the culmination of a long and arduous academic journey. Upon receipt of my undergraduate degree I anticipated my transformation into a Ph.D. chemist. Alas, it was not to be. Instead, I completed two masters degrees—one in chemistry and another in counseling—almost fifteen years apart. Now, twenty five years past my B.S. and the Kent State massacre which marked that era in American higher education, I earn the doctorate. Where *does* the time go?

I owe my lifelong love of learning to many who have influenced me along the way, all the way back to my second and third grade teachers (Miss Anderson and Mrs. Howard, respectively) who, somehow, recognized and encouraged my very raw talents. It wasn't until I reached higher education, however, that I came upon a cross section of individuals who served as my role models for true scholarly endeavor. To these folks, I thank them all for entering my life and having—whether they know it or not—profound influence. I especially recognize Joel Klink and Allen Denio of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Gerald Gleicher and James Firth of Oregon State University, and Thomas Schwandt of Indiana University.

I also acknowledge, at Indiana University, the members of my doctoral committee who have supported me through the thin and thick of my time in Bloomington: Tom Schwandt, Director; John Bean, Chair; Don Hossler and Sam Guskin. Many thank to these gentlemen. Without their belief in me, this dissertation would never have been completed. Thanks also go out to George Kuh whose research and writing on student life has been a continuing inspiration—and who first worked with me on this topic. George was awarded the grant from the Proffitt Endowment, Indiana University School of Education, that funded my initial year in the field.

In addition, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to some fellow doctoral students at Indiana University who supported me and offered encouragement along the way.

Higher education students Peter Magolda (now of Miami University), Lemuel Watson (now of Illinois State University), and Brenda Robinson, all played key roles in keeping me here and keeping me sane. Further, school administration students Carl Lashley (now of the State University of New York, New Paltz) and Sandi Cole (now of the Columbus, Indiana public schools) became wonderful friends and supporters of my work.

A variety of old friends from the West Coast were also instrumental in providing me with the encouragement I needed to stay the course and complete this degree. Chief supporter in this regard was Jan Molina, Oregon State University, whose steady stream of email from Corvallis over these several years always served to make my day. Similarly, many of my former student affairs colleagues from Western Oregon State College offered frequent, long-distance words of support during my degree quest in Indiana. In this category, very special thanks go to Susan Hopp (now of Portland State University) and Clay Smith (now of St. Martin's College) for helping me keep on keepin' on and writing wonderful letters of recommendation as I commenced my job search activities.

I most gratefully acknowledge, of course, the men of Iota Nu Sigma who opened up their fraternity house and allowed me, a total outsider, unprecedented access. In so doing they broke their own first rule of survival: secrecy. Unfortunately, the names of all the individuals involved in this project must remain confidential. However, I extend special thanks to "Wolfman" and his successors in the INS presidency who offered continuing cooperation with this study. I hope that their trust in me was not misguided.

Finally, my heart-felt thanks go to the individual who was the most instrumental in making my time at Indiana University a first-rate experience: Tom Schwandt. I took courses in interpretive inquiry and evaluation from Tom and they were, without reservation, my best days here. In fact, on occasion, I made a special effort to walk through the snow to attend Tom Schwandt classes. (Anyone who knows me, knows that says a lot!) I am extremely fortunate that Tom agreed to direct this dissertation for I cannot imagine a more superb person to work with

on a project. Draft after draft, Tom provided constructive criticism along with unbelievable levels of encouragement and support. To this incredible gentleman and scholar I extend my most sincere expressions of gratitude.

James Charles Arnold

ALCOHOL AND THE CHOSEN FEW: ORGANIZATIONAL
REPRODUCTION IN AN ADDICTIVE SYSTEM

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an interpretive case study that examines alcohol use by a specific subculture of undergraduates, a college fraternity. Based on nearly three years of investigation using interviews, observation, and document analysis, this study takes a detailed look at the organization's indoctrination process and the ways that their practices are explained by its most astute observers, specifically high-status insiders. Various elements of the author's biography are integrated into the text and used to enhance understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The multiple purposes of this research were to offer a thick description of college student drinking practices, to describe and understand the organization's socialization processes, and, ultimately, to present an analysis of the group using contemporary organizational theory. This work focused on the way that a social fraternity communicates to its newest members the ways of the world with respect to alcohol consumption and its concomitant attitudes, beliefs and behaviors—and what this means in terms of the way the organization functions. A theoretical model of organizations as addictive systems is refined in this study and used as a basis for understanding the organizational dynamics. Implications of this study for institutional and extra-institutional agents who must work with college fraternities are also discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One. Introduction.....	1
A Personal Journey	3
The Nature of this Study	10
Getting it Right	22
Ethical Concerns	28
What to Expect.....	33
Chapter Two. College Students, Alcohol, and Organizational Theory.....	35
The Magnitude of the Issue.....	36
Fraternities and Alcohol Use.....	38
Explanations for Student Alcohol Use.....	40
Alcohol Use and Fraternity Socialization	43
Organizational Socialization.....	45
A Theoretical Model of Organizations	47
Summary	49
Chapter Three. Iota Nu Sigma Socialization: Rush and Pre-Pledgeship	50
Rush	51
Initial Contact.....	51
Rush Weekend	53
Concluding Comments on Rush	75
Pre-Pledgeship	78
Spring Festival	78
Rookie Week.....	85
Summary	88
Chapter Four. Iota Nu Sigma Socialization: Pledgeship.....	90
Pledge Class Unity	91
The Goals of Pledgeship and the Pledge Educators.....	95
INS Pledgeship, Part I.....	101
Steam Bath	101

The Rules of Pledgeship	112
Room Changes	113
Nicknames.....	115
Study Table	117
Cleaning	118
Meals and Pertinent.....	120
The INS Luau, Part I.....	126
The INS Luau, Part II.....	131
Summary	151
Chapter Five. The Remainder of INS Pledgeship.....	153
INS Pledgeship, Part II.....	153
Weekends	154
Freshman Parents' Weekend.....	158
Dad's Night.....	159
The Walkout.....	164
Pledge Dance.....	169
HP Night	172
Concluding Remarks on HP Night	182
Summary	184
Chapter Six. Toward an Understanding of Iota Nu Sigma:	
An Addictive Organization and Some of Its Implications	186
Linking Socialization and Organizational Theory	187
The Purposes of INS Activities.....	188
Metaphors for Understanding INS Socialization	194
The Book.....	195
The Recipe	198
Basic Training.....	199
Summary of the Pledgeship Metaphors	201
The Organization as Addict	203
The Characteristics of Addiction and Iota Nu Sigma	205

Iota Nu Sigma as Addict	211
Summary of INS as Addict	219
Implications of This Study for Institutional and Extra-Institutional Agents	221
References	228
Appendix A. Methodological Musings	238
Ethnographic Genres	238
Texts as Biography	243
Social Science as Art	245
Summary	248
Appendix B. INS Rush Documents	249
Letter from Rush Chairs	249
INS Information Sheet	250
Rush Host Note	251
Appendix C. Informed Consent Form	252

Chapter One

Introduction

The scenic Chippewa River runs through the heart of campus at my alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UW-EC). In order for students and others to traverse the river in the safest and most expedient manner, a footbridge was constructed just as I was leaving the institution in the late 1960s. During the spring of 1990, however, the institution saw fit to place warning plaques on either side of this structure, each of which say:

The Chippewa River is both beautiful and treacherous. It has taken the lives of a number of students who attempted to swim across it. Its deceiving nature and the involvement of alcohol have proven to be a deadly combination. Don't make the same mistake.

—Concerned Students, Faculty and Staff

Indeed, several students under the influence have tragically died over the years while attempting to swim the river, typically in the spring when the warm weather encourages more frequent college parties (and the melting snow pack contributes to the volume and treachery of the river).

Although Wisconsin, the state of my birth, is affectionately referred to by many as the “brewing capital” of the world, due to the number of beer manufacturing facilities which abound there, hazardous use of alcohol among college students is, of course, not localized to that area of the country. The traditional age (18 to 22) college student experience and prolific use of alcohol seem to go hand in hand in the United States, regardless of campus location. Testimony to the scope and seriousness of this issue was the formation, in 1992, of a national Commission on Substance Abuse at Colleges and Universities. This 16-member commission called for campuses to address binge drinking by students, including taking steps to ban alcohol advertisements and promotions related to campus events. In addressing this issue recently, the Reverend Edward A. Malloy, president of the University of Notre Dame and chairman of the commission, said, “alcohol abuse

must not be accepted as simply a part of the ‘rite of passage’ of college students. It is unhealthy and contra-educational” (Connell, 1994, p. A1).

This study examines alcohol use by a specific subculture of undergraduates, a college fraternity. My purpose is three-fold: to offer a rich description of college student drinking practices; to describe and interpret the organization’s socialization process and, in so doing, to offer an analysis of what might be aptly termed their “cultural learning” (Van Maanen, 1984, p. 215) regarding alcohol use; and, ultimately, to present a case for viewing this group as an addictive organization (Schaeff & Fassel, 1988). I focus on the way that one group of students communicates to its newest members the ways of the world with respect to alcohol consumption and its concomitant attitudes, beliefs and behaviors—and what this means in terms of the way the organization works. This study, based on nearly three years of investigating this organization, takes a detailed look at this indoctrination process and the ways that the group’s practices are explained by its most astute observers, specifically high-status insiders. While virtually all of the description presented in this study revolves around the fraternity’s socialization practices and the alcohol use contained therein, the purpose of this work goes beyond merely understanding student alcohol use per se. As we see in Chapter 2, alcohol use on campus is a much-studied phenomenon. My primary goal in this dissertation is to use the fraternity’s socialization processes and alcohol use as vehicles to present an analysis of this group in terms of current organizational theory.

This introductory chapter discusses (a) my background, interests and motivations for conducting this investigation; (b) the story of how this study evolved, entitled “the nature of this study”—including such elements as my selection of participants and how I collected my data; (c) a discussion about “getting it right,” that is, some thoughts I have on how it is I think I am pretty sure about what it is I know; (d) a few comments on some of the ethical concerns which I believe are important to this particular study; and (e) an outline of what to expect in subsequent chapters.

A Personal Journey

Writer Sam Keen (1991) advises us that as a young man he interpreted some of the messages he received to be something like this:

Join the fraternity.

Get a letter in football, baseball, or basketball.

Screw a lot of girls.

Be tough; fight if anybody insults you or your girl.

Don't show your feelings.

Drink lots of beer.

Be nice—don't fight or drink.

Dress right—like everybody else: penny loafers, etc.

Get a good job, work hard and make a lot of money.

Get your own car.

Be well liked, popular. (Keen, 1991, p. 3, emphasis added)

Keen believed that a boy who went along with these messages was “on track”—on the road to manhood. Although he is about fifteen years older than me, I received many of the same messages when I was growing up. For example, I had definitely been socialized through my family's unwritten rules to *not* show feelings. And I sure remember the pressure from, or at least the expectation of, my peers, that I drink a lot and that I “score” with girls a lot.

Despite demonstrating such obvious qualifications for manhood in my late teens as getting drunk and trying to “find, feel, and fuck” the girls, there were lingering doubts along the way about my masculinity. Some of the messages I received early in my teen years from others, albeit indirectly, made me wonder. I suspect that my father, especially, had some reservations. Though I have never asked him, I would not be surprised if he would say that I was a disappointment to him then, at least in some ways. For example, he had played sports when he was young—activities that generally held little interest for me. *My* involvement with athletics was focused on collecting baseball cards and memorizing player and team statistics, though I did try out—awkwardly—for Little League one year. I had this old, used, thin, first-baseman's mitt and my hand hurt every time I caught the ball; if I caught the ball. I had no idea what I was doing there. I was small and not very strong physically—and one of those kids that was always picked last in choosing sides. My preference was to stay inside on summer days and read (at

that time science fiction) even when exhorted by my parents to “get outside and play with the other kids.” Despite the loner and weakling image I had of myself, I am sure others perceived me, especially my teachers, as bright and sensitive. During my childhood I remember having concerns about self confidence and self esteem.

I was not “in” with the high status groups in high school—guys like the varsity football and basketball players and the girls that hung around them. Nor was I affiliated with the lowest status, “the greasers” or the “hoods,” as we called them. I was somewhere in between, a nondescript kid who fantasized about dating a cheerleader, and being the class president, but who basically never had a prayer of accomplishing either. Although I was always quite talented academically, I somehow was never so good as to make National Honor Society—or anything too successful. I guess the whole time I was in high school the most high profile activities I had were being in the pep band all four years and being selected to represent the school at Boys’ State during the summer after my junior year. I held down a part-time job at a local grocery store, which provided me with an income, and during my junior and senior years had a circle of drinking buddies with whom going out into the country with a trunk-full of beer was about the “coolest” thing that we could do on a weekend night.

If my beer drinking was ritualistic in the manner that weekends were celebrated, this personal tradition didn’t fit very well with my family’s. I came from a family that is not very big on ceremony. I guess if they had been more inclined toward tradition and ritual I’d have a different—and more positive—view of times like birthdays and Christmas. But I don’t. I tend to get embarrassed when someone new in my life fusses over my birthday, and, as a perpetually single male, when I get invited out for Christmas and Thanksgiving, as happens just about every year, I experience feelings of anxiety. And I can think of very few formalized “rites of passage” in my life during my early years. Van Gennep (1960) discusses circumcision as such a rite and, if it is, of course I do not remember mine. Further, as a WASP from the Midwest, I never experienced the ritualistic entry

into manhood that Jewish men go through in their bar mitzvah. As I look back on that period of my life, there were few things that were representative of my entry into manhood. However, there were *some* symbols and events.

For example, two documents that I obtained on my eighteenth birthday were significant: the State of Wisconsin ID card and my draft card. My parents knew that I was taking some time off work that hot, seventeenth day of August in 1965 to drive to the county seat in order to register with the Selective Service, but remarkably, they were amazed to find out that I had also obtained an identification card which would enable me to drink legally. Those two documents were signs of status and adulthood in my small Midwestern town, and on the way home from work that day I stopped off at a bar with the others possessing ID and was able to drink legally. Unfortunately I was still a virgin, but at least I could drink. In my mind, I was pretty sure that I was now grownup.

Two other, more or less obvious, indicators of adult status were leaving home to attend college less than a month after that eighteenth birthday and my marriage about two and half years later. I moved to a town sixty miles away from my parents and started higher education at the nearest state college with only the vaguest notion of what I was doing or why. If Viet Nam had not been heating up, perhaps I might have skipped college altogether. Who knows. But enter college I did—and it felt great to be away! The late Sixties was an exciting time to be on a college campus; I thrived on the turmoil and uncertainty, though I only hoped that the war would end before my student deferment did. College was a “coming of age” for me like it is for many young adults. I met a girl the first semester at college whom I married at the end of my junior year. And though, in hindsight, marrying at age twenty seems to be contrary to good judgment, it happens to be what I did. In a totally different way it was also a means of asserting myself as a grownup—as a man.

I engage in these reflections because the study I report on here has awakened in me an interest about young mens’ rites of passage and the changes we experience when going away to college. As is illustrated later in this study, there is an

argument to be made for the college socialization process playing an important role in students' use of alcohol—at least in so far as membership in a college fraternity goes. Socialization, in this context, is the process whereby the culture of a group—in this case, a fraternity—is handed down to successive generations of members (Schein, 1990) and the means by which the organization's novices are taught the ways of the established members. Van Maanen (1984) indicates that some of the aspects of culture which are passed along are “such matters as expectations, values, skill development, and normative (moral) judgments about the kind of abilities and performances a person thinks likely to be applicable and rewarded” in any new setting that is encountered (p. 215). According to Kuh and Whitt (1988, p. 87), student subcultures such as fraternities “are maintained through ceremonies and rituals (e.g., initiation of pledges, orientation of freshmen) and formal and informal mechanisms of social control (e.g., grade point requirements for membership, unwritten dress codes)” (see also, Bushnell, 1962; Leemon, 1972; Newcomb, 1962; Scott, 1965). Given this, it is possible to infer that the values and expectations communicated by the established organizational culture may, in turn, influence the behaviors of its new members with respect to alcohol use. That is, in order to understand and appreciate members' drinking behavior, we must also understand the way new members are socialized into the group and what the process means to them.

The experience of anthropologist Mac Marshall (1979), while studying adolescent drinking in Micronesia, supports this view of the relationship of drinking behavior and socialization. Gilmore (1990, p. 59) describes Marshall's experience this way: “Marshall went to Moen Island as an expert in the role of drinking in culture and as a student of alcohol abuse, wishing to isolate its causes in the broader culture...[however] after a few months...[he] had become an expert on Trukese concepts of masculinity. He found the people there obsessed with it, and he discovered that he was unable to study any aspect of their culture without first acquiring a passable comprehension of what it meant to be a man on Truk.” Thus, while Marshall went to Truk to study adolescent drinking in that society, he came

away convinced that he must understand the transition from boyhood to manhood in that culture (i.e., male socialization). *I* went into the field to study adolescent student drinking in college fraternities and came to believe that I must understand the explicit and implicit messages conveyed to new members as they transition into their group.

This is an interpretive study that Denzin (1989, p. 12) describes as “beginning and ending with the biography and self of the researcher.” My interest in fraternities and student alcohol use is personally informed through my biography and leads me to explore this topic within an interpretive frame (see Appendix A for further detail). As indicated above, I started drinking early in my life. Though the drinking age in Wisconsin was 18 when that birthday came around for me, my drinking career began, as I recall, about the age of 16. The first time I drank, I got drunk. I consumed about a quart of some kind of fruity wine and vaguely recall stumbling around the downtown area of the small town in which I lived. Things never got much better for me as far as knowing how to drink and also remain in control. My first two years of college remain sort of a blur as it was not uncommon for me to drink as frequently as five nights a week. I often consumed to excess and would not hesitate to drive after drinking though, thankfully, I did not own a car at this time. Unfortunately, my girl friend at the time possessed a car, which I often drove home after spending the evening at the bars. After college, I spent about seven years (of my ten year marriage) under the influence of Valium—taken by prescription to cope with chronic, and often debilitating, tension headaches. Then, after my divorce, I went back to frequent, heavy drinking for about four years—again, with uncountable occasions of blackouts and driving under the influence. I probably should be dead as a result of this unquestionably self-destructive behavior, but after an arrest for driving under the influence in 1983, I entered an alcohol treatment program and now have over eleven years sobriety as a recovering alcoholic. Part of my recovery has involved periodic involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous groups.

It may seem odd, to some, that an alcoholic in recovery would *want* to study the drinking behavior of college students, or, further, be able to conduct research that is objective. Yet Denzin (1989) reminds us that the biography of the researcher is where interpretive inquiry begins. Who other than me (or someone like me) as one with such a significant alcohol history, is *better* suited and has as much interest in the topic? In this study I explore a part of my alcoholic past by revisiting the behavior of student drinking. Given my commitment to personal growth and self awareness, rooted in my experiences in therapy and in my training as a counselor, perhaps in some sense I *needed* to do this study. Further, no study is completely objective or free of the biases of the researcher. In this investigation I have tried to be extra careful with my prejudices. In large part, the motivation I have to engage in this self-disclosure up front is so that a portion of my background is exposed, available for the reader, in order to evaluate some of my biases and preconceptions.

I know that I could not have conducted this study in the first few years of my sobriety. For at least three years or so after I stopped drinking, I continued to possess the much-practiced ability to deny my condition and I was incredibly reluctant to use the word “alcoholic” as a self descriptor. However, over the years, I have found myself more secure in using this term and in acknowledging the consequences of my past, negative behavior. Having stabilized in this regard, I knew at this study’s outset that I was able to manage the emotional and intellectual issues that had the potential to arise in conducting a study on alcohol use. However, at one point during the course of this study, I returned to therapy when I found myself on emotionally shaky ground. In a later section of this chapter, I continue to address the objectivity of this work, when I examine how it is I believe that I have gotten the story “right.”

Those four years of drinking after my divorce were more or less coincident with my career as a photographer. My interest in photography as a hobby had eventually led me to employment in two photography studios, the second of which catered to the photography needs of the Greek system on the Oregon State

University (OSU) campus. After two years working there and concentrating on the party picture aspect of the business, I opened my own shop where I spent the next three years working exclusively with OSU's fraternities and sororities. When I refer to this portion of my life, I often say that "I went to parties for a living." My existence revolved around my encyclopedic knowledge of the Greek system party scene, and my personal attendance at, usually, several parties per week. Though I did not drink while shooting these events, often times I would end up at the bars afterward. In both my personal and professional life, alcohol was a predominant factor.

For approximately the last twelve years of my life, I have had the professional identities of counselor and administrator. I studied for a masters degree in counseling at OSU after my party-picture, photographer days were over and worked for a few years as a counselor in a federally-funded job-training program. Subsequently, I became the director of another, federally-funded program on a college campus, assisting low-income, first-generation and disabled students to meet their academic goals. Among my many counseling interests are individuals' compulsive behaviors, including substance (alcohol, drugs, food, etc.) and process (gambling, sex, work, etc.) addictions. In my continuing education as a counselor I have sought to become an expert in these areas and have attended many groups, workshops and classes cultivating this knowledge. I have also led groups in these areas, such as a group for college students exploring their issues as adult children of alcoholics. Further, I have made presentations at conferences on the topics of dysfunctional families and addictive organizations.

Prior to entering the field to undertake this study of student drinking, therefore, I had been a heavy drinker in college, a heavy drinker and chronic user of prescription drugs out of college, a business owner who worked with drinking college students, and, finally, a non-drinker who worked with college students in a student affairs division. In some respects I have completed a circle by coming back to take a look at college student drinking from an outsider's perspective.

The Nature of this Study¹

Is there really a need for yet another study of college student drinking? And, if so, why? Much gets said and written about it these days but, by now, it is also very old news. So much attention has been devoted to this issue in the 1980s and 1990s that it is reasonable to ask, “What’s left to be said?” Or, as one obviously intoxicated student who was inquiring what I was up to at a fraternity party said, “What’s the big deal? You go to college, you drink and have fun—and learn a little bit.”

Perhaps the “big deal” is that alcohol remains a pervasive and potentially deleterious aspect of the undergraduate experience. Leavy (1979, p. 97) suggested that “drinking and drunkenness” could be viewed a major part of the college curriculum where it is not uncommon to find that “the ‘classroom’ is the bar or the fraternity house.” Further, he offered, “[d]rinking seems to capture a fair amount of the college student’s time and energy.” One fraternity member with whom I spoke agreed by offering the observation that drinking is “the social thing to do...it’s a given...[that] college and underage drinking are synonymous.” Or, as another student shared with me about his view of the college experience, “When you think about going to college, you don’t think about professors and books. You think about being away from home, the people you’re going to meet and the parties, and the social life and the drinking. That’s what you’re *really* thinking about.” And senior campus administrators tend to agree that alcohol is an issue that just will not go away. More than two-thirds of college presidents who were surveyed pointed to substance abuse, chiefly alcohol, at the top of their list of concerns regarding the quality of campus life (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).

This case-study examines the use of alcohol in a single college fraternity. However, I don’t view this work as “yet another study” of student alcohol use. As stated above, one of my goals is to communicate an understanding of the organi-

¹Some portions of this section, particularly the descriptions of participant selection and data gathering methods, previously appeared in Arnold and Kuh (1992) and Kuh and Arnold (1993).

zation's socialization process, including the use of alcohol. Through detailed narrative (Chapters 3-5), my intent is for readers to experience vicariously this indoctrination experience. In addition, as a study of college-student drinking, this dissertation takes an approach not present in other works. I utilize both the socialization and drinking practices as dimensions for understanding the group from an organizational theory perspective. In this dissertation, then, I strive to not only describe the phenomena of fraternity socialization and student drinking, but also to understand what these activities mean for an organization that orchestrates such activities so successfully.

When this project commenced, it did not have the one-group-specific focus that it now has. In the fall of 1991, along with a higher education colleague, I started working with four fraternities in a study of alcohol as a "cultural artifact" (Mandelbaum, 1965) in their organizations. The objective was to enlist the cooperation of two fraternities on each of two different campuses, interview a number of members, and utilize a cultural lens for interpreting the data. In order to enhance the chances of encountering a wide spectrum of practices with respect to fraternity member alcohol use, we used what's called maximum variation sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) in the initial selection of campuses and groups to be studied. In essence, we had certain criteria (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) in mind when selecting the groups we would ask to participate.

Student affairs administrators at two institutions—a large public university and a small, private liberal arts college—were asked during late summer of that year to recommend fraternity chapters at their institution that, from their point of view, exhibited generally "responsible" behavior (or "making progress toward" responsible behavior) or generally "problematic" behavior (such as a history of alcohol-related offenses that resulted in probationary status imposed by the institution) with respect to their use of alcohol. After identifying such chapters, the executive directors at the national offices of each fraternity were contacted in order to inform them of the nature of the study and to enlist their support. Every fraternity executive reached responded positively, some of them even enthusiastically,

though they all emphasized that the ultimate decision rested with their individual, local chapters. I then reached by phone each chapter president early in the fall semester of 1991 to discuss possible participation in the study. Of the seven chapters so recommended by campus administrators and subsequently contacted, six agreed to have me visit and make a presentation to chapter members as a group to explain what I proposed to do. Four organizations eventually permitted me access, with one so-called “responsible” and one “problematic” group at each of these institutions.

Some of these groups were a harder sell than others—and “selling” *is* what I was doing when I showed up at the chapter houses to do my presentation about this study. Fortunately, I had made literally dozens of presentations to Greek organizations on the OSU campus when I owned my photography business, so all of this was, in many respects, a familiar scenario. My script for each presentation told not only about the study, but more specifically about me. I figured that about the only way these guys were going to let me in was to have them accept *me*, not necessarily the project in which I was engaged. I made a conscious effort to look and talk more like a counselor than a researcher, and to appear to be a “regular person” and not an academician. I assumed that, even though I was on a college campus, one of the least effective messages I could convey was that “I am a doctoral student and I want to study you” (Jankowski, 1991, p. 9). I told them of my background taking party pictures. I explained that by training and profession I had been a counselor for several years and had worked with college students. I told them I had no research hypothesis (which I think some believed and some didn’t) and that I was really intent on just simply *understanding* them. And I heavily emphasized that my training and subsequent professional work had led me to value highly the practice of confidentiality. In all my contacts, I assured them that I would keep individual identities confidential, and, furthermore, that neither the