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EXPLORING THE BASES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE WITHIN COLLEGE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Ohio State University

Ph.D.  1985

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EXPLORING THE BASES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE WITHIN COLLEGE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Charlotte Davis, B.S., M.Ed.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1985

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study of college student organizations was conducted to examine and describe the ways in which student organizations operate as formal organizations and to discover how student organizations develop and maintain patterns of activities, thoughts, and behaviors which have been described as "organizational culture" in organizational literature.

The study was prompted by the investigator's interest in organizational behavior and the development of organizational culture within college student organizations, and by the lack of literature about student organizational behavior or culture. Much of the available literature pertaining to college student organizations has focused more on the behavior and characteristics of individuals (a micro level of analysis) than on broader issues of organizational activities and characteristics (a macro level of analysis). That literature provides little explanation of how student organizations operate or what characteristics of student organizations contribute to the development of organizational culture. Conversely, the literature from organizational studies which adopts a macro level of analysis has not included college student organizations in its studies and theories. This study uses a macro level of analysis to show that concepts from organizational literature, when applied with a clear understanding of the characteristics of
college student organizations, allow one to discover and explore the manner in which student organizations operate as formal organizations and develop identifiable organizational cultures.

Two considerations directed the formulation of the problem and the development of the research design. The first consideration was that studying and understanding student organizations as formal organizations requires an understanding of the similarities and differences between college student organizations and the formal organizations on which much of the organizational literature is based. That literature has most often been based on what Thompson has termed "instrumental organizations" (1967), which involve regular, induced or coerced participation. Most such organizations are hierarchically structured, with training systems, job assignments, and expectations of long-term participation by employees. Student organizations are much less structured, offer fewer or different inducements to participate, and usually expect much lower levels of participation from members.

The similarities and differences between college student organizations and other formal organizations have not been identified in the available literature on student organizations. Without knowing the central characteristics of college student organizations, one may be unable to make valid comparisons, either among student organizations or between them and other organizations. Some features of instrumental organizations have little, if any, bearing on student organizations. Reward systems are vastly different, as are division of labor, technologies, and many other topics which apply to instrumental organizations but not to college student organizations. There are applicable
concepts, however, which can illuminate issues that college student organizations face and can contribute to an understanding of how student organizations operate. Identifying the concepts and using them in studying student organizations requires a knowledge of both organizational literature and student organizations, and requires adapting the concepts when the characteristics of student organizations warrant. The key characteristics of student organizations and applicable concepts from organizational literature will be discussed as the study is described.

The second consideration was that much of the previous work pertaining to college student organizations falls into one of two categories:

1. psychologically-based research which measures individual characteristics of organization members (Appel, Berry, & Hoffman, 1973; DeJulio, Larson, Dever, & Paulman, 1981; Weston & Stein, 1977), but is not directed at organizational behavior and characteristics.

2. material which is based on the authors' observations and experiences, rather than on formal studies of student organizations (Beach, 1973; Lloyd-Jones & Smith, 1954; Miller & Jones, 1981; Wise, 1978).

The psychologically-based research is usually focused on measuring personality characteristics, with interest in such topics as leadership traits (DeJulio et al, 1981) or the students' scores on human development scales (Weston & Stein, 1977). Frequently, researchers have studied special populations, such as women, minorities, members of organizations identified as "leadership societies," or Greek-letter social organizations. The measurement of individuals within a group generally is not designed to measure whether or how group membership affects the
individual, and it cannot measure whether or how individuals affect the organization.

The material based on the authors' observations is usually very broad in scope, often describing an ideal of how student organizations might contribute to the development of college students, rather than reporting on actual, documented evidence of what occurs within organizations and student activities.

Both categories of work offer insight into the general nature of college student organizations, but they do not pertain directly to organizational behavior or the organizational culture of student organizations. Research which does pertain directly to those topics is needed to extend understanding of college student organizations.

The two considerations directed the investigator to develop a research design, based on concepts and methods from studies of organizational culture, which would allow the investigator to discover and explore patterns of organizational activities and organizational culture within college student organizations. The discussion which follows identifies the specific purposes of the study and outlines the design used.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discover and explore the bases of organizational culture within college student organizations. Recent literature has described organizational culture in corporate organizations (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982), and this study was conducted to determine whether cultural patterns develop in student
organizations as well, and how those patterns compare among the organizations in the study.

An organizational culture is a pattern of behaviors, symbols, and meanings which members of an organization develop, learn, and transmit. It is a coherent frame of reference within which participants—natives, employees, or members—interpret their experiences and attach meaning to them. Culture defines for its members values, activities, and appropriate responses to a variety of situations.

The corporate cultures described in the literature have developed under conditions in which key personalities have molded organizational ideals; stable populations have adopted, adapted, and transmitted those ideals; and long-term participants have been given time to learn and adjust to the company culture.

Student organizations also develop cultures which informed observers can identify and describe, but the conditions under which those cultures develop are vastly different from those just described for company cultures. Key personalities may come and go, as students graduate or leave the organization; the population changes with each new academic term; and new members often become "old-timers," as compared to newer members, within a matter of months, if not weeks. The central question is how organizational culture develops within student organizations, given the conditions under which they operate, and how that culture is transmitted, sustained, or altered.

This study answers that question by identifying the bases of culture within college student organizations and exploring the means by which their cultures are developed and maintained. The writer will
identify the ways in which college student organizations compare to other formal organizations, by applying organizational models and concepts from organizational literature to student organizations. The writer will present conclusions regarding the development and maintenance of organizational culture within college student organizations and relate those conclusions to the available literature.

There are three primary objectives for the study:

1. To explore and describe practical ways of understanding student organizations which will be useful to student affairs professionals and other persons who work with student organizations. By describing the conditions which affect and influence organizational behavior and organizational culture, this study will add to the body of knowledge about student organizations and will suggest areas in which advice, direction, and intervention can be most effective for persons who work with student organizations.

2. To contribute to the developing theory of organizational culture by extending that theory to an organizational setting which heretofore has not been included in the literature. Student organizations, with different characteristics and purposes from other formal organizations, can provide evidence of organizational culture which can be compared and contrasted to the corporate organizations reported in the literature. The characteristics which differ, such as length of membership, socialization of new members, and formal structures, are
affected by the culture of the organization in ways which may
3. To add to a small body of literature based on the application
of anthropological research methods in a college setting.
Cultural anthropology offers an alternative paradigm to the
psychological paradigm used in much of the previous work with
college student organizations. Cultural anthropology allows
the investigator to study group behavior in a natural context,
rather than focusing on the behavior or characteristics of
individuals under experimental conditions. The anthropologi­
cal paradigm assumes that a trained observer can collect
material from a setting, discover patterns as they occur in
context, and explore interactions among participants in an
environment. A small number of studies, among them Leemon's
(1972) study of the rites of passage of a college fraternity,
has demonstrated the applicability of anthropological methods
and concepts. This study further extends those studies.

Overview of Design and Methodology

This study was conducted with four student organizations on the
campus of a major midwestern public university. The organizations were
selected for study because they met certain criteria established by the
investigator: all were organizations which were reported to have estab­
lished patterns of behavior and long-standing procedures for organiza­
tional activities, as opposed to new organizations which might not have
settled into patterns; all were locally constituted and organized,
rather than associated or affiliated with a national organization; all
met frequently enough and included enough persons as members to provide adequate material for study; and all agreed to allow the investigator to enter the organization for the study. In addition, the organizations represented a range of organizations on two criteria: length of membership, and age of student members, as represented by academic classification.

The investigator employed qualitative methods to study the four organizations. These methods, based on anthropological and ethnographic research methods, were selected because they allow an investigator to enter a setting, observe activities, participate with members to varying degrees, and collect material as the organization operates in a natural context. In such a study, the investigator becomes the research instrument and collects material as unobtrusively as possible.

The principle methods used in this study were participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. The study was conducted during an academic quarter in which each of the organizations scheduled a variety of activities, to which the investigator was admitted. The investigator observed organizational behavior and interviewed members to discuss a variety of organizational issues.

Qualitative methods are especially useful in discovering and exploring patterns of behavior in the natural context. In this study, the topic of special interest is organizational culture, and the methods were used to explore cultural patterns within each organization. The investigator drew from three sources in forming broadly-framed questions which were designed to reveal patterns of behavior within the four organizations:
1. **organizational theory**, which prompts questions about the goals, purposes, and structures of the organization, and which provides models within which student organizations can be compared and contrasted to other formal organizations.

2. **cultural anthropology**, which prompts questions about the composition of the cultural group, how participants view the organization, how participants attach meaning to their participation, and how cultural patterns within the organization are created and sustained.

3. **common characteristics of student organizations**, such as the length of membership, the pool from which members are attracted or selected, and the amount of time which membership in the organization demands. (As a preliminary step for this study, the investigator developed a framework of organizational characteristics which appears in Appendix A.)

The questions which were developed from these three areas enabled the investigator to discover what the intended purposes of the organizations were, which members were involved in developing or directing the activities of the organization, how the organization related activities to purposes, what the patterns of participation in the organization were, and what conditions affect the operation of the organizations.

The research methods used are designed to uncover the participants' perspectives on the organizations and to discover topics which are pertinent to the development and maintenance of the cultural patterns of each organization.

**Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Qualitative methodology allows one to study a context in great depth, but it limits the scope of study by requiring intense involvement with the object of study. The object of this study is the college student organization. On the campus at which this study was conducted, nearly 500 student organizations are recognized by the university. Only
four organizations were selected because of the time and energy required to conduct a qualitative study properly.

In deciding which organizations would be included for consideration in the selection of organizations, the investigator found it necessary to specify a definition for student organizations. There are many forms of student associations on a college campus, from informal social gatherings having little relationship with the university to formal organizations intricately tied into the governance and operational structures of the campus.

As it is used in this study, the term "student organization" refers to a formal organization which students choose to join and which is recognized by and registered with the university. It is a named entity which continues from year to year in basically unchanged form. Unlike informal student associations, student organizations have some type of written document, such as a constitution or charter, which specifies how the organization will function. Within each organization is the expectation that the organization will exist continually, unlike committees or task forces which disband each year or when the task is completed. A particular organization may not actually survive, but the expectation of survival is present.

A key distinction between student organizations and other formal student associations is the source of the initiative and energy for sustaining the organization. Many universities have established student activities which are directed by students but which the university would continue to maintain even if student interest or ability waned. Student organizations, as defined here, are originated by students, rather than
by the university, and would be allowed to cease operation if student interest were not sufficient to sustain them.

Under this definition, certain distinct student associations are not considered student organizations. A residence hall association, since it is based on residential status rather than on a decision to join, and since it is customarily established by the university as a vehicle for student participation in the programming and governance programs of the residence halls, is not a free-standing student organization.

Student organizations must be self-perpetuating in the sense that they must attract or select new members. They are also self-sustaining in that they must secure operating funds through the contributions or efforts of their members, rather than through annual allocations from the university.

Elected student assemblies and other student associations established by the university and funded through annual allocations may be quasi-administrative units, or they may be autonomous student organizations. If university funding and administrative support remove the need for an association to perpetuate and support itself, the conditions under which the association operates are different from those under which free-standing student organizations operate. University-related student associations were not considered student organizations under the definition used in this study.

Limitations of the study. In any research, certain limitations must be recognized. In this study, the central limitation was the time...
available for investigation. The study was conducted during one academic quarter, which affected the study in two ways.

The first effect was that a large amount of material had to be collected in a short time, during the ten weeks of the study. The energy required for qualitative research and the short time available meant that decisions had to be made among organizational activities and between collecting and analyzing material. In the time available for the study, the investigator was not able to attend every activity of each of the organizations or to devote large amounts of time to analysis as the study progressed.

A second limitation related to the time available was that the study of a dynamic organization is limited by what occurs within that organization at the time of the study. Significant events in an organization's year which took place at times before or after the study were inaccessible for observation and first-hand experience. Events which had already taken place could be reconstructed during interviews, but verification and analysis is limited. The findings reflect occurrences and evaluations during a short span of the organizations' lives and are constantly subject to change as new events occur.

Outline of the Presentation

The previous sections have presented the purpose of the study, the means of conducting it, and conditions under which it would be carried out. The remainder of the paper discusses the application of literature and methods to the study of student organizations, presents the findings, and identifies implications and conclusions to be drawn.
Chapter II is a review of literature. Literature from three areas of organizational studies is reviewed: organizational models, organizational culture, and organizational socialization. The issues which have been identified in these three areas for many types of formal organizations are pertinent to student organizations. The concepts which were selected allow one to discern broad organizational patterns and processes which have not previously been identified within college student organizations.

The nature of discussion about college student organizations in the literature from college student personnel is also reviewed. Student organization behavior has been the subject of discussion less often than the characteristics of individuals within those organizations, so the student personnel literature offers few directly applicable ideas about organizational behavior within college student organizations.

Chapter III outlines the research methods used in this study. Since much of the previous work with student organizations is based on paradigms from psychology, and since this study is based on anthropological methods, a detailed description and explanation of the methods is given. That is followed by a discussion of the particular manner in which the methods were applied in this study. The discussion also identifies limitations other than those outlined in this chapter and explains what steps were taken to alleviate problems associated with the research methods.

Participant observation, in which the investigator enters the setting being studied and participates to varying degrees, was used to
gather information about the activities and types of participation of members.

Ethnographic interviewing, in which the investigator conducts relatively unstructured exploratory interviews with participants, was used to collect information about organizational activities and procedures which were not observable during the study and to discover participants' experiences in and attitudes toward the organization.

Chapter IV is a presentation of the findings from the four organizations studied. As the organizational culture of each organization was studied and compared to the other organizations, a framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs emerged. This framework serves as the basis of organizational culture and provides the structure for the discussion of the material collected from each organization.

It was found that organizational culture is based on the knowledge and beliefs about the organization which members develop in each of three stages of membership: Pre-Membership, New Membership, and Established Membership. Within each stage, individuals develop knowledge and beliefs from one of three bases: Fact, Opinion, or Assumption. Finally, the organization can be viewed from one of three perspectives: Individual; Organizational, that is, internal to the organization but reflecting collective, rather than individual, views; and Systemic, that is, external to the organization or its members. The three elements of the framework, Stage of Membership, Bases of Knowledge and Beliefs, and Perspective on the Organization, are shown to be interrelated. The evidence from the study is given to demonstrate each category in the framework.
Chapter V identifies the implications of the study and conclusions which can be drawn about the development and maintenance of organizational culture within college student organizations. The concept of culture and the possibilities or processes of cultural change have many applications in college student organizations. Student affairs professionals who work with student organizations, as well as members of the organizations themselves, can be sensitized to the manner in which one element of a culture affects or is affected by other elements. Whether agents want to induce or prevent cultural change, knowing how the culture develops and maintains itself is a valuable means of understanding the procedures which will affect cultural patterns.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The term college student organization encompasses two broad fields, college students and organizations. From the literature in each field, material is available which adds to an understanding of the nature of college student organizations, but the fields have infrequently been formally combined. Interest in college students is the traditional domain of college student personnel, but the focus of that field is a psychologically-based concern for the individual development of students. Much of the student personnel literature on student organizations is a micro literature which is based on psychological models and analyzes individual behavior. There is little available student personnel literature based on macro levels of analyzes which focuses on college student organizations.

On the other hand, organizational literature which is based on macro levels of analysis has not incorporated college student organizations into studies and theories, focusing instead on instrumental organizations which employ full-time personnel and produce goods or services for clientele of the organization.

This study adds to the available literature by studying student organizations at a macro level rather than a micro level, and by using variables and frameworks, which organizational theorists have developed
in other settings, as a basis for studying college student organizations.

The primary focus of this discussion will be organizational literature. Models which have been developed in that field and which can be applied to college organizations will be discussed, along with other ideas from organizational literature which are applicable for studying and comparing student organizations. These models and ideas provide insight into general organizational behavior, and they serve as a basis for considering how student organizations are different from or similar to other formal organizations.

Applying organizational literature to the study of college student organizations requires a clear understanding of the nature of student organizations and careful selection of organizational concepts. Assumptions about both students and organizations must be recognized for reasonable applications and conclusions to be made. This discussion will identify such assumptions.

Following the discussion of organizational models and how student organizations can be understood through the application of such models, ideas from recent organizational literature and their usefulness for student organizations will be presented. The central ideas which are discussed pertain to organizational culture and to organizational socialization. Ideas about organizational culture have proven, in this study, to be applicable to student organizations, in ways which will be illustrated in the discussion. Organizational socialization is an important element of organizational culture, since changes in membership
--which occur frequently in student organizations--often reveal the strength and coherence of the culture.

Finally, a brief review of student personnel literature related to student organizations will be given. The review will show that the application of ideas about cultures to student organizations is not new, but has not yet been fully developed.

Characteristics of Student Organizations

Pertinent to the Review of Literature

Before a review of organizational literature is given, the characteristics of student organizations must be specified and compared to characteristics which are assumed or identified for most of the organizations in the general literature. Such a specification is lacking in most of the student personnel literature. Although particular kinds of student organizations may be the focus of various efforts, the way those organizations relate to or contrast with each other is seldom, if ever, discussed.

For instance, in *Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education* (Roberts, 1981), a number of special populations--among them, women, minorities, and Greek organizations--are identified and targeted for leadership training. The book gives practical advice to assist student personnel professionals in developing and offering leadership training. However, the discussion does not focus on why such special populations need separate kinds of training or how they differ from each other. An overall model of student organizations which highlights the characteristics which create both similarities and differences among student
organizations needs to be used before ideas from organizational literature can be judged to be applicable to student organizations.

This writer has identified membership and governance characteristics along which student organizations differ from each other and from other formal organizations. Membership characteristics consist of the membership pool, membership longevity, attracting or recruiting members, intensity of membership involvement, and alumni membership. Governance characteristics are those which determine the extent of student autonomy in running the organization: national affiliation, alumni involvement in governance, and institutional involvement. (Appendix I offers a detailed discussion of these characteristics.)

It is possible to relate these characteristics to the typical characteristics of the organizations which form the basis for much of the organizational literature, such as corporations or government agencies. The differences which are noted affect the applicability of certain ideas to student organizations and should be kept in mind when general organizational literature is used in trying to understand student organizations.

Membership Pool

The membership pool of most student organizations will be much more homogeneous than that of most business organizations, and the members who are drawn from that pool will be a more homogeneous group. That is, student organization members will be closer in age, education, and, probably, socioeconomic background, than employees of most organizations will be. Organizations on a campus may draw students from particular segments of the total student population, but the range of
that population on characteristics such as age and previous experience within organizations will be smaller than the range of the work force from which companies draw employees.

Membership Longevity

Membership in student organizations is ephemeral compared to long-term employment, which many employees of companies assume they have, whether they achieve it or not. No formal survey is available to indicate average membership longevity across all student organizations, but an informed estimate would be that it is less than two years. With such rapid turnover, relative longevity among members is of more interest than actual length of membership.

It would appear that many of the same processes which members of companies experience, such as socialization, affect student membership, but at an accelerated and more pronounced pace. Few companies have a 25% turnover among employees each year, but a student organization with equal distribution of members throughout academic classifications would have that. Some student organizations have a 100% turnover annually. Therefore, processes such as socialization and the emergence of leadership take place at a much more rapid rate than is assumed for most companies.

Attracting or Recruiting Members

The reasons for joining student organizations are very different from those for accepting employment with a company. The processes student organizations use to attract new members may be based on similar ideas that companies use, such as creating positive images about affiliation with the organization, but the content will likely be very
different. For instance, the financial incentives companies offer have limited comparability to the reward systems of student organizations. It is interesting to note that many student organizations recruit members with the argument that involvement in the organization will help the student get a job after college.

Intensity of Membership Involvement

In all but a very few cases, membership involvement in student organizations is vastly different from employment in companies. The daily time commitment, organizational expectations for participation, rewards, punishments, and signs of membership all vary. Student organizations differ not only in the kinds of involvement they require, such as daily, routine participation, but also in the extent to which members identify with the organization. Employees work for only one company in most cases, but students may join numerous organizations. Balancing competing demands is an issue in both companies and student organizations, but student organizations usually have fewer sanctions or incentives to assure participation.

The types of involvement available within student organizations also vary from companies. Student organizations are usually structured so that there are very few formally defined positions, unlike companies which have job descriptions for each position. Student organizations usually have a small set of officers, with the majority of the members participating without having a defined role within the organization.

Alumni Membership

Some student organizations have formal alumni status which may keep some individuals involved long after they leave the organization.
Little is said in organizational literature about former employees affecting the daily operation of companies. Although retirement and employee retention patterns are similar to the notion of alumni status, the comparisons have not been explored in this study.

**Governance Characteristics**

Even those student organizations which have national affiliation and high levels of institutional involvement usually operate in isolation from other chapters of the national organization and relatively autonomously from institutional control. Therefore, when an idea from organizational literature is applied to student organizations, its primary usefulness will be at the local level, rather than throughout a national organization. For this study, organizations were selected which were locally organized, without national affiliations.

With these characteristics in mind, the applicability or transferability of ideas from organizational literature to college student organizations can be determined. The following discussion of ideas from organizational literature is based on the decision that each idea has relevance for student organizations, in light of the characteristics just described.

**Applying Organizational Literature to the Study of College Student Organizations**

Three broad areas within the general field of organizational literature provide the bases for studying college student organizations and for understanding how they compare to or differ from each other and other types of organizations. The three areas are: (a) organizational
models; (b) organizational culture; and (c) organizational socialization. Organizational models provide categories or perspectives within which organizations can be compared, and they illuminate key features of organizations. The literature on organizational culture, which has received increased attention in recent years, offers insight into the ways organizations operate and members make meaning of their participation. Organizational socialization is a process which is particularly important within student organizations because of the almost constant change in membership which they undergo. Each of these areas will be discussed in relation to its applicability for the study of college student organizations.

Organizational Models

In reading organizational literature to ascertain its appropriateness for understanding student organizations, this writer reviewed a number of works, some of which seemed very applicable and others which had little relevance. A distinction explained by Pondy and Mitroff (1979) clarified the general field of organizational literature and made selection easier: Micro-levels of analysis, generally known as organizational behavior, consist of studies of individual, interpersonal, and intergroup behavior, as in the study of leadership, motivation, and job design, whereas the macro branch concerns organization-wide aspects such as structure, relations with the environment, effects of technology, and so forth. (p. 4)

Although not all organizational literature can be clearly categorized into either grouping, the distinction is helpful. In this analysis, the literature which has the most applicability for student organizations is
that at the macro level. It was found that much of the micro-level work is so directly based on occupational organizations that few of the results and insights are relevant to student organizations. At the macro level, however, comparisons between organizational models and student organizations are possible. The two macro perspectives which have been most helpful to this investigator in understanding student organizations will be discussed. These perspectives allow someone who is familiar with student organizations to relate them to other formal organizations. The first model is the Blau-Scott typology of organizations, based on the prime beneficiary (1962). The second part of the discussion identifies how rational, natural, and open system models explain or account for various organizational phenomena. These perspectives encompass large issues regarding formal organizations and show how one's perspective will determine which aspects of organizations one will study most closely.

**Blau and Scott: Typology Based on Prime Beneficiary**

A model which has been especially useful in revealing how student organizations compare to other formal organizations is Blau and Scott's typology based on the prime beneficiaries of organizations (1962). Blau and Scott have stated that every organization has an identifiable population which is the prime beneficiary of its services or activities. It is this population which gives the organization its reason for existing. Serving the interests of the prime beneficiary is an ideal which may become obscured and supplanted as the organization operates, but the organization's existence is based on the population it is designed to serve. The four types of organizations are:
1) "mutual-benefit associations," where the prime beneficiary is the membership;

2) "business concerns," where the owners are prime beneficiary;

3) "service organizations," where the client group is the prime beneficiary; and

4) "commonweal organizations," where the prime beneficiary is the public-at-large. [(p. 103)] (p. 42)

Each type encompasses several different kinds of organizations. Service organizations, for example, range from schools to hospitals; business concerns from steel mills to banks. The diversity within the types in this model is particularly helpful when student organizations are to be considered. As will be discussed in greater depth during the review of student personnel literature pertaining to student organizations, little of the literature on student organizations attempts to differentiate among the many purposes and structures of student organizations. One of the purposes of this study is to demonstrate that there are ways to distinguish among student organizations, even while recognizing features they share. This typology allows that.

Although student organizations vary in their structures and goals, most of them exist primarily to serve the members of the organization, making them mutual-benefit associations. They may serve other purposes within the larger system of the university, but they exist primarily to fulfill a purpose for the members.

A sometimes-unrecognized purpose in student organizations is to provide a training experience for participants, to prepare them to participate in other associations within a society which is based on formal organizations and democratic procedures. The training purpose is seldom formalized in the charter or constitution of a student
organization, and it may not be recognized by student participants, but it is an underlying purpose served by the organizations, to benefit members.

The assertion that student organizations are mutual-benefit associations and serve as a training experience for students is based on analysis which is one level removed from the individual organization. Within a given organization, purposes other than that of benefiting members may be formally recognized and embraced, one notable purpose being service of some kind. Although it is true that many student organizations, including three of the four in this study, are designed to perform service projects, they are not likely to serve a population through their projects in the same way that a service organization in the Blau and Scott typology will serve its clientele. They do, however, act as a training ground for students to learn how to manage projects, work cooperatively, and develop a sense of civic responsibility.

The nature of student organizations as mutual-benefit associations is particularly clear in organizations which provide students a chance to pursue hobbies, special interests, or professionally-related affiliations. A student chapter of an honor society within an academic discipline clearly exists to further the interests of the student by recognizing academic achievement and by providing a means for students to associate with other students who are being trained to enter the discipline.

As mutual-benefit associations, student organizations face some of the same issues which other mutual-benefit associations face. Blau and Scott suggest that the central issue for these organizations is
maintaining membership control, or internal democracy (p. 43). In the ideal, a mutual-benefit association engenders the active interest and participation of its members, but Blau and Scott have reported that "the majority of members of mutual-benefit associations are not sufficiently interested to devote much time or energy to conducting the business of the association and are content to leave the running of the organization to a corps of active members or to a hired staff" (p. 46). This was found to be the case, to varying degrees, within each of the organizations in this study. The patterns of participation will be discussed in Chapters IV and V.

When one studies student organizations as mutual-benefit associations, attention is given to the benefits a student derives from the organization and how the organization deals with the issue of maintaining internal democracy.

Rational, Natural, and Open Systems

On a broader scale than Blau and Scott's typology, organizations can be viewed as either rational, natural, or open systems (Scott, 1981). These perspective have evolved as theorists have attempted to develop coherent systems to explain organizational phenomena. An organization can be viewed from any one of these perspectives, so it is neither practical nor defensible to say that one organization "is a rational system" and another "is an open system." Rather, one would say, "When viewed as a rational (or natural, or open) system, this organization is . . ." This discussion highlights the issues which are considered when an organization is viewed from each perspective.
The choice of perspective either determines or is determined by the aspect of the organization on which one focuses attention. Scott (1981) has identified elements of organizations:

1) **social structure**, "the patterned or regularized aspects of relationships existing among participants in an organization" (p. 13), which may be formal or informal.

2) **participants**, "individuals who, in return for a variety of inducements, make contributions to the organization" (p. 16).

3) **goals**, "conceptions of desired ends" (p. 16).

4) **technology**, some type of work, whether of a mechanical nature or not (p. 17).

5) **environment**, a specific physical, technological, cultural, and social setting in which the organization operates (p. 17).

Depending on the perspective from which one views organizations, one or more of the elements is emphasized, but Scott has stated that "no one element is so dominant as to be safely considered in isolation from the others (p. 18). Three definitions of organizations indicate which element is most important for understanding organizations from each perspective. The implications for student organizations will be discussed as each perspective is presented.

**Organizations as rational systems.** The definition Scott has given for organizations which are viewed as rational systems is that "an organization is a collectivity oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting a relatively highly formalized social structure" (p. 21). One who views organizations from this perspective will be interested in "the extent to which a series of actions is organized in such a way as to lead to predetermined goals with maximum efficiency" (pp. 57-58). As Scott has noted, "rational" in this sense means "'technical' or 'functional'" (p. 57) and refers to the ways goals are
pursued, even if the goals themselves are "irrational or foolish" (p. 58).

The "ideal" rational system, as described by Weber is a bureaucracy, characterized by:

- a fixed division of labor among participants
- a hierarchy of offices
- a set of general rules which govern performance
- a separation of personal from official property and rights
- selection of personnel on the basis of technical qualifications
- employment viewed as a career by participants (Scott, 1981, p. 68)

Student organizations exhibit few of these characteristics. Such distinctions as there are among members, for division of labor, offices, technical qualifications, property, or rights, are usually limited to a small group of people, such as officers or long-term members. Participation is voluntary and is not viewed as a career by members.

Within a rational systems perspective, the elements of organizations which are most closely studied are goal specificity and formalization. The function of specific goals is to supply criteria for selecting activities, to guide decisions about how the organizational structure is designed, to identify tasks to be performed, and to determine how resources are to be allocated among participants (Scott, 1981, p. 59). Formalization attempts to "make behavior more predictable by standardizing and regulating it" and "to make more explicit and visible the structure of relationships among a set of roles and the principles that govern behavior in the system" (p. 60).

The emphasis on goals and formalization has come at the expense of attention to the individuals, technologies, and environments with which organizations must also be concerned. These have not been ignored completely, but have been viewed as elements an organization must
control and direct rather than accommodate. Other views of organizations developed because of the limited attention rational perspectives gave to aspects other than goals and structures.

When student organizations are viewed from a rational systems perspective, one seeks information about goals and formal structure. Formal structure is readily apparent within most student organizations, in the form of a set of officers, a constitution which identifies the purpose and operating procedures for the organization, and, in some organizations, an agenda which is used in meetings. The formal structure is often imposed on student organizations, in the sense that an agency outside the membership directs that the structure be adopted. Most universities require that any student organization which uses university facilities and receives some form of recognition must maintain a formal constitution, specifying purpose, membership requirements, officers, and procedures for conducting organizational business. Student associations which are not organized in such a manner usually are not recognized by the university. Chapters of national organizations also are directed by national requirements to adopt a set of local bylaws or other operating documents.

An additional influence on the formal structure of individual organizations is the phenomenon of "institutional isomorphism" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Organizations which operate under similar conditions will model themselves after each other. DiMaggio and Powell have identified conditions which prompt such modeling, one of which is uncertainty. In seeking ways to assure themselves of success when goals are unclear or conflicting,
organizations tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful. The ubiquity of certain kinds of structural arrangements can more likely be credited to the universality of mimetic processes than to any concrete evidence that the adopted models enhance efficiency. (p. 152)

What is not obvious to student organizations is that organizations which appear to be similar to each other may actually be different in important ways, so that what works for one can be detrimental to another. An example from the study will illustrate the point.

The Service Organization admits members on an individual basis at any time during the academic year. About four years before this study was conducted, according to one of the senior members, the organization had established a formal orientation process for new members, very similar to a pledge program in social fraternities, inasmuch as it consisted of information to be learned in a setting separate from the other members and taught by an experienced member. At the time of this study, certain members, including new ones who were being oriented to the organization, expressed dissatisfaction with the procedures. It appeared to the investigator that the procedure, which can work well in an organization which admits a large group of new members at the same time, is unsuited for an organization which admits members individually. By adopting a model from organizations different from itself in that important respect, the Service Organization created a problem for itself which it was beginning to examine as this research concluded.

To summarize the points regarding formal structures in student organizations, the first is that the organizations are usually, if not always, required to have a formal structure in order to achieve recognition from the university or from a national organization. In addition,
when one organization attempts to model itself after other student organizations, the result may be that the organization adds formal structures or procedures, in imitation of the second organization.

The second major element of organizations which is important in a rational systems perspective is a set of specific organizational goals. In the ideal rational system, goals direct attention to the most important functions of an organization and guide decisions about allocation of time, money, and energy.

Goals within student organizations are often difficult to identify or, if identified, to specify to a degree which allows the goals to function as guides for decision-making. Many student organizations have as a goal "to promote an interest in" an academic field, hobby, or special interest. Few student organizations have clear areas of expertise or identifiable products toward which organizational resources and efforts are channeled. From a rational systems perspective, student organizations fall well short of being ideal rational systems.

As was discussed previously, student organizations may be characterized as mutual-benefit associations. As such, one goal which is implicit within the organization is to promote the well-being of and to serve the members. In this regard, certain aspects of student organizations are easily understood within the natural systems perspective, which will be discussed next.

Organizations as natural systems. In a reaction to the lack of attention which rational models give to participants and to informal structures within organizations, a natural systems perspective developed. Its focus is specifically on participants, almost to the
exclusion of concern with the formal structures within organizations. The definition Scott has given for organizations viewed from the natural systems perspective is that, "an organization is a collectivity whose participants are little affected by the formal structure or official goals but who share a common interest in the survival of the system and who engage in collective activities, informally structured, to secure this end" (Scott, 1981, p. 22).

Within a natural systems perspective, the overriding goal for an organization is survival. Energy must be devoted not only to the maintenance of the organization, but also to the accomplishment of tasks. Informal organizations develop, based on the personal characteristics and relationships of participants. In this view, "highly centralized and formalized structures are doomed to be ineffective and irrational in that they waste the organization's most precious resource: the intelligence and initiative of its participants" (Scott, 1981, p. 84).

This view does not ignore the existence of a formal structure, but maintains that the structure should yield to the abilities, interests, and working relationships of participants, rather than treat individuals as interchangeable, indistinguishable parts in a machine-like manner.

When student organizations are viewed as natural systems, attention is given to the behavior within the organizations: Whereas a rational systems perspective would have one study organizational structure, the natural systems perspective would have one study what organizations actually do. Within student organizations, participants rely more on personal interests than formal goals to determine activities, and they seldom have clearly defined responsibilities for individual
members' participation. Many participants also must be actively involved in recruiting members, a survival strategy which is easily understood from the natural systems perspective.

A weakness of the natural systems perspective is that one cannot understand formal organizations without understanding the formal structure. In comparing the rational and natural systems, Scott has stated,

While the rational system model stresses the normative structure of organizations, the natural system model places more emphasis on the behavioral structure. And where the rational system perspective stresses the importance of structure over the characteristics of participants, the natural system perspective reverses these priorities—so much so that Bennis labels this orientation as one of 'people without organizations.'" (Scott, 1981, p. 99)

Each perspective gives relatively little regard to the areas of interest to the other perspective, and neither specifically incorporates a consideration of the effects of the environment. That remains to be included in the open system model, which attempts to combine the perspectives of the rational and natural models with an understanding of environmental conditions to describe how organizations function.

**Organizations as open systems.** In an open systems perspective, an organization is seen as "a coalition of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation; the structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors" (Scott, 1981, pp. 22-23). The purpose of this perspective is to broaden the scope of thinking about organizations. It recognizes that there are structures which must be taken into account, along with purposes and technologies. It also recognizes that participants are not machines to be turned on and off as the organization directs. It considers that there are conditions beyond the control of the organization,
within the larger environment, which affect the work of the organization and organizational participants. At every juncture of the organization's activities, the task, participants, and environment are changing. The open systems perspective recognizes, in a way that neither of the other perspectives does, that change is a constant condition with which the organization must cope.

Organizational theories which are based on an open systems perspective emphasize processes rather than structures. Within a rational systems perspective, the focus is clearly on formal structures, and even within the natural systems perspective there is an interest in the relatively permanent structure of informal relations. In each case there is an implicit assumption that those structures are stable. In the open systems perspective, however, the dynamic, shifting quality of organizations is recognized. As conditions change—in goals, technology, participants, or the environment—the organization will change. If the organization does not change, to match the new conditions, it will gradually lose the ability to continue to operate in a changed environment. If the organization gradually adapts to change, the increments of change may be so minor as to be unrecognizable, but the organization will continue to operate and survive.

A useful idea in an open-systems perspective is that of "loose coupling" (Weick, 1976). Any element of an organization may be loosely coupled to other elements, so that substructures, events, tasks, and personnel may affect other elements very little. Weick has observed that each element "preserves its own identity," somewhat like "building blocks that can be grafted onto an organization or severed with
relatively little disturbance to either the blocks or the organization" (p. 3).

Within student organizations, an obvious example of loose coupling is evident when an organization is studied over time: events which occur at one time are only loosely coupled to previous events. Student organizations lack the continuity of membership to assure that successive events will accurately repeat previous similar events. Whereas a business may have exact procedures to follow every time an action occurs and no changes occur in the procedures from year to year, a student organization, which has new members each year, is likely to make a series of incremental adaptations which quickly result in substantial changes. As participants change, interests, emphases, and experiences also change, so that traditions and procedures may change quickly. In this regard, each year's activities are "loosely coupled" to the same organization's activities of the previous year.

This process makes the organizations at once dynamic and vulnerable. An organization which has no clear ("tight") connection to its past is free to adapt to current conditions, but it may also be "re-inventing the wheel" every year. Traditions become empty rituals if younger students fail to learn their meaning before the older students leave the organization. In either case, the younger members of an organization have an opportunity to create their own meaning as members of the organization, but they may also lack a sense of direction within the organization to do so.

Student organizations may be seen as loosely coupled in other ways, as well. Each organization is a "building block," to use Weick's
term, for the campus system, but the university can survive without any particular organization. Within the system, an organization may share some features, concerns, and even members with other organizations, but few, if any, student organization would be dependent on any other organization for its own survival.

An open-systems perspective sensitizes one to the interdependence of all five organizational elements which Scott has identified. The social structures, participants, goals, technologies, and environment interact to create conditions under which the organization will operate. Both the rational and natural systems perspectives focus on certain elements to the near-exclusion of others, but an open systems perspective attempts to account for the contribution of all elements. Within student organizations, which operate under constantly-changing conditions, particularly in membership, the open systems ideas help one to understand both why student organization can change as rapidly as many of them do and how patterns persist over time. Issues are recognized when one asks how each element interacts with and is independent of another. These issues are important for understanding how student organizations operate.

Summary of Models

These models have been used to focus on elements of student organizations, to show how they compare and contrast to other formal organizations. Many other models could have been selected, but these incorporate broad organizational issues which are pertinent to any formal organization, within which student organizations can be considered. When combined with ideas about organizational culture, these models
allow one to examine, describe, and understand how student organizations function in the college environment.

Organizational Culture as a Topic of Study

The interest in organizational culture as a new base of theory or model-building in organizational studies has developed within the past decade or so among students of management, organizational effectiveness, and general organizational theory. The interest is explained in the introduction to a special issue of the Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ) devoted to organizational culture:

For organizational analysis, we need to be able to perceive and understand the complex nature of organizational phenomena, both micro and macro, organizational and individual, conservative and dynamic. We need to understand organizations in multiple ways, as having "machine-like" aspects, "organism-like" aspects, "culture-like" aspects, and others yet to be identified. . . .

To the extent that our ways of looking at things become solidified into commonly accepted paradigms limiting what we pay attention to, new ideas in and of themselves can be valuable. Culture as a root metaphor for organization studies is one such idea, redirecting our attention away from some of the commonly accepted "important things" (such as structure or technology) and toward the (until now) less-frequently examined elements raised to importance by the new metaphor (such as shared understandings, norms, or values). Especially in conjunction with other approaches, culture may provide the critical tension that can lead to new insight. (Jelinek, Smircich, & Hirsch, 1983, p. 331)

The concept of organizational culture has been developed, perhaps not coincidentally, during roughly the same period as open systems models have developed. Contingency theories, such as those developed by Lawrence and Lorsch or Galbraith (cited in Scott, 1981) are open systems models which are based on three assumptions:
1. There is no best way to organize.

2. Any way of organizing is not equally effective.

3. The best way to organize depends on the nature of the environment to which the organization must relate. (pp. 113-114)

These assumptions indicate a recognition of the changes which can take place in organizations as personnel, tasks, or environmental conditions change. Another open systems school, which Scott has labeled "environmental approaches," contends that an "organization is not passive, but active in determining its own fate" (p. 116). These ideas appeared in the early to mid-1970's. As ideas about organizational culture developed in the late 1970's, with new models, paradigms, and methods for studying organizations, those who studied them found that decisions which are made within organizations and the means of accomplishing the tasks of the organization follow a pattern which is particularly suited to the organization and which has come to be called "organizational culture."

Within the field of organizational studies, the work on organizational culture can be categorized within open systems perspectives. Studies of organizational culture draw from areas beyond organizational studies, however. Many writers have based their work on ideas such as Berger and Luckmann's "social construction of reality" (1967) and ideas from cultural anthropology which have been recognized for a number of years but are being applied in new ways. In the ASQ introduction, Jelinek, Smircich, and Hirsch have asserted:

There is something new here: this time around, researchers seem to be striving for some way to address the interactive, ongoing, recreative aspects of organizations, beyond the merely rational or economic. (p. 331)
Peters and Waterman (1982), searching for theories of organizational effectiveness, polled business practitioners and academics in 1977 to ascertain the state of theory at the time. They found it to be "in refreshing disarray, but moving toward a new consensus" (p. 5). That consensus was toward an interest in the "stream of thoughts" (p. 5) regarding information capacity and rational decision-making within organizations. The work they did led them to study "excellent" companies and the processes which set those companies apart. Their findings became a book, *In Search of Excellence*, which is perhaps the most widely known discussion of organizational culture to have gained attention in both academic and business circles.

At the same time Peters and Waterman were exploring organizational effectiveness and developing their ideas about organizational culture, other writers were exploring the development of organizational culture and the phenomena involved. They were viewing organizations as systems in a state of becoming, rather than a state of being.

The metaphor of culture adds a paradigm to our field's conceptual tool kit, expanding the old implicit models of machines or organisms to include the newer model of social process. It is important to emphasize that the shift is not just from one noun to another (as from machine to organism) but from noun to verb (from organization to organizing). What is proposed is a dynamic and interactive model of organizing as a process that persists and changes over time. Moreover, the nature of the process is conditioned by the nature of the human mind (which seeks to interpret or make sense) and the nature of the organization as a human artifact of the sense-making process. (Jelinek, Smircich, & Hirsch, 1983, p. 338)

It is the emphasis on "sense-making" that has captured the attention of many writers. They have focused on organizational imagery, stories, myths, and metaphors. The language and thought systems within
organizations, more than organizational charts and technology, have been the objects of their study.

Organizational culture provides an excellent means for understanding college student organizations. These organizations are constantly changing, yet they remain identifiably the same. Membership may turn over completely every year or, at most, every four years; each new generation of members may change the formal structure or, at least, the persons who occupy roles within the formal structure; and the activities of the organization are likely to change as the interests of members change. Yet there remains, for most college student organizations, an essential character. The organization which is "a line on a resume" remains passive, whereas an "old reliable" organization remains faithful in completing its responsibilities. The "political fraternity" continually has members elected to student government positions and the "studious sorority" takes home the scholarship trophy. Pre-selection of members could be said to account for certain stable features, but the results of this study show that pre-selection is one factor of the culture of the organization. Students who enter begin learning the expectations of the organization before they enter, and they perpetuate them once they are members.

The definitions of organizational culture identify the process of learning which takes place within an organization. In the sections that follow, the definitions of organizational culture which have been adopted will be explained, and the importance of language and symbols in organizational culture will be reviewed.
Definitions of Organizational Culture

Many writers offer a quick, simple definition of culture, from which they work when they study organizational phenomena. These simple definitions obscure the fact that there are a number of different uses for the term which should be recognized before one definition is adopted.

Smircich (1983) has provided the most comprehensive analysis of the concept of culture, dividing the various uses she found for culture into two areas: culture as a critical variable and as a root metaphor.

Smircich has compared concepts of organizations from organization theory with concepts of culture from anthropology, arriving at five major classifications:

- culture as an independent variable
- culture as an internal variable
- culture from a cognitive perspective
- culture from a symbolic perspective
- culture from a structural and psychodynamic perspective (p. 348)

The first two classifications are identified as "culture as a variable" definitions, the last three as "culture as root metaphor" definitions. The difference between the two types is similar to that between product and process. The root metaphor definitions are used by those looking for the processes within organizations which produce or exhibit culture, whereas the culture-as-variable perspectives are used by those who view culture as an accomplished fact and seek evidence of it in their studies.
A process-product relationship is evident in many of the definitions seen in the literature, with some definitions emphasizing the processes by which internal variables of culture develop, and others emphasizing the products or manifestations of culture. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz's definition is frequently cited, that culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols" (cited in Louis, 1980). The transmission is process and the meanings and symbols are products.

Other definitions which reflect recognition of both the process and product of cultural development are:

- the continuous recreation of meaning (Jelinek, Smircich, & Hirsch, 1983, p. 335);

- social knowledge passed on from generation to generation . . . hardened into what the anthropologists might term culture (Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983, p. 473); and

- the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior (Spradley, 1980, p. 6).

These definitions relate directly to two of the categories of organizational culture studies which Smircich has identified. For the culture-from-cognitive-perspective definition, Smircich has drawn on cognitive anthropology, in which "culture is a system of shared cognitions or a system of knowledge and beliefs" (p. 348). Those who study organizations with this definition in mind "view organizations as networks of subjective meanings or shared frames of reference that organization members share to varying degrees and which, to an external observer, appear to function in a rule-like, or grammar-like manner" (p. 349). From this perspective, the process by which these networks of meaning develop are the objects of study.
From the perspective of culture-as-internal-variable, the products of culture are important, the "shared key values and beliefs" (p. 345), which are manifested through myths, symbols, stories, legends, and other language devices. In both definitions, language is the key to cultural development and maintenance, and studying language is important in studying organizations.

An organization which has developed an organizational culture is likely to have long-standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language, an ideology that helps edit a member's everyday experience, shared standards of relevance as to the critical aspects of the work that is being accomplished, matter-of-fact prejudices, models for social etiquette and demeanor, certain customs and rituals suggestive of how members are to relate to colleagues, subordinates, superiors, and outsiders, and a sort of residual category of some rather plain "horse sense" regarding what is appropriate and "smart" behavior within the organization and what is not. (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 210)

Many of these elements of culture depend on or are directly expressed through language. In the following section, the role of language in culture will be explored and the manifestations of language in organizational culture will be explained.

Use of Language in Cultural Systems

The role of language in cultural systems is a dominant interest in studies of organizational culture, because it is through language that culture is made possible and made visible to others. Each of the definitions of organizational culture incorporates language—in the form of stories, myths, metaphors—into its domain.
To understand the importance anthropologists place on language in the development of culture, a review of the major features of culture as anthropologists view it is in order. Bourguignon has provided a summary of the work of anthropologist A.I. Hallowell, who has outlined six features of what he has called "protoculture" (Bourguignon, 1979, p. 29). Protoculture can develop at any level of the animal kingdom and is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of culture. It consists of six features: forms of learning, socialization of individuals, social structures with role differentiation, transmission of group habits, the use of tools—these may be as simple as leaves used to build nests—and a form of communication (pp. 29-30).

Many groups of animals develop protocultural features and live in social groupings similar to human cultures. However, they lack the key feature which allows culture to develop from protoculture: language. Language allows forms of communication far more complex than the relatively simple messages sent and received by animals.

Language gives humans the "capacity for the symbolic transformation of experience" (p. 39) which allows culture to develop. That capacity allows humans to remember and relay accounts of events, to create new ideas and exchange information about events outside their direct experience. Without language, human culture would not be possible.

Cultural anthropologists have studied the use of language in society, and their work has been the model, either explicit or implicit, for much of the work in the study of organizational culture. Most of the work has included interviewing methods for collecting information
about the language participants use in understanding and describing their experience within organizations.

Few, if any, of the writers trace their interests so carefully as to show the critical role language plays in allowing human culture in general to develop, but they do attempt to show how the particular use of language in a particular setting is different from the general use of language in the society as a whole. The degree of distinction between the general language and the particular language is one indication of the culture of the organization.

**Functions of Organizational Language.** The language that is used in an organizational setting affects participants in four ways which have been identified by Pondy and Mitroff (1979):

- It controls our perceptions; it tends to filter out of conscious experience those events for which terms do not exist in the language.
- It helps to define the meaning of our experiences by categorizing streams of events.
- It influences the ease of communication; one cannot exchange ideas, information, or meanings except as the language permits.
- It provides a channel of social influence. (p. 24)

Given this view of the role of language, the object of research is defined:

We need to study how participants themselves come to evoke categories such as "organization" and "technology" as a means of making sense of their experience. The resulting meanings will frequently be stored in organizational myths and metaphors to provide rationales for both membership and activity in organizations. The creation and use of myths and metaphors in organizations is a worthwhile focus for study. (p. 28)

Studies of organizational culture indicate that organizational culture performs two functions for participants: It gives them words,
labels, and terms to use and it directs their thoughts to certain sub-
jects.

The first function, supplying labels, is important to individuals, be
cause, "When simple terms are made available to individuals who previ-
ously lacked them, they learn to make discriminations more readily than
when such terms are not available to them" (Bourguignon, 1979, p. 209).

The second function is important because it allows individuals to
channel their energies, rather than having to discern what is important
in the organizational environment. Peters and Waterman has noted, for
example, "the limited capacity of decision makers to handle information"
(1982, p. 5), which requires that they set priorities to help them
determine which information they should try to handle. Whether individ-
uals are in organizational decision-making positions or not, without
some sense of what is important in the organization, they are likely to
exhaust their energies or apply them in idiosyncratic ways which may
have little relation to what other participants are doing.

Organizations which do develop systems of distinct language and
symbols benefit from "the power of symbols to engage people in a guided

Peters and Waterman note that in the successful companies they
studied, "We hear stories, perhaps apocryphal, probably not--it doesn't
matter" (1982, p. xii). The stories give life to values, goals, and
purposes of the organization. They explain the way the organization
works and what is considered important in ways that employees' manuals
and management directives never could.
The central role of language is identified in several ways. Myth is used to identify the perhaps-untested assumptions which guide behavior and thought within the organization (Dandridge, Mitroff, & Joyce, 1980; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; and Pondy & Mitroff, 1979). Metaphor is also used, to identify the sometimes complex comparisons and images which members or observers develop to describe organizations (Peters & Waterman, 1982; and Pondy & Mitroff, 1979). Other labels are symbolism (Dandridge, Mitroff, & Joyce, 1980), code (Barley, 1983), rites and rituals (Deal and Kennedy, 1982), and organizational stories (Martin, Feldman, & Sitkin, 1983).

Each term is a way to label or describe the elaboration on basic information which takes place in the organizational setting as people come into contact with one another, share organizational experiences, and attach meaning to their participation in the organization.

In the report of the findings of this research, the discussion will show how people in the four college student organizations studied learn about and share information within the organizations. The explanation members give of the organization and their participation in it reveal the experience the organization has provided them. The evidence also shows how information is transmitted to and received by new members and the effects of poor information systems within the organization.

Limitations in the applicability of organizational culture models

In considering a study of organizational culture, one should be aware of two necessary precautions which are not often identified by the writers describing culture in a particular setting. One precaution is
to remember that not every setting is governed or maintained by cultural norms. Wilkins and Ouchi explain:

Although there are some organizational situations... that approximate the community-like sharing of complex social understandings implied by the ethnographic paradigm, many organizations are socially fragmented. They do not provide the enculturation and social contact that could create a culture specific to the organization. We must therefore be more careful in how we think about organization-specific culture... .

We take the paradigmatic view of culture and call it a clan. We argue that the organization that develops a distinct local culture, or clan, ... will have significant performance efficiencies, but only under certain conditions. We also posit two other forms of organizational governance—the market and the bureaucracy—and suggest the conditions under which they will be more or less efficient than the clan. (Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983, p. 469)

Likewise, precaution is needed when equating culture with organizational success. A number of the major works about particular organization cultures which have been published to this point have explored how culture contributes to the success of major corporations. Peters and Waterman's original criteria for selecting corporations for study were derived from objective measures of organizational success. Thus, they were studying only corporations that had a history of success, and they concluded that the culture of the organization was the major factor in the success. That should not lead to the conclusion that every organization with a distinct culture will be successful or above the average in performance in its field.

Similarly, Deal and Kennedy discuss "strong cultures" within the businesses which are the "leaders in the marketplace" (1982, p. 5). They imply that strong culture is good and leads almost inevitably to success, and that corporations without strong cultures will not be successful.
In light of Wilkins and Ouchi's discussion, one must be aware of criteria and features other than culture to explain success in some settings, such as market mechanisms. Likewise, before assuming that culture and success are always related, one must study organizations which exhibit a distinct culture but which are not leaders in their fields or successful by accepted criteria for success. There are perhaps organizations which survive in spite of dysfunctional cultural patterns, simply because other conditions allow them to continue operating. These organizations may not face significant competition or may have sufficient resources to survive even when organizational practices mitigate against success.

**Summary of Organizational Culture Literature**

Two themes emerge from the literature relating to organizational culture. The first is an interest in studying the process of organizing rather than the product of organizational structures and technology. The second is an interest in how language is used in organizational processes.

Organizational culture is seen as both process and product, with language as the central feature of culture. Those who study organizational culture trace the use of language and the ways members construct meaning from their experiences within the organization. The process of constructing those meanings and the meanings which they develop are the objects of study.

The study of organizational culture, with a focus on process, is particularly appropriate for student organizations, because student
organizations are in an almost constant state of flux as members enter and leave, making methods for studying process extremely useful. Student organizations develop identifiable patterns of meaning and ways of interpreting experiences and the environment, even though membership longevity is short and the organizations is subject to an almost constant influx of influences from new members.

**Organizational Socialization**

One process in the development and maintenance of organizational culture is organizational socialization, "the manner in which the experiences of people learning the ropes of a new organizational position, status, or role are structured for them by others within the organization" (Van Maanen, 1978, p. 19). Organizational socialization is of special interest to student organizations, because of the frequent—indeed, almost constant—changes in membership which occur as new members enter, current members change their level or type of involvement, and graduating members leave. Organizational socialization is most commonly thought of as the process by which new members are incorporated into the organization, but it also refers to the process by which role succession within an organization takes place. Both types of socialization are important for student organizations.

The culture of an organization establishes the pattern for organizational socialization. In turn, the manner in which members are socialized either perpetuates or changes the culture. Socialization begins even before an individual enters an organization, through the expectations created in the recruiting process or from other contact an individual has with the organization prior to achieving membership.
Upon entry, the new member either confirms expectations or experiences unanticipated realities. Either unanticipated positive conditions or unanticipated disappointments can affect the new member's level of involvement or commitment and may affect membership longevity.

When new members enter an organization, socialization may take many forms. Van Maanen (1978) has explained seven "strategies" of socialization. Whether consciously adopted or not, these strategies determine how new members will be incorporated into an organization.

The strategies are identified as:

1. Formal versus informal socialization strategies.
2. Individual versus collective socialization strategies.
3. Sequential versus nonsequential socialization strategies.
4. Fixed versus variable socialization strategies.
5. Tournament versus contest socialization strategies.
7. Investiture versus divestiture socialization strategies.

Formal versus informal strategies. A formal socialization process is one which is segregated from the ongoing activity of the organization, whereas the informal process occurs when the individual is placed in "real" organizational situations. With the possible exception of strictly controlled situations which allow for no individual discretion at all, informal processes will occur within any organization, whether a formal process occurs or not.

During formal processes, new members are set apart from other members. It is possible to teach new members only what the organization
wants them to learn, but once they enter the mainstream of organizational activity, they will be exposed to other facets of the organization than were included in the formal sessions.

Certain student organizations employ formal socialization strategies. Greek "pledge classes" and other new members of organizations who must await an official initiation or induction ceremony are examples of formal socialization groups. Many other organizations, however, simply have sign-up procedures for new members and make no attempt to offer formal socialization into the organization.

Formal socialization processes have both advantages and disadvantages for the organization and new participants. The organization's leaders can decide what will be included in the formal sessions and thereby affect the experience and attitude of new members. This is especially desirable when change is introduced to the organization. If a large enough group of new members accepts the change, old members may not be able to perpetuate previous conditions.

Formal socialization can also make very explicit the requirements of membership and of certain roles within the organization. If informal processes are the only means new members have for learning about the organization, they may have difficulty discerning norms of behavior and the organization's expectations for new members.

A disadvantage of formal socialization is that it can stigmatize new members and make them feel isolated from the other members. Particularly in student organizations, in which new members are also likely to be younger than other members, the isolation can lead to uncertainty about remaining in the organization. Another disadvantage is that
informal socialization which follows (or parallels) the formal processes can contradict the formal process. If peer pressure is greater than the formal learning situation, the informal learning will dominate the new members' thinking.

**Individual versus collective strategies.** Socialization can take place either within groups or individually. Group socialization is relatively efficient for the organization and allows new members to develop a sense of identity with other new members. When homogeneity of experiences and attitudes is desired, group processes are preferable to individual processes. However, when individuality is preferred or the danger exists that new members will develop collective resistance to the socialization process, individual strategies are preferred to group strategies.

When student organizations adopt formal socialization strategies, they most often adopt collective strategies as well. Most organizations receive new members in clusters at certain times in the academic calendar, and they usually complete the formal socialization within a specified term of the calendar. Even within the organizations which do not adopt formal strategies, collective socialization may take place because new members may cluster together.

Newcomb (1966) has explained that small groups are more likely to influence college students to change their attitudes than large populations are. Chickering (1975) has said much the same, that clarity of purpose is a factor of size. Both were referring to university-wide changes in or development of attitude, but the connection to student organizations is clear: within large populations—universities or large
organizations—group identity depends on establishing small groups which have some common ground. Even within an organization which is small relative to the university of which it is a part, members are likely to form "small congenial subgroups" (Newcomb, 1966, p. 13). If these subgroups are formed by the organization for new members who enter together, the organization has some control over the development of the attitudes and behaviors of new members, and the new members have the experience of being part of a larger organization.

Sequential versus nonsequential strategies. Sequential strategies contain discrete stages which must be accomplished for individuals to move through stages in the socialization process. Often these stages are directed by different members of the organization, which means that they must be coordinated so that conflicting information is not given.

In Van Maanen's discussion, "compartmentalized" or "cumulative" might be more accurate terms to use than "sequential," because Van Maanen has included in this category programs which are not cumulative, and therefore not truly sequential. In his discussion, nonsequential programs are those which take place in one transitional stage, rather than those which take place in random order. Both compartmentalization and a cumulative presentation are important factors in socialization.

Since student organizations have few roles which require formal training in specialized skills, they will probably have few cumulative stages of socialization. They may, however, compartmentalize some of the learning tasks for new members. Various officers within an organization might be asked to instruct new members in matters pertaining to each office. When this is done, one result can be that different
officers give different information in related areas, so the organization must decide whether compartmentalization of information requires coordination.

**Fixed versus variable strategies.** Some strategies incorporate a timetable to which all new members adhere during the socialization process. These fixed schedules provide clear knowledge of the time allotted to complete requirements, whereas variable schedules fluctuate with the performance of the new member. Thus, fixed schedules do not instill a sense of competition among new members, as the variable schedules do, but variable schedules allow the socialization leaders to use the schedule as a reward system for achievers.

Most student organizations adopt a fixed schedule, based on the academic calendar. In combination with formal, collective, and sequential strategies, the fixed schedule clearly identifies what new members must do, by when, and under what conditions.

The fixed schedule can become a problem for students who fail to meet one or more of the requirements. For instance, in organizations which establish a grade requirement for initiation, a student may complete all other requirements with a group of other new members but fail to make the qualifying grade. Many organizations, particularly Greek organizations, allow the member to retain some association with the organization until the grade requirement is met, but the member is not afforded full membership status. Isolation of the member becomes a problem, since official socialization requirements are completed but full participation is not allowed.
Tournament versus contest strategies. When new members are clustered among themselves into small groups and are required to compete in prescribed "tracks," they are said to be in tournament strategies. Winners advance to the next level of competition and losers drop out. Contest strategies, on the other hand, allow the new members to choose their areas of competition. Rather than competing against others in their group, as they must in tournament strategies, they may develop support groups to cheer each other on in their chosen pursuits.

Tournament strategies are similar to the idea of "sponsored mobility" (Turner, 1961), or ascribed condition, in which someone other than the individual assigns the individual to a status. The individual has little choice but to compete under the terms which are determined by someone else. One who is sponsored or assigned to the "elite" must compete with others in the same track, whereas one who is assigned to a lower status group may never have the opportunity to compete with the elite for elite rewards.

Contest strategies are more open to individual effort from the outset. The individual selects areas in which to compete and does not face the prospect of elimination from competition if initial efforts fail.

Very few student organizations consciously employ tournament strategies. The American ideals of the self-made success story and of democratic processes resist the implications of tournaments or ascribed processes. There are examples, however, of individuals' being "tracked" according to early achievements. Honor organizations for underclass students select members on the basis of very limited evidence of
success, but upperclass organizations often credit students for being successful if they have been members of the underclass organization. The system often gives attention to a handful of students who are noticed early in their career and progress "up the ladder" of student organization recognition. This process is not confined to a single organization, but it may affect the socialization which occurs within organizations which are historically included in the system.

**Serial versus disjunctive strategies.** Serial strategies are those which provide a mentor or model for new members who are about to assume a particular position. Disjunctive strategies are those which do not provide for one-on-one "grooming" of newcomers for particular positions.

Because of the turnover within student organizations, there is seldom time for concentrated training to be given by incumbents to successors in their positions. Outgoing officers either graduate, leave the organization for some other reason, or assume a new office to which they devote attention. There is also the attitude within some organizations, that the newly elected officer should have the opportunity to carry out the duties of the office without "interference" from the outgoing officer.

**Investiture versus divestiture strategies.** Investiture processes allow individual newcomers to the organization to emphasize and use their strengths and personal characteristics, whereas divestiture processes seek to eliminate certain characteristics, at least during the socialization period. Investiture often accompanies ascendance to a particular role, whereas divestiture is often used to make a group of new members appear more uniform and less appealing as individuals.
Student organizations have been criticized for their divestiture practices on occasion. Greek organizations which have practiced "hazing" have used divestiture practices, seeking to reduce individuality in the name of group cohesiveness. Even when hazing is not involved, organizations may use other techniques to reduce individuality for a time and promote group identity. Wearing matching clothes or insignia, traveling as a group, and meeting other group requirements are practices some organizations establish for new members in the early stages of membership.

On the other hand, if an organization makes any effort to individualize the socialization process, investiture may be a means which is used. Any process which recognizes and encourages individual achievement and supports individual effort is a form of investiture. Often the two practices are combined, in an effort to achieve desired levels of group identity but reward outstanding individual behavior at the same time. Organizations may establish rewards and recognition systems for investiture, but one basis for the rewards may be the extent to which the individual becomes a "team player."

Summary of Socialization Strategies

The socialization strategies may be combined in a number of ways, and the extent to which they are applied will vary within different organizations. The choices an organization makes about the strategies it will use are related to the culture within the organization, including the clarity of that culture for its members. For instance, if the culture stresses individuality and members firmly believe in supporting individuality, collective strategies of socialization are less likely to
be employed than individual strategies. If collective strategies are thought to be necessary, the loss of individuality which they may cause is likely to be mitigated by other practices in the course of socialization, such as investiture or variable schedules.

Each form of socialization is present to some extent within the organizations in this study. As the material is presented, the socialization processes used will be described. The impact of those processes will be explored when the implications of organizational culture are discussed.

Summary of Organizational Literature and Its Applications to College Student Organizations

Applying organizational literature to college student organizations requires that the nature of student organizations be explained and explored. Certain topics within the literature are more germane than others, particularly those which consider processes within diverse organizations. The characteristics of student organizations have been presented as the topics have been explained, and attention has been focused on the ways the literature can aid in understanding college student organizations.

In the section that follows, the treatment of student organizations in student personnel literature is explored. This study is an extension of previous work which introduced the concept of culture within student organizations but left the concept unexplored.
Student Organizations in Student Personnel Literature

Early student personnel literature and other histories of higher education have described the development of college student organizations. Dating from colonial times, student organizations have operated on college and university campus, and their contributions have been discussed by higher education historians such as Frederick Rudolph (1962) and student personnel writers such as Esther Lloyd-Jones and Margaret R. Smith (1938), Kate Mueller (1961), and E.G. Williamson (1961). Such writers have reported the development and operation of student organizations and have discussed in general terms the role of the organizations on the campus, the type of activities they have provided for students, and the relationship between student organizations and student personnel professionals. However, the manner in which student organizations have operated has not often been explored in the literature of the field.

Student personnel as a profession has its roots in the guidance and counseling movement and has long been oriented toward individual development. In one of the major works in the field following World War II, Lloyd-Jones and Smith (1954) have given insight into the interests of student personnel, in the process revealing one reason that student organizations have received so little attention.

If it is true, as cultural anthropology seems to show, that personality is almost infinitely modifiable in terms of the roles society permits or assigns the person to play and thus to learn, then the sort of society that exists on a college campus itself must be seen as one of the influences most powerfully affecting each person's concept of who (one) is, what abilities (one) possesses, and for what ends (one) might most profitably try to use those abilities. (pp. 336-337)
Student personnel professionals have focused on the "infinitely modifiable" personality in their research and in the professional literature. Almost overlooked have been the "roles" and the "sort of society" which influence and guide individual development and behavior.

The student personnel literature which does discuss student organizations and activities is often directed toward particular populations or specific issues. Within the professional journals in the field, legal issues pertinent to student organizations have received the greatest attention in recent years. Another frequent topic of journal articles is discussion of how organizations can support special populations, such as adult/returning students, minorities, and handicapped students. In either type of article, the means by which the organization's operations can be understood are less important to the article than the outcomes of those operations.

An instrumental interest in student activities is also evident in recent books which are at least somewhat concerned with student organizations. Miller and Jones (1981) have discussed "Out-of-Class Activities," but have focused on what such activities can do for students who participate, not on how the participation is accomplished. They discuss the need for student self-direction, career planning, social relations, leadership development, volunteer service, cultural participation, recreational activities, and athletic programs, but they do not directly discuss how student organizations contribute to meeting such needs.

In Roberts' book (1981), mentioned previously, student leadership programs are discussed. The needs of special populations and how to meet those needs through leadership programs are presented, with some
explanation of how the special populations differ from the traditional student body. However, the programs which are presented are designed for settings apart from the natural context of the organizations or populations for which they are intended, and the programs are designed specifically for leadership training. No effort is made to explain or explore how the special populations operate within their own organizations. In fact, the existence of separate organizations is not discussed in detail except in chapters about Greek organizations and student governments. Thus, the discussion about special populations is only tangentially related to a general consideration of college student organizations.

Organizational Culture in College Student Organization Literature

There is a body of literature which recognizes and explores the development of organizational culture within college student groups. The need to study the impact of the campus culture on students was identified in the early days of the field by Sutherland (1949), when he said that such studies would reveal the effect upon human growth and social development of the existing group arrangements, traditions, residence living, instruction, employment, techniques of exclusion, rejection, and acceptance—in brief, the effects of the culture-impact upon the new student. (p. 353)

There is little evidence that Sutherland sparked widespread interest in studies of campus culture but some work since he wrote demonstrates how campuses can be understood as cultural systems.

The most specific application of cultural concepts to student organizations is Leemon's Rites of Passage of a Student Culture (1972).
Leemon lived with a college fraternity during the pledge period one year, observing how new members entered the fraternity, how initiated members treated them, what activities the pledges went through, and how they were prepared for initiation. Leemon made specific comparisons to tribal rites of passage, specifically separation, transition, and incorporation rites by which boys are initiated into manhood. He found analogous activities in the fraternity pledgeship and initiation, and he concluded that activities within the pledge program and the initiation served purposes for the fraternity which tribal rites served for African tribes.

Other writers who have discussed culture on the college campus have not focused so directly on a distinct organization. Many refer to the "student culture" in general, without attempting to discern the culture of individual organizations. Clark and Trow (1966) divided the campus into "subcultures," identifying them as Academic, Collegiate, Vocational, and Nonconformist. According to this typology, an individual student would be considered a member of a subculture on the strength of attitudes toward identity with college and involvement with ideas.

At large, diverse universities, students' preferences account for the subculture in which they are included. At smaller colleges, there may be a pervasive attitude which influences all students. Clark (1970) has called these the "distinctive colleges" and has traced how change occurs for individual students who attend such colleges.

Chickering (1975) used the term loosely when he referred to the sphere of relations into which an individual student enters as the "general culture" for that student (p. 264). He has offered no
definition, but has discussed culture as if he took for granted that such a sphere of relations can be called a culture. He has assumed the presence of cultures or subcultures without explaining how they develop. He has imposed conditions which are necessary to the development: small size and reference groups within housing arrangements are said to be necessary. That begs the question of how cultural patterns develop within aggregates who do not live together and which are larger than Chickering's undefined "small."

Both Chickering and Clark have adopted the use of a term which falls within the traditional domain of anthropology and have used it without specifying or limiting the definition of culture which they believe to be applicable. Given the various definitions used in anthropological literature, such a lack of specificity is unfortunate. Nevertheless, they have shown that it is possible for ideas about culture to be applied to the college campus. This study will explore ways in which culture can be defined and how culture is manifested within student organizations.

Summary of the Review of Literature

This study, taking as its object of interest college student organizations and the cultures which such organizations develop, must draw on several sources of literature, none of which is directly applicable to college student organizations, but all of which provide some insight into the nature of the organizations.

The most helpful literature is that which allows for comparisons among many diverse organizations. The models which were discussed
sensitize an observer to the most important features and conditions in an organization's existence. The idea of organizational culture introduces the observer to patterns and processes which more static models of organizations do not take into account and cannot explain. Organizational socialization is one of the many processes within organizations which is affected by organizational culture. Socialization is particularly important for college student organizations because of the frequent influx of new members and the shifting of roles as members leave the organization. Student personnel literature has given little attention to student organizations' operations, but the application of cultural models is congruent with previous work.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods on which this study is based and identifies the particular methods incorporated into the research design. A general description of ethnography and ethnographic methods is given in the first section of the chapter, and the manner in which those methods were applied in this study of organizational culture is discussed in the second part of the chapter.

Much of the literature on organizational culture is the result of qualitative research, conducted in the natural context of organizations. Although many of the writers cited in the previous chapter, such as Peters and Waterman, Pondy and Mitroff, and Deal and Kennedy, are not trained as anthropologists, much of their work has been based on traditional anthropological research methods. In anthropology, a trained observer enters a context, usually one vastly different from the observer's native environment, and becomes a "naive" observer, questioning all aspects of behavior, speech, social structure, and life in general in the context of study. The researcher's intentional naivete is based on a desire to avoid ethnocentric evaluations, that is, evaluations of the culture being studied in terms of the researcher's native culture. By examining patterns and relationships, the researcher seeks to understand the culture being studied as the natives of that culture understand it
and to develop ways of describing the culture so that others can understand it as well.

Anthropological methods have been adopted by students of organizational culture partly because the methods focus the researcher's attention on participants' perspectives on the organization and allow the observer to discover features of the context which are important to participants. Whereas other forms of research generally begin with categories for which evidence is collected, anthropological methods are designed to elicit categories of language, behavior, and other phenomena of social life which occur naturally in the context being studied.

In anthropological methods, the researcher becomes the instrument, and routine occurrences become the research material.

Anthropologists have always believed that human phenomena can best be understood by procedures that are primarily sensitive to context, be it situational, social, or cultural. Our methods are primarily unobtrusive, non-reactive ones; we observe, we participate, we learn, hopefully we understand. We rarely experiment, and then only under special conditions. This is our unspoken paradigm and it is directly at odds with the discovery of truth by experimentation which, at least as many anthropologists see it, ignores context and creates reaction. (Edgerton, cited in Spindler, 1978, pp. 633-634)

Ethnography and Ethnographers

The specific type of anthropological research associated with studying a group in its natural context is ethnography, the charting of human behavior.

The methods of ethnography, primarily participant observation and ethnographic interviewing, produce information about "the behaviors and the beliefs, understandings, attitudes, and values they imply, of a
group of interacting people. Thus an ethnography is a description of the way of life, or culture, of a society" (Berreman, 1968, p. 337).

In order to gather such information from a group in its natural context, the ethnographer becomes the instrument of research. By observing, participating, and interviewing, the ethnographer collects information about the context, the individuals, and the processes which characterize the group. This work requires training and the development of skills and techniques. Berreman (1968) has identified the attributes of a good ethnographer:

Of crucial importance is a sense of perspective: the ability to distinguish the important from the unimportant, the inevitable from the results of choice, the part from the whole, the self from society. This entails an ability to see oneself and one's society with insight and a sense of objectivity or detachment. An aspect of this, I think, is a kind of generic skepticism. (p. 341)

Additional qualities the ethnographer must have are flexibility, adaptability, open-mindedness, a willingness to exchange information about oneself, ability to listen, energy, determination, persistence, curiosity, and "a sense of the problematic" (Berreman, 1968, pp. 342-343). Equipped with these qualities, the ethnographer enters the context of study.

Designing an Ethnographic Project

The design of an ethnographic research project is based on four considerations: a) selection of an appropriate setting for the research, b) selection of bases for observations and questions, c) application of appropriate research methods, and d) an awareness of potential problems. The ethnographer must design the project so that adequate
information will be gathered in an appropriate manner and from appropriate sources. Each setting will vary, so that the amount of information that adequately reveals a phenomenon in one setting may not be sufficient in another, or the number and types of sources needed may vary. The scope of the project and the nature of the setting will contribute to decisions about the design of the project.

Before a project begins, the investigator must consider such topics as the type of observations to be made, the setting for observations, procedures for selecting the persons and events which will be observed, the role the observer will take within the setting, and how to record observations (Whiting & Whiting, 1970, pp. 286-292).

Preliminary decisions about each of these topics guide the design of the research. Adjustments are possible as the research progresses, but the basic plan can be set at the beginning of the project.

**Selecting an Ethnographic Setting**

As with any research, the success of an ethnographic project depends on the researcher's access to information. James Spradley (1980) has described the ethnographic research cycle. The scope of the project may be large or small, but each ethnographic cycle will consist of selecting an ethnographic project, asking ethnographic questions, collecting ethnographic data, making an ethnographic record, analyzing ethnographic data, and writing an ethnography (p. 29).

Spradley and McCurdy (1980) have set forth a set of questions to be used in the first step of the cycle, selecting a project. A project
will consist of "cultural scenes," about which these questions must be asked to determine if the scene is acceptable and accessible (p. 357).

The questions they pose help the ethnographer determine the likelihood of collecting adequate material to complete the ethnography. If an affirmative answer can be given for most of the questions, the ethnographer can expect to be successful in collecting material:

- Is the cultural scene accessible in that I can enter, make observations, or find an informant for interviews?
- Does the informant I would interview have a thorough knowledge from at least one or two years of experience in this cultural scene?
- Is this cultural scene unfamiliar to me? (When a scene is too familiar, you already have put on some cultural blinders that make research difficult.)
- Is this cultural scene one that I can study now, or is my potential informant currently involved in it?
- Will my informant have adequate time or can I gain access to observe for at least several hours each week?
- Do I need permission to study this scene and, if so, can I gain that permission easily?
- Is my informant willing and interested to teach me his or her cultural knowledge? (Spradley & McCurdy, 1980, pp. 357-358)

The answers to these questions help the ethnographer grasp the scope of the project and anticipate situations which will arise during the research.

**Bases of Observations and Questions**

A design for ethnographic research prepares the investigator to enter the setting and collect ethnographic material. The research methods require that the investigator set aside pre-conceived notions about what the research will reveal. However, the investigator will not
enter the scene with a completely unformed or undifferentiated idea about the research setting, but will review previous work and will be informed by ideas which have application to the research setting selected.

Ethnographic research may be designed to pursue many research interests. One ethnographer may wish to chart kinship systems, whereas another will be interested in the rites of passage from childhood to adulthood. Whatever the interests, the ethnographer enters the cultural scene with a plan for studying it and some idea of the early questions which must be asked.

For the study of student organization culture, two sources from the literature of ethnographic research provide a means of organizing or directing observations and questions, while still allowing the context to reveal the categories of meaning it contains for participants. Other sources than these two might well be appropriate, but these are both formally grounded in ethnography and easily related to organizational studies.

Model of Psycho-Cultural Development

The first model is derived from the Whiting and Whiting Children of Six Cultures study (1975). They developed a model which is intended to take into account both the elements of culture and the causal relationships of culture which contribute to and result in cultural systems. Their study was based in settings far removed from the campuses of United States universities, but their model can be adequately applied to
any group setting in which socialization and the development of a group culture occur.


Environmental elements, such as climate and terrain, interact with historical elements, such as borrowings from other groups or inventions. These in turn lead to the development of maintenance systems: subsistence patterns, means of production, social structure, division of labor, law and social control, to name a few.

These characteristics of the group lead to conditions which affect and mold individuals. The child's learning environment is an outgrowth of the first three elements and includes the settings occupied, the tasks assigned, and the characteristics of the adults, such as teachers and caretakers, who come in contact with the children.

This learning environment contributes to both innate and learned personal characteristics of infants and adults. The innate characteristics of infants, their needs, drives, and capacities, are affected by the learning environment and in turn lead to the learned characteristics of the adult, such as behavioral styles, skills and abilities, and value priorities.

Finally, all elements, as they are shared by all members of the culture, lead to the development of projective expressive systems, including religion, ritual and ceremony, and games and play.
The same scheme of development can be applied to college student organizations and can provide questions from which to consider what happens to a student who enters a student organization, as well as how the group handles elements of its life under the circumstances it faces. Appropriate questions might be asked for each element of the Whiting model:

Environment. What factors of size, location, weather and architecture have a direct impact on the student organization? What special feature in the environment, if any, is necessary for the existence of the organization? How would the organization be changed if the environment were different?

History. What elements of the group's history are its members aware of and what effect does the history have? Does the effect come from within the group or does it come from outside?

Maintenance Systems. How does the group attract new members? How does it support itself? What are the patterns of activities on which the group relies?

Learning Environment. (college student's, not child's) How does a new member learn the group's procedures? How does a member learn a new role? From whom do members learn? Are learning situations distinguished from other activities?

Innate and Learned Personal Characteristics. What interests, skills, needs, or drives does the group seek or accept in members? How much does the group affect the new member? How much does the member affect the group?
Projective Expressive Systems. How do traditions develop? How may they be changed by members? How informal or formal are rituals? What is the extent of participation in rituals? To what extent do members understand or attach meaning to rituals? What purposes does the group serve? For whom? What purposes are not served? What degree of participation do members give, and what degree are they allowed? How does the group sanction members and for what reasons?

By applying this model to a college student organization, one can detect the dynamic quality of the group, as an entity always in a state of becoming rather than a state of being. The questions can be answered at one point in the group's life, but they are never settled.

Given this model as a guide for forming preliminary questions, the investigator can enter the setting with an idea of what to look for within the group and what to ask the members about during interviews. Individual informants may have experiences with only a small range of the group's history or activities, but they can be representative of the possibilities within the group, of how things might be for everyone. A single informant would be asked for personal opinions and reactions, with the individual responses adding up to a picture of what the group as a whole is like. How it got to be that way and how or whether it can be changed can be speculated upon by members and researcher alike.

Descriptive Question Matrix

A second guide from ethnographic literature which can provide questions to use in studying college student organizations is James Spradley's Descriptive Question Matrix (1980, pp. 82-83). Spradley has identified nine significant features of a setting: space, object, acts,
activities, events, time, actors, goals, and feelings. By crossing each feature with the others, 81 descriptive questions are derived which can be applied to any setting or group. These questions can guide the researcher in both participant observation and interviewing. The Descriptive Question Matrix is shown in Table 1.

These questions also remind the investigator of the need to maintain the attitude of intentional naivete which is the underpinning for good ethnographic research. Spradley and McCurdy (1980) have described how this happens:

> When you ask descriptive questions, you pretend you are a stranger from the planet Mars without any knowledge of what people do, say, or make. This helps to keep you from overlooking the familiar. (p. 358)

Forcing oneself to examine what seems to be familiar is especially important in settings which are similar to each other on the surface, but different in their underlying patterns, as is the case in college student organizations. The research in this study showed that student organizations "borrow" ideas from each other, with one organization planning activities or establishing structures similar to those in another organization. However, the purposes, usefulness, and manner of implementing ideas in each organization will differ as the organizational cultures differ. Therefore, the researcher must be careful to observe the occurrences in each organization, avoiding the mistake of assuming that the meaning of an occurrence in one organization will be the same as the meaning of the same or similar occurrence in another organization.
Table 1
Descriptive Question Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPACE</th>
<th>OBJECT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTOR</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>FEELING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPACE</td>
<td>Can you describe in detail all the places?</td>
<td>What are all the places that objects are used in?</td>
<td>What are all the ways space is organized by objects?</td>
<td>What are all the ways objects are used in activities?</td>
<td>What are all the ways space is organized by events?</td>
<td>What spatial changes occur over time?</td>
<td>What are all the ways objects are used by actors?</td>
<td>What are all the ways space is associated with feelings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECT</td>
<td>Where are objects located?</td>
<td>Can you describe in detail all the objects?</td>
<td>What are all the ways objects are used in acts?</td>
<td>How are objects used at different times?</td>
<td>What are all the ways objects are used at different times?</td>
<td>How are objects used in seeking goals?</td>
<td>What are all the ways objects evoke feelings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Where do acts occur?</td>
<td>How do acts incorporate the use of objects?</td>
<td>Can you describe in detail all the acts?</td>
<td>How are acts performed by actors?</td>
<td>How are acts performed by actors?</td>
<td>How are objects used to goals?</td>
<td>What are all the ways objects evoke feelings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>What are all the places activities occur?</td>
<td>What are all the ways activities are organized by objects?</td>
<td>What are all the ways activities incorporate acts?</td>
<td>What are all the ways activities are organized by events?</td>
<td>What are all the ways activities vary at different times?</td>
<td>What are all the ways activities are involved in actors?</td>
<td>What are all the ways activities involve feelings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
<td>What are all the places events occur?</td>
<td>What are all the ways events incorporate objects?</td>
<td>What are all the ways events incorporate acts?</td>
<td>Can you describe in detail all the events?</td>
<td>How do events occur over time? Is there any sequence?</td>
<td>How do events involve the various actors?</td>
<td>How do events involve feelings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>Where do time periods occur?</td>
<td>What are all the ways time affects objects?</td>
<td>How do acts fall into time periods?</td>
<td>How do acts fall into time periods?</td>
<td>Can you describe in detail all the time periods?</td>
<td>When are the times actors are &quot;on stage&quot;?</td>
<td>How are goals related to time periods?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTOR</td>
<td>Where do actors place themselves?</td>
<td>What are all the ways actors use objects?</td>
<td>How are actors involved in activities?</td>
<td>How are actors involved in different times?</td>
<td>Can you describe in detail all the actors?</td>
<td>Which actors are linked to which goals?</td>
<td>What are the feelings experienced by actors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL</td>
<td>Where are goals sought and achieved?</td>
<td>What are all the ways goals involve use of objects?</td>
<td>What activities are goal seeking or linked to goals?</td>
<td>Which goals are scheduled for which times?</td>
<td>How do the various goals affect the various actors?</td>
<td>Can you describe in detail all the goals?</td>
<td>What are all the ways goals evoke feelings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEELING</td>
<td>Where do the various feeling states occur?</td>
<td>What feelings lead to the use of objects?</td>
<td>What are all the ways feelings affect acts?</td>
<td>What are all the ways feelings affect events?</td>
<td>How are feelings related to various time periods?</td>
<td>What are the ways feelings involve actors?</td>
<td>What are the ways feelings influence goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnographic Research Methods

The two methods most frequently associated with the study of groups in a natural context are participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. Each method can be used in a variety of settings, to gather many different forms of research material, for a number of research purposes. The general form and use for each method is explained in this section, and the particular applications of the methods in this study will be described in the section following the description of the organizations included in the study.

Participant Observation

One of the primary means of gathering information in the natural context is participant observation. The researcher assumes varying degrees of involvement in the setting in order to gather data. The researcher's experience in the setting is significantly different from that of other participants, as Spradley (1980) has noted. He has identified six differences which the researcher must keep in mind. First, the researcher knows that participation in the group serves two purposes, that of engaging in activities as well as that of observing other participants and the setting for the activities. The researcher is also explicitly aware of as many features of the activity as possible, unlike the participant who blocks out much information to avoid overload. Similarly, the researcher adopts a "wide-angle lens" to take in aspects of the situation which may seem unrelated to the participant. Fourth, the researcher must experience the same situation simultaneously from both an "insider" and an "outsider" perspective, while participants experience only the insider perspective. Fifth, the researcher must be
more introspective about experiences, whereas the participant often takes them for granted. Finally, the researcher must keep records of the experience, unlike any that participants would keep. The six elements add up to make the research, or participant observer, experience significantly different from that of the ordinary participant. Table 2 illustrates the categories of differences which Spradley has discussed.

Although there will always be some degree of difference between a researcher doing participant observation and the participants in a

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of participation</td>
<td>a. Learning</td>
<td>a. Doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Conscious awareness</td>
<td>b. Not self-conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of detail</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of observations</td>
<td>&quot;wide-angle lens&quot; (will focus closely during individual observations, but scope of research is wide)</td>
<td>Focused on particular activity most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status as insider/outsider in the setting</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Insider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on experiences</td>
<td>Reflect on all experiences</td>
<td>Usually do not reflect on routine experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording behavior</td>
<td>Record all possible behaviors and observations, either during or soon after</td>
<td>Do not record most behaviors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
setting, the researcher's task can be accomplished from several perspectives which combine varying degrees of participation and observation. Both Junker (1960) and Spradley (1980) have discussed the progression from full observation to full participation. Junker (1960) has offered a model which identifies four perspectives, ranging from complete observation to complete participation (p. 36). An adaptation of the model appears in Table 3.

Junker's emphasis is on the social role of the researcher in relation to the people in the research setting. His discussion centers on the level of awareness group members have of the research and the researcher's depth of involvement with the group.

As Junker has described the observation-in-order-to-observe role, which he labeled Complete Observer (p. 37), the observer is completely removed from the participants. Understanding the situation as participants experience it is not possible in this role, nor is it a goal, but

### Table 3

Adaptation of Junker's Model of Social Roles for Field Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparative Detachment:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comparative Involvement:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objectivity and empathy</td>
<td>subjectivity and sympathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O/O</td>
<td>P/O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation in order to observe</td>
<td>Participation (Observer as Participant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from *Field Work* (p. 36) by Buford H. Junker, 1960, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Copyright 1960 by the University of Chicago Press.
information can be collected which can contribute to understanding the general situation. Junker stated that this role does not occur in natural settings, that it is "more imaginary than real or possible" (p. 38), but the discussion of Spradley's model will show that it is possible for a researcher to observe some portion of a group's activities without the group members' being aware of the researcher's presence.

The next level Junker described is that of participant-in-order-to-observe, or Observer as Participant (p. 37). In this role, the observation activities are not hidden as they are during Complete Observation. Both the researcher and participants are aware of the research activity and must develop the conditions under which information will be shared and reported.

The common denominator in the above roles is observation. The nature of the researcher's role changes when the purpose of the research shifts from observation to participation. The observer-in-order-to-participate role, which Junker called Participant as Observer (p. 36), is one in which the researcher keeps the purpose of the research somewhat hidden while being present in the setting, so that participation by the researcher is possible. Participation is the goal, and observations allow the researcher to learn how to participate. The level of participation is less than in Complete Participation, particularly in secret matters within the group, but the researcher relates more closely to the group members than in either of the roles in which observation is the purpose.
The fourth role is that of participant-in-order-to-participate, or Complete Participant (p. 35). In this role, as Junker described it, the researcher conceals the research activities and acts as much as possible like a member of the group being studied. Junker stated that such participation is difficult for three reasons: (a) the researcher may have trouble achieving status as an insider; (b) the researcher may have difficulty observing how the "in-group system" (p. 35) operates within the larger social system; and (c) when the researcher reports observations, participants may see the researcher as a spy or traitor.

These four levels or roles for participant observation reveal some of the issues which arise when there are different levels of involvement between the participants and the researcher. Spradley (1980) broadened the scope in his model and considered the researcher's degree of involvement with both the participants and the activities within the setting. He has offered five categories of participant observation, with greater distinctions among the five classifications than among the four developed by Junker. The basic interest in understanding the issues involved as the researcher shifts from observation to participation remains the same. Table 4 describes Spradley's five categories.

The categories developed by Spradley range from nonparticipation to full participation. Nonparticipation (p. 59) is reliant on observation alone. The observer is somehow separated from the activity, as a viewer watching television, and does not interact at all with participants.

Passive participation (p. 59) occurs when the observer is present but does not participate or interact. This is especially possible in
public places, where bystanders may be present without intruding on activities or behaviors. On the college campus there are many opportunities to be a passive participant, watching faculty and students as they move about the campus or congregate in hallways or cafeterias.

Moderate participation (p. 60) is an entry level to participation. This could be described as participating in order to observe, taking

Table 4

Categories of Researcher's Roles in Participant Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Passive Participation</th>
<th>Moderate Participation</th>
<th>Active Participation</th>
<th>Complete Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>observation; no contact</td>
<td>frequent contact, but without depth of exploration of participants' perspective</td>
<td>participation, with depth of reflection at time of participation</td>
<td>participation from insider's perspective; little or no reflection or exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researchers and participants</td>
<td>researcher observes what insiders do, does not talk with them about what they do</td>
<td>researcher observes and talks with insiders about what they do</td>
<td>researcher does what insiders do and talks with them about it</td>
<td>researcher does what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outsiders</td>
<td>outsider</td>
<td>insider</td>
<td>insider</td>
<td>insider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researcher observes what insiders do, does not talk with them about what they do</td>
<td>researcher observes and talks with insiders about what they do</td>
<td>researcher does what insiders do and talks with them about it</td>
<td>researcher does what</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

just enough of an active role as a participant to avoid being conspicuous by not participating.

Active participation (p. 60) has the observer become involved in what the group is doing in order to learn more completely what it is like to be a member of the group. The observer will observe in order to participate, in order to catch the cues needed to participate successfully. Active participation allows the observer to feel what it is like to do the things group members do.

Complete participation (p. 61) is the closest possible involvement for the observer. This is participation for the sake of participation, in which the observer already knows the rules of the situation and reflects upon the experience only after the experience is completed.

Selecting levels of participation. Each level of participation can serve a purpose in a research project. The lower levels are useful for the early stages of research or when some new activity occurs, when the observer must gather as much information as possible in order to understand the scope of an activity. Higher levels of participation give the observer the opportunity to experience what it is like to be a member of the group. The observer needs the freedom to shift from one level to another as activities change, which may be difficult if the group does not understand that the observer's level of participation will vary. The researcher must be sensitive to the group members' need to understand the research process in order to avoid misinterpretations of the researcher's actions and level of participation.

The two middle categories in Junker's model, labeled Observer as Participant and Participant as Observer, correspond to Spradley's middle
three categories, labeled Passive Participation, Moderate Participation, and Active Participation. Junker's two roles more clearly identify the shift from observation to participation as the purpose of research, but Spradley's three categories more clearly identify the gradations in the researcher's actual experience. In this study, the researcher often found it necessary to shift from one level of participation to another in the course of a single contact with the organizations. Spradley's three-stage progression more accurately describes the shifts than do Junker's two stages. In the discussion of the application of research methods, instances will be cited in which the researcher's role changed, and the reasons for selecting a role will be explained.

As participation and observation take place, the researcher must look for patterns within the setting. This happens not only after all the material is gathered and the researcher begins analyzing it. Rather, the search for patterns should guide all stages of the research. Culture, according to Spradley, "refers to the patterns of behavior, artifacts, and knowledge that people have learned or created. Culture is an organization of things, the meaning given by people to objects, places, and activities" (1980, p. 86). By being present and observing activities as they occur in context, the researcher will discern patterns and learn the meaning they have within the culture of the organization.

Ethnographic Interviews

A companion research strategy for participant observation is the ethnographic interview, "a device whereby informants report on their own behavior and the behavior of others, assess its frequency, comment on
its relation to the perception of norms and consider the consequences of deviation from this norm" (Whiting & Whiting, 1970, p. 284).

The ethnographic interview has been used by anthropologists to elicit from informants information about the group or its activities which would not be available through participant observation alone. In turn, participant observation can be used as a means to verify information gathered in the interview process. For many purposes, full understanding of what a group does and what it means to be a part of the group requires the use of both techniques.

Participant observation may give the researcher topics to incorporate into ethnographic interviews. From observations, questions arise, even about seemingly insignificant or self-evident topics. Lofland (1971) has discussed how a "puzzlement" may become a topic of research, as something which the researcher considers a curiosity becomes a basis for further investigation (p. 76). Spradley (1979) has made a similar point in noting that "questions always imply answers. Statements of any kind always imply questions. This is true even when the questions and answers remain unstated. In ethnographic interviewing, both questions and answers must be discovered from informants" (p. 84).

The discovery process can take place in both formal and informal interview settings. Informal interviews (Spradley, 1980, p. 123) are incidental contacts which can occur during participant observation and serve especially to clarify an observation or to provide the researcher with information about the ongoing activities.

Although informal interviews are very common in a research project that involves participant observation, it is the formal ethnographic
interview which has received most of the attention in the literature. In contrast to the informal interview which may take place anywhere and at any time, "a formal interview usually occurs at an appointed time and results from a specific request to hold the interview" (Spradley, 1980, p. 124). It takes place at the initiative of the researcher, who has the major responsibility for setting the direction, tone, and topic.

Questions for the interview may arise from the researcher's observations or from information the informant provides in the course of the interview, always in keeping with the ideal that they be rooted in the setting as the informant knows it, not in the researcher's preconceived ideas.

The researcher may use three basic strategies for questioning: open-ended questions, focused questions, and life histories.

Open-ended questions are frequently used at the start of the research, to give the researcher a basis for further questions. This is an exploratory phase when the researcher knows little about a topic or setting or wants to increase a general understanding of a complex situation (Dobbert, 1982).

The open-ended interview may also be known as a "non-directive interview," in which "the informant is allowed almost completely free rein after the collector has suggested a subject." (Goldstein, 1964, p. 108). This form of questioning encourages spontaneous responses, may reveal affective and value-based thoughts, and may unveil information which the informant would not give in response to a direct question.

Focused questions, or directed interviews, are used to verify or clarify information the researcher already has and to fill in missing
information on a topic (Dobbert, 1982; Goldstein, 1964). The researcher will be much more involved in directing the course of the interview than with open-ended questions, so the likelihood of discovering new information decreases. Directed interviews are most useful in later steps of the research process.

Finally, a special kind of interview which may be very useful in some research processes is the life or career history (Dobbert, 1982). A history can reveal patterns that may be typical to the society or group, and it can add a time dimension which would otherwise not be available in a short-term research project.

The researcher must be aware of the issues involved in selecting persons to interview. In some groups it may be possible to interview all participants, but when that is not possible, the selection of informants should be done with care. Berreman (1968) has discussed the need to select an adequate number of informants, who represent diverse viewpoints within the society. By interviewing a cross-section of the society or organization, the researcher will be better able to avoid bias in the collected material and will be able to determine relationships and patterns which affect different members in different ways.

Combining the Methods

A sound research process will combine the strategies of participant observation and ethnographic interviewing in order to explore the target setting in depth. Zelditch (1970) has provided a useful framework based on the adequacy and efficiency of three methods of obtaining information from a group. The methods complement each other, with each
method compensating for a weakness in another. Table 5 shows Zelditch's comparisons.

Research which is concerned with discovering the range, rather than the frequency, of behaviors and values, will employ participant observation and interviewing. An advantage of observation over interviewing in obtaining information about incidents and histories is that an informant may not have been present at a particular time or might not report the incident accurately. The researcher can use participant observation to verify informants' information and to record events as a trained observer. An advantage of interviewing over observation is that the informant can provide meanings and explanations to events that the researcher would not discover through observation alone.

Table 5
Comparison of Research Methods for Obtaining Types of Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information types</th>
<th>Methods of Obtaining Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enumerations and samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency distributions</td>
<td>Prototype and best form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidents, histories</td>
<td>Not adequate by itself; not efficient form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalized norms and statuses</td>
<td>Adequate but inefficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential Problems of Ethnographic Research

In designing ethnographic research, the researcher should be aware of the potential problems associated with the methods used. By being aware of them, the researcher can take steps to avoid them.

Two principle problems occur with both participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. The first is known generally as the "reactive effect" (Argyris, 1969; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966). The researcher's presence in a setting or the questions posed in an interview are conditions not normally present in the setting, to which participants may react.

The researcher attempts to mitigate the reactive effect in two ways. First, by explaining the purpose of the project clearly and providing information to participants in advance, the researcher can limit the uncertainty which contributes to participants' reactions. Second, by being present in the setting frequently enough, the researcher can begin to "blend in with the scenery," creating less reaction by becoming a familiar part of the scene.

The second potential problem is one of bias, or "biased-viewpoint effect" (Webb et al., 1966). This can occur in participant observation if the researcher observes only certain aspects of organizational activities and fails to see other aspects. It can also occur in interviews, if the researcher interviews only a certain type of participant and excludes others, or if the participants who are interviewed have unique perspectives or experiences to report but the interviewer is unaware of that uniqueness.
The primary protection against biased-viewpoint effects is adequate sampling. If the researcher observes a series of functions and activities of the organization or other research setting, or interviews several members, the effect of any single observation or interview is lessened, thus lessening the likelihood of a biased view affecting overall analysis.

The steps which were taken to avoid these problems when studying each organization in this research will be explained in the discussion of the design of the project.

Designing the Study of Organizational Culture in College Student Organizations

The research design for this study of college student organizations is based on the four considerations identified in earlier discussion: the setting, the bases of investigation, methods, and potential problems. The design and the application of ethnographic methods in the study is presented in the following discussion, beginning with an explanation of how organizations were chosen for the study.

Selection of Organizations

Organizations were selected for study which appeared to "have" or "be" a distinctive culture and which met certain criteria derived from the researcher's framework of student organizations. The characteristics used in the selection of organizations are identified below, and a description of each organization follows.
Organizations were selected which had been functioning on the campus for a number of years so that organizational patterns and practices would have been established before current members joined. The selected organizations had to meet often enough to allow the researcher time to observe the organization in action.

Membership characteristics

The six membership characteristics included in the framework of student organizations are membership pool, membership longevity, access to membership, attracting or recruiting members, intensity of membership involvement, and alumni membership. Two of these characteristics, membership pool and membership longevity, were chosen to be used in the selection of organizations for this study. The characteristics not used in selecting the organizations were evident in each organization, but did not serve as a basis for selection.

Membership pool. The membership pool is the portion of the student population from which members of the organization are drawn. Two ways of dividing the membership pool were considered in selecting the organizations for the study.

First, the range of academic fields of students was considered. Each organization selected may contain members from any undergraduate academic discipline. No organization located within a single discipline or college was selected.

Second, the academic classification of members was a consideration. Two organizations admit members of any academic classification, that is, at any time during the student's enrollment from freshman year
to senior year, whereas the other two limit membership to students who are in a specified academic class.

Membership longevity. Organizations which differ in the length of active membership were selected for the study. Among the membership characteristics, membership longevity is a factor which clearly separates student organizations from most of the organizations discussed in the literature on organizational culture.

Membership longevity in the selected organizations ranges from a maximum of one year in two of the organizations to an indefinite period in the other two.

Characteristics not included. The other membership characteristics were not directly considered in the selection of organizations, although elements of each characteristic will be noted during the discussion. Information about the two characteristics chosen was available for each of the organizations before the study began, whereas information on the other characteristics was collected during the study and will be discussed as each organization is described.

Governance Characteristics

Student organizations differ in their affiliation with national organizations, the degree of alumni involvement in their governance, and the extent of university involvement with their activities. For this study, only local organizations, those that do not have an affiliation with a national structure, were selected. This eliminated the need to determine the degree of national influence on the organization, making comparisons of responses to local conditions easier. The degree of alumni and institutional involvement for each organization was not known
in detail when the organizations were selected and did not influence the selection.

Description of the Selected Organizations

Four student organizations were selected for study. Each operates on the campus of a major state university in the Midwest, a campus which lists over 500 student organizations. Each organization had to agree to allow the researcher to observe the activities of the organization, make records available as needed, and agree to allow members to give interviews about their experiences within the organization. The description of each organization and the manner in which the research began within each is described below.

Class Honorary A

Class honorary A is an underclass organization with selective membership. The stated criteria for membership are academic achievement, defined as approximately a 2.7 average on a 4.0 scale, and leadership. College grades are used to determine academic eligibility, but both college and high school activities are considered in selecting members.

Membership in class honorary A begins at the end of one academic year and continues to the end of the next academic year. All members are classified in the same academic class. New members are selected by incumbent members, on the basis of a written application, which applicants complete with information about previous activities and personal statements about their anticipated participation in the organization. Incumbent members review applications without knowing the applicant's name, so selection is based on an evaluation of the applicant's previous
experience, in comparison to the pool of applicants. Membership is limited to a maximum of 30 each year.

Class honorary A was founded over 50 years ago as a single-sex organization. Title IX legislation required the abolition of single-sex organizations in universities receiving federal funds, so the organization began to admit members of the opposite sex in 1976. The group during the period of study was almost equally divided, although only one of the officers was of the gender which had been admitted in 1976.

Along the membership characteristics in the framework of college student organizations, class honorary A was found to be competitive in access to membership, although the pool against which applicants compete is small; dependent on other sources for prompting membership applications, rather than having students seek out the organization; low in membership involvement, either the opportunities for or the requirements for; and low in alumni involvement, although students view themselves as a member for the remainder of their college days, with alumni status. It is not known whether alumni status is considered to continue beyond college.

Access for the study. Access to the organization for this study was gained by conferring with the president and the advisor, who each approved the project, and by presenting the idea to members, who voted to accept the project. No restrictions were placed on the type of meetings or activities of the organization which were open to the researcher. The president accepted the research idea enthusiastically, equating the project to a service project for the university, thereby fulfilling one of the organization's purposes by participating.
The organization scheduled meetings every two weeks, but actual meetings were held only three times during the quarter this study was conducted.

Class Honorary B

Class honorary B was included in the project because of its similarity to honorary A and to allow comparisons between the two. The membership qualifications, term of membership, purposes, and formal structures are virtually identical. Honorary B was founded over 50 years ago as a counterpart to A, so that there were two single-sex honoraries for the academic class, one for men and one for women. Unlike A, honorary B's membership remains almost completely segregated, although it is officially open to both genders. Only three members of the sex which was admitted to membership in 1976 were selected for the group which participated in this study, and of those three, only one attended meetings and participated to any degree.

Except for the difference in the integration of both sexes into the traditionally single-sex organizations, with A being fully integrated and B being virtually unintegrated, there are no major differences in the formal structures, purposes, and membership experiences between honoraries A and B. Although each starts out the year with approximately 30 members, each experiences a sharp drop in members' participation after the quarter in which members are selected. Honorary A experienced more of a drop than did B, but each of them had fewer than half of the original members participating during the quarter this study was conducted, the last quarter of membership before new members were to be selected.
Access for the study. Entrance into honorary B for this study was somewhat more difficult than into A. The president accepted the idea initially, but without enthusiasm. The advisor's reaction was similar. When the idea was first presented to the members, the members in attendance decided that there were not enough people present to vote on the idea, so the decision was delayed until the following meeting. When they did vote, approval was given and the president sounded less uncertain about the idea than had initially been the case. Access to the organization did not prove to be a problem. The organization scheduled meetings every two weeks and met as scheduled except for one meeting which was canceled.

Sport Club

The Sport Club is a recreational club, established in 1973, for people who are interested in the sport for which the organization is named or, as the study revealed, who are looking for a social organization to join. The organization is open to any person, including graduate students and non-students, who completes a membership card and pays annual fees of $12. The membership card includes a waiver of liability clause which releases the organization from liability if the member is injured while on an outing or involved in an activity sponsored by the organization.

Members may join the organization at any time during their association with the university and at any time during the academic year. Most members join early in the academic year, although a large number join in the winter to become eligible to attend a spring break trip sponsored by the organization.
The organization attracts members through advertising and when those who have been members invite their friends to join.

The intensity of involvement members have with the organization varies greatly. Those who seek involvement may devote most of their free time to the organization, while those who are interested only in the social activities or the trips the organization sponsors may participate infrequently. The organization places no involvement stipulations on its members.

Members must rejoin the organization each year and may remain a member as long as they choose to pay the fees. Those who have graduated but remain in the area are welcome to continue to participate in the organization, but there is no provision for alumni membership as such.

Access for the study. The president received the request to conduct this study and discussed the idea with other officers. They agreed to allow the researcher to attend meetings of the organization and parties sponsored by the organization at local bars after each general meeting. Officers' meetings were not freely open to the researcher, but the officers agreed to be interviewed and had no objections to other members' being interviewed.

The organization met weekly, with a party following each meeting. All meetings were held as scheduled, although some lasted fewer than 20 minutes before they were adjourned for the party.

Unlike either of the class honoraries, the Sport Club has an office in the student union on campus. Officers maintain office hours, and members can conduct business there, such as registration for trips
or ordering items from the organization. Several of the interviews for this study were held in the organization's office.

**Service Organization**

The Service Organization is an incorporated organization which has as its primary purpose service to the university. Membership is limited to 50, of whom 36 are students and 14 are faculty or administrators. Alumni are eligible for one of the 14 non-student memberships, but no alumni who were not also on the staff of the university were members at the time of this study. Student members may enter the organization upon completing at least two quarters in residence on the main campus of the university and fulfilling other membership requirements, including planning a service project and presenting the plans to a membership committee. The process of entering the organization will be described in greater detail in the presentation of the findings.

Student members remain active from the time they are admitted to membership until they graduate. Most members enter during the junior year, but may enter as early as the end of the freshman year. There are provisions for resignation, inactive status, and alumni status, but most of the students remain active until they leave the university.

Faculty and administrative members are selected for three-year terms and may serve consecutive terms. The faculty advisor for the organization is a member of the organization, and the faculty treasurer serves as an officer, but all other officers and chair positions in committees are held by student members.
The Service Organization was founded as a single-sex organization nearly 50 years earlier, but membership was opened to both sexes in 1973 and membership is now fully integrated.

Although the organization is structured to allow for 36 student members, there have not been 36 active at any time in the memory of the current members. Since members may be admitted at any time during the year, membership figures vary almost weekly. At the time this study began, there were 16 student members, a number which members considered alarmingly low. Five members were added during the quarter of this study, and others were preparing for the membership interview.

Students seek membership or are sought by members of the organization through personal contacts. The organization does not advertise through the newspaper that membership positions are available, so one who is interested in membership must contact a member, or, more often, one who appears to have the attributes the organization seeks is contacted by a member and invited to consider applying for membership and completing the requirements set by the organization.

Members of the Service Organization are intensely involved with it. Both through formal meetings and activities sponsored by the organization and in personal relationships, the Service Organization occupies a great deal of the time and esteem of its members. Most of the student members are involved in other campus activities, but the Service Organization demands and receives a large portion of the members' efforts.

Following graduation, members achieve alumni status and maintain contact with the organization as alumni. For the first three years after graduation, the individual is invited to the annual banquet.
Alumni of the organization also serve on special committees as the need arises. At the time of this study, a special committee was at work trying to raise over $100,000 through alumni for a project on campus to commemorate the organization's fiftieth anniversary, which would occur the following year.

The Service Organization has an office in the student union. Records of previous activities are kept on file there, memorabilia from the organization's history are on display, and meetings of some of the smaller committees or special groups are held there.

Access for the study. The president and advisor of the organization received the initial request for access to the organization for this study and responded favorably. A presentation was made to the members at a weekly meeting, they asked questions about the procedures and the role of the researcher, and they voted to allow the research to be conducted. Details of the study had to be agreed upon the following week, at which time it was decided that the researcher would be allowed to be present for all meetings of the organization, all committee meetings, and all activities. The only restriction placed on the researcher was during membership interviews. At the time a prospective member was being interviewed, the researcher would not be present, the rationale being that the candidate would not be as informed about the research process as should be the case before participating in it. The researcher was present during discussions before and after membership interviews and discussed the procedures for the interviews with both committee members and candidates for membership.
Summary of the Selection of Organizations

There were two primary areas of concern in selecting student organizations to be studied. First, organizations were sought which varied along the characteristics described in the framework of student organizations. Three of those characteristics, two from membership and one from governance, were selected for use as selection criteria.

The second area of concern was access to the type of information which is necessary for a study using ethnographic research methods. Spradley and McCurdy (1980) have provided the questions to ask to determine whether adequate access is available. The key factors they have identified are adequate time to gather material, opportunity to interview qualified informants, and the researcher's ability to gather information without overlooking what is already familiar.

Each of the organizations selected provided an acceptable setting for ethnographic research. The researcher was admitted to meetings, allowed to observe activities, and given the opportunity to interview members of each organization. The amount of information gathered and contact the researcher had with each organization varied, but the time the researcher had with each organization approximated the time members of that organization spend with the organization as well. That is, the fact that honorary A held only three of its scheduled meetings during the quarter of this study limited the amount of contact the researcher had with the organization, but the time the researcher spent with the group matched the time members spent. The researcher adjusted contact with each organization, to make that contact somewhat more equal, by interviewing more in the organizations that met less frequently and
collecting more information through interviews in those groups than in the groups which met more frequently.

**Bases of Observations and Questions**

As discussed previously, the model of psycho-cultural development (Whiting and Whiting, 1975) and the descriptive questions matrix (Spradley, 1980) provided the means of organizing observations and questions. Portions of each model were selected for their relevance to this study.

The following elements of the model of psycho-cultural development were especially helpful in identifying important aspects of the student organizations:

- **History** - the extent of members' awareness of the organization's history; the effect of history on current activities.

- **Maintenance systems** - how members were attracted to the organization; what activities are considered essential for the organization to continue.

- **Learning environment** - how members are incorporated into the organization.

- **Projective expressive systems** - what traditions and rituals are evident; the impact or importance of traditions and rituals.

The descriptive question matrix was especially useful during participant observation. It also gave the investigator "probes" to use during interviews to elicit more information from the members being interviewed. Of the nine elements identified by Spradley, the two most important ones used in this study were actors and activities. Other elements from the matrix were not dismissed, but they were not as
important as the two which were used. The implicit question in every observation was, "Who is doing what?" The primary activity which was observed in each organization was the regular meeting, which consisted of members speaking to the group as the organization followed an agenda and as members participated in discussion. The topics of the agenda and the types of participation by members were the most important foci of observation.

**Application of Ethnographic Research Methods**

Participant observation and ethnographic interviewing were the primary research methods used in this study. Some information was collected through other means, especially through reviewing written records of the organizations, but most material was gathered through observations and interviews.

Ethnographic methods are useful for research in many types of settings. The particular technique employed is determined by the research setting. For instance, one event in an organization may afford the investigator the opportunity to become a full participant, whereas another event may require that the investigator remain a detached observer. The nature of the event, the stage of the research, and the receptiveness of the participants will contribute to the investigator's decisions about which technique or role to use in each situation.

The particular use of each method and the rationale for such use is explained below. Any circumstances presented by one organization which required some adjustment in the use of the research methods will also be explained.
Participant Observation

Spradley (1980) has identified five types of participant observation: nonparticipation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation, and complete participation. The investigator found that these five categories of participation more clearly identify the roles the investigator took during the research than do the four roles which Junker has identified. Each of the five roles Spradley has identified was used at least once during the research, with the majority of the observation done from the perspective of passive participation, in which the researcher was present on the scene but did not interact with participants, or from moderate participation, in which the researcher interacted with participants enough to avoid conspicuous silence, usually exchanging greetings as meetings began.

Most of the observation was done at scheduled business meetings of the organizations. Each organization convened meetings at regular intervals, the Sport Club and Service Organization weekly and the class honoraries less often. Honorary A's officers reported that they planned meetings every two weeks, but the organization actually met about every three weeks. Honorary B met every two weeks, except for one canceled meeting at the end of the quarter.

For meetings of the Sport Club, members convened in a large auditorium lecture hall in a classroom building. Capacity of the room is approximately 300. Attendance varied from standing-room only to fewer than 30. The investigator's role and presence were not noticeable to the members in general, but the officers privately acknowledged the researcher's presence as they became acquainted.
The investigator's observations during the Sport Club meetings were done in the role of passive participant. The investigator was present in the room, but had almost no contact with members, with one exception. That exception was an informal interview in which a member was asked some questions about how students joined the club, how many events the student attended, and what membership was like. During the informal interview the student agreed to a formal interview, which was conducted later.

The class honoraries met in small meeting rooms in the student union, sometimes in a theater arrangement with chairs only and sometimes in a conference arrangement with tables and chairs. Attendance ranged from 6 to 13 in honorary A, and averaged around 15 in honorary B. In both organizations, the investigator was visible to all participants. Very few members spoke to the investigator either before or after meetings unless the investigator initiated the conversation. At each meeting, the president usually spoke privately to the investigator, usually to exchange greetings. The investigator sometimes approached members after the meetings to schedule times for interviews.

On one occasion a meeting of honorary B provided an opportunity for the investigator to participate actively with the members. The social chairperson had planned an acquaintance activity in which the investigator took part. It was done at the end of a meeting and lasted less than five minutes, but members mingled to talk with each other to collect information for a game. The investigator participated just as the members did in that activity.
Aside from that one activity, virtually all other observation of the three organizations just mentioned occurred as passive participation. The observer was present on the scene and occasionally exchanged greetings with members, but there was very limited interaction, the meeting was conducted as if the investigator were not present, and the investigator's primary activity was taking notes about the meeting and the participants.

The investigator was somewhat more involved with participants in the Service Organization. The weekly meetings of the organization were held in a small private dining room as members ate lunch. Attendance averaged 40 or more, including guests who were invited most weeks. The members interacted with each other much more frequently than was true in the other three organizations, and that frequency of interaction affected the interaction with the researcher. Before and after each meeting, the investigator had conversations with members, with the members often introducing guests to the investigator and explaining the research project. During the meeting itself, the investigator sat among the members, sometimes having one of the members make an explanatory remark as discussion took place. Because of the amount of conversation and explanation the investigator received, the role was more moderate participation than passive participation.

The Service Organization is accustomed to having guests present, especially since potential members are invited to a luncheon to learn more about the organization. The investigator was not treated in the same manner as a guest, however. Guests are given a tour of the organization office during a portion of the meeting, so that they are not in
the room for discussion of membership interviews or of major financial considerations. The investigator was permitted to remain in the room for those discussions during all meetings after the research project had been approved.

**Selecting the level of participation.** The investigator was, on several occasions, faced with choices about the role from which to observe the organizations. The deciding factor in such cases was whether the investigator's participation would change the conditions under which members would participate. In all cases, the role selected was the one in which the investigator anticipated having the least possible effect on the situation.

In class honorary A, no choice situations arose during any meetings. The investigator had brief greetings and conversations with members as they entered and left meetings, and had the opportunity during the meeting to make remarks about the research project. Otherwise, the investigator was a passive participant during all meetings. The organization did not sponsor activities other than meetings during the study.

In class honorary B, the opportunity to participate in other than a passive role came during an acquaintance activity at one of the meetings, which was described earlier. The investigator actively participated in that activity, since the invitation was extended and it was likely that non-participation or passive participation would have been awkward.

Aside from that activity, the investigator had less contact with members of B than with A. The president of B did not ask the
investigator to speak during the meetings, as A's did, and the investiga-
gator had few conversations with members of B as they entered or left
meetings. B did not sponsor activities other than meetings during the
study.

In the Sport Club, there were two types of activities other than
meetings which the investigator observed and which presented choices
regarding the level of participation. The first was weekly parties at
local bars. Because of the difference in age and personality between
the investigator and members, the investigator was not comfortable in
actively participating in the parties. Passive participation in this
case was not based on the effect of the investigator's participation,
but on the investigator's preferences. Such decisions are discussed
under the problems encountered in the research, later in this chapter.

The second activity was the weekly trip the club sponsored.
Because of the lack of space available on the trips, the investigator
was unable to attend with members. The trips were made by bus, and the
investigator observed the members as they arrived and loaded on the bus.
These observations were in a non-participation role, from a building
from which members were unaware of the researcher's presence.

In the Service Organization, the investigator had more contacts
with members outside business meetings than in the meetings. The inves-
tigator's level of participation in these meetings was usually moderate,
active, or complete. During active and complete participation, the
research was not evident to others. For instance, the investigator was
invited to the annual banquet, to which parents, university administra-
tors, and other guests were also invited. Tape-recording and
note-taking in the presence of guests who were not familiar with the research project would have been inappropriate. Therefore, the investigator attended the banquet as a guest, without the tape-recorder or notebook, and made notes about the evening after the banquet.

**Ethnographic Interviews**

Ethnographic interviews were used for many purposes in the research. Both formal and informal interviews were conducted, and a cross-section of each organization was represented among the persons interviewed.

Informal interviews took place in the course of participant observation, particularly in the Service Organization. As an idea was being discussed or a topic arose with which the researcher was unfamiliar, members of the Service Organization would explain some aspect of it to the researcher. Informal interviews also took place when the researcher was scheduling formal interviews with members of each of the organizations. Members would volunteer information about the nature of their participation in the organization.

The majority of the interviews, however, were formal ones. The researcher's goal was to interview both officers and members in all of the organizations, seeking a mix among members of new and old or active and relatively inactive. The interviews were intended both to seek information about the members' perspective on the organization and to explore further the topics which were observed during participant observation. Before each formal interview, the member received an oral and a written explanation of the purpose of the interview, and each member
signed a form which acknowledged understanding the purposes. (See Appendix B for forms used.)

In keeping with the discovery goal, many of the questions were open-ended, but the researcher found that some members needed more direction than others to answer questions. The researcher used some questions with great frequency to provide a common base of information in the materials which were collected. These are discussed in the next section.

Most of the interviews were conducted with just the researcher and one member present. Most took place in the student union, although the researcher did go to residence halls and fraternity or sorority houses for some of the interviews.

At least one interview for each organization was not an individual interview, but was a small group interview instead. From two to four people participated in these small group interviews, and the information collected in that way proved invaluable. Members discussed issues between and among themselves as the researcher listened, and several of the members commented that they were reminded of an experience they had because of the other member's comment.

The researcher used several guidelines in selecting members to be interviewed. The officers in each organization were the first to be approached, and nearly all the officers in all the organizations were eventually interviewed, either individually or in small groups.

To avoid the potential for biased-viewpoint effect, interviews with non-officers were sought as well. In the class honoraries,
interviews with members were especially important because the organizations met less frequently than the Sport Club or Service Organization.

In honorary A, 10 of the members and the advisor were interviewed. Of the 10, five were officers, four considered themselves relatively active without being an officer, and one was virtually inactive. The members interviewed indicated that fewer than half, or 15, members were active, so the 10 who were interviewed represent the majority of the active participants.

In honorary B, 13 members were interviewed, all of whom were relatively active and six of whom held an elected office or committee chair position. They represent about half of the original 31 members and the majority of the approximately 20 members who are reported to be active to some degree.

In the Sport Club and the Service Organization, more information was available through observation than in the class honoraries, so fewer interviews were conducted. Seven members of the Sport Club, including four officers, were interviewed. An additional interview was scheduled, but the member never appeared. Among the more than 1000 members, seven is a minute percentage, but their interviews supplemented observations and represented a range of experience within the organization from two quarters to more than two years.

In the Service Organization, 11 members were interviewed, including one new faculty member, two new student members, three experienced faculty members, four graduating seniors, officers who had completed their terms, new officers, committee chairs, and project chairs. In addition, there were a number of informal interviews and opportunities
to question members during committee meetings and weekly luncheons. The 11 formal interviews represent approximately one-third of the total members, but other research activities allowed the researcher opportunities for personal contact and conversation with all members of the Service Organization.

**Topics for discussion.** The formal interviews in all the organizations included many topics, but two common topics which the researcher introduced into nearly all the interviews provided the basis of comparison among the organizations.

The first topic in virtually every interview was intended to put the member at ease and help open up conversation. Members were asked to tell how they had learned about the organization, what they had known before entering, and how they became a member. Their replies often introduced a number of other topics, which then became the focus of the interview.

The second topic introduced by the researcher, if it had not arisen out of the earlier questions, was the nature of the member's earliest experiences within the organization, the first thing the organization did or the member learned upon entering the group.

Additional topics introduced by the researcher were related to activities of the organization, the members' acquaintance with other members, the members' evaluations of the organization relative to each one's expectations of what membership would be like, and the members' opinions about what the organization could have been doing or should have been doing if it had not met the individual's expectations.
Officers of each of the organizations were asked how they gained office and what differences they observed as an officer than would have been the case for them as members.

All members interviewed were generally cooperative. Only one person scheduled for an interview failed to appear, and members did not appear to be anxious to terminate the interview until the researcher closed it.

In several interviews it was apparent that members were nervous at the outset, but in only two did the member fail to respond openly and spontaneously as the interview progressed. For one of those two individuals, the interview was terminated early. For the other, the content of the interview was analyzed in light of the individual's apparent defensiveness.

It was also revealed in several interviews that some members had discussed the researcher's presence with each other, although the extent of the discussion is not known. The researcher was careful not to display concern or embarrassment about such discussion, but to keep the focus of each interview on the experiences and opinions of the person being interviewed.

**Investigator's effect on the interviews.** Just as the investigator's choices regarding the level of participation in activities can affect situations, the investigator's choices about contributions to or role within an interview can affect an interview. In most of the interviews, the choices did not present a problem, because the investigator was not placed in a position of offering opinions or creating reactions by asking certain questions. In a few instances, however, a subject
would arise to which members would react as if they had not considered the possibilities raised by the questions.

This was particularly true with members of the class honoraries. In several interviews, members said, "I've never thought of it like that," or something to that effect. By asking them to think about topics which they would not have considered otherwise, the investigator was creating conditions which were not already present in the organization. For instance, one of the honoraries had normally interpreted "service projects" to mean volunteering time to aid physically disabled persons in some way. During the course of an interview, a member began to talk about the organization's being an academic organization that could do a service project to promote good scholarship among other students. The member then looked thoughtful and commented that that idea had not been discussed before. The investigator had to choose whether to pursue the idea in the interview or not, and decided not to because of not wanting to affect the amount of attention given to a new idea. Parenthetically, there was no indication during the remainder of the research that the member discussed the idea with anyone else in the organization or attempted in any way to consider how to implement the idea.

Tapes and Note-Taking

During each meeting, activity, and interview, as the circumstances permitted, the investigator made an audiotape and took notes. If circumstances did not permit taping or note-taking, as at the Service Organization banquet mentioned previously, the investigator recorded recollections as soon after the event as possible.
For each interview, the investigator asked the member for permission to record the interview. With few exceptions the member appeared not to notice the tape-recorder during the interview. During meetings which were recorded, the investigator held the recorder, so that some members saw it, but its use was not announced.

The researcher also was prepared to take notes during each interview. Interview notes usually consisted of only one word or phrase, about which further questions would be asked. During many interviews, no notes were taken.

During observation of organizational meetings, both tapes and notes were made when circumstances allowed. Tapes were made to preserve actual discussion, but notes were needed to record details of the physical setting, identify speakers, and describe activities.

The tapes of all meetings and interviews were transcribed onto forms prepared for the research by the investigator. (See Appendix B for forms used.) The forms were color-coded: yellow for meetings, blue for interviews, and pink for notes and analyses the investigator made as the project progressed. Materials were reviewed and analyzed periodically, so that topics which appeared early in the research were explored further in later contact.

Timetable for the Study

The study was conducted during a 10-week academic quarter. Although 10 weeks is a relatively short time for an ethnographic study, it represents more than one-third of the active membership experience of the members within each organization. The quarter chosen was the last full quarter of membership for the class honorary members and the
quarter in which new officers were elected in both the Sport Club and the Service Organization.

The goal for the research was to schedule at least one contact with each organization during the first two weeks of the quarter and an average of two contacts per week for the next seven weeks, leaving the final week to allow adjustments in the schedule and final contacts with each organization. A contact was defined as a meeting attended or an interview conducted, including any extensive conversations, whether scheduled as an interview or not.

The average was achieved in three of the four organizations. In the fourth one, the organization did not follow the meeting schedule which officers had reported to the researcher, so some opportunities for contact did not occur.

Contacts were approximately equally divided between participant observation and interviewing, although relatively more interviews were conducted with members of the honoraries, to compensate for their meeting less frequently than the other two organizations.

Procedures for Analysis of Material

Periodically as the research was being conducted and then again at the end of the research, all the notes were reviewed. The tapes were replayed and compared to the notes after all material had been transcribed and reviewed. The analysis of the material and the development of the framework within which the findings would be presented was then done.
Identifying Topics

The notes from each organization were read and topics which appeared in the notes were identified: The investigator used an index-card system in which a single topic was written on each card and coded to indicate from which organization it had been noted. Each time a new topic appeared it was noted on a separate card. This process was repeated for each organization and produced a set of topics which could be compared to the topics which had appeared in each of the other organizations.

The topics which were noted within each organization were studied and compared. The comparisons revealed many categories which were common to all four organizations, as well as some which appeared in some combination of the organizations but not in all. For example, the role of the advisor was discussed and noted within all organizations, but the use of written documents (minutes, constitutions, or reports) was not discussed by members of one of the organizations. When the analysis was done, the absence of the use of documentation in the one organization was compared with the use of documentation in the other three organizations. Both topics common to all organizations and topics which did not appear in all organizations were retained for analysis. In the analysis, it was found that some topics pertained to the class honoraries and not the Sport Club or Service Organization, and vice versa. Those topics were also retained.

Developing Categories for Analysis

After the topics identified within each organization were compared, the investigator studied the groupings and developed clusters of
related topics. These clusters led in turn to the development of categories which provide the basis of discussion in Chapter IV.

There was not a pre-conceived set of categories into which the information from the organizations was arranged. Rather, similarities among topics which had been identified in the initial analysis were noted. The investigator repeated the process of comparing topics, asking about each one, "What does this topic have in common with each other topic, and how is it different?"

The comparison process produced numerous related clusters, many of which had an underlying theme: The knowledge or beliefs one holds about an organization at a particular stage of membership determine in large part what one's experience as a member of the organization will be. From that theme, three categories emerged which have been incorporated into a framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs. This framework will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter IV, but its essential elements or categories are the participants' stages of membership, the perspectives from which the organization is viewed, and the bases of knowledge and beliefs about the organization.

The culture of each organization can be described and explained in terms of the three categories of the framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs. When an organizational issue arises, such as the use of documentation or the role of social activities, the framework can be used to reveal the elements of the organizational culture which affect the organization's response to such topics. The manner in which this is done will be discussed in Chapter IV.
Review of original research material. After the framework was
developed, the investigator reviewed the original research material and
identified particular quotations, descriptions and other examples from
the material which would support the framework of organizational knowl-
edge and beliefs. The discussion in Chapter IV combines the partici-
pants' examples with the investigator's framework. The analysis is
based on the examples and opinions of participants as much as possible.
The implications the investigator draws are offered in Chapter V, not in
the presentation of the findings in Chapter IV.

Problems Encountered in the Research Process

There were few, if any, problems encountered in the research
process which could not be corrected. The procedures worked well with
each of the organizations, and adjustments were made when necessary.
The two areas of concern which the investigator became aware of and ad-
justed for were the amount of contact which could be achieved with each
organization and the researcher's ability to collect information in a
variety of settings, given the background and personality of the re-
searcher.

Contact with Organizations

The problem of having adequate contact with each organization
required the researcher to exert greater effort with three organizations
and purposefully decline opportunities in the fourth.

With both class honoraries, scheduling contact was somewhat diffi-
cult. As was previously mentioned, honorary A met only three times
during the quarter, although there would have been five meetings had the
announced plans been followed. In order to compensate for the low number of meetings, the investigator sought more interviews. These were scheduled with no great difficulty, but with more than one of the members, the interview was the first contact between the member and the researcher. Having previous information about the project might have put the members more at ease.

The other difficulty with having to schedule so many interviews was that they required more of the researcher's time than did meetings, contributing to problems in collecting information, which will be discussed below.

In honorary B, the interviews supplemented adequate information from the observation of meetings, but extra interviews were needed to investigate certain topics which arose. As will be discussed in the findings, there turned out to be a division in the organization between the members and officers, particularly the president. Additional interviews were necessary to determine the extent of this division and its effects, and to avoid the problems of biased viewpoint because of poor sampling.

In the Sport Club, the anonymity of members was a problem. The project itself was approved by the officers of the club, but the overwhelming majority of the members knew nothing about it. Approaching members at random before or after meetings to request interviews was difficult for the researcher. Four interviews were scheduled in such fashion, but only three were conducted because the fourth failed to keep the appointment. Other interviews were scheduled with persons who were in the Sport Club office at a time when the researcher was present.
Since only a small number of members go to the office, the persons who were interviewed may not represent an adequate cross-section of all members. It was decided to discuss and analyze the experience of those who participate regularly in the administrative aspects of the organization, rather than try to generalize to the more than 1000 members.

A problem of a very different nature developed in the Service Organization. All members of that organization were aware of the project and became acquainted with the researcher. They frequently invited the researcher to committee meetings, projects, and other events of the organization. A conscious decision had to be made to limit the amount of contact with the Service Organization, in order to allow time to create contact opportunities with the other organizations.

**Investigator's Role in the Process**

The second major concern during the research was the role of the investigator. Two factors contributed to the concern, the energy required for ethnographic research and the researcher's personality.

The energy requirement was the more serious of the two concerns. An intense involvement and concentration is needed to conduct ethnographic research. Interviews and meetings averaged between 45 minutes and one hour in length, during which time the researcher had to constantly maintain the questioning, skeptical stance of an ethnographer. Concentration of that sort is difficult to maintain on a regular basis over the course of a project such as this.

In addition to the time spent in interviews or meetings, more time was required for transcription and analysis. Since this needed to be done as the research was conducted, the energy demands remained high.
even when there were not multiple contact with organizations on a given day.

Pacing and patience were the remedies to the energy problem. The researcher sought to maintain a steady pace, even if that meant that analysis did not keep pace with collecting information. Even when analysis lagged behind collection, enough analysis could be done for the researcher to be attuned to developing patterns in the materials.

The second problem was more subtle, but no less important. The personal experiences and values of the researcher are a part of any ethnographic study, but their effects must be recognized and dealt with. In this study, the investigator's personality and experiences made the research process easier in some regards and more difficult in others.

On the difficult side, there were problems in regard to each of the organizations. The class honoraries were particularly difficult, because of the researcher's previous experience with similar organizations on other campuses. The members of the class honoraries reported great frustration at the ineffectiveness and disappointment they experienced with the organization, a frustration shared by the researcher. There were many times when the researcher, who had had experience advising similar organizations at another university, was tempted to offer suggestions rather than collect information about the existing conditions. Affecting the conditions of the setting being studied is a danger for any ethnographer, which the ethnographer should avoid if possible. Thus, remaining an observer rather than becoming a critic or advisor was a difficult task. The researcher is not aware of any instance when the effort was not successful, however.
The Sport Club presented another difficulty for the researcher. As the findings will show, a major attraction of the Sport Club for its members is its partying and socializing. Many of the club activities revolve around alcohol and occur in bars or similar settings. This was not known to the researcher at the time the organization was selected for study. Because of an age difference and different social interests, the party settings were uncomfortable for the investigator. While not placing a value judgement on the participants, the researcher could not comfortably enter such settings and successfully conduct research observations. The researcher did observe the organization under party conditions, but most of the information about the party nature of the organization was gleaned from interviews.

The Service Organization presented a problem of a different sort. The investigator's personal interests and level of involvement with service activities closely parallel those of many of the members of the Service Organization. In addition, members of the organization frequently approached the investigator to volunteer for interviews or to invite the investigator to committee meetings or activities of the organization. The investigator had to make a conscious effort to limit the number of contacts with the Service Organization in order to allow time for contacts with the other organizations. In addition, the investigator had to maintain an inquisitive attitude appropriate for the research, rather than allow a natural affinity for the organization to obscure the investigation.

The research methods selected for this study allowed the investigator some flexibility when problems arose during contact with the
organizations. Since participant observation allows for varying degrees of involvement with participants and activities, the investigator was able to adjust consciously to the situation and base decisions about participation on the models for participant-observation. Spradley's five-stage model was particularly useful in such situations.

For instance, when the class honoraries presented situations in which the investigator was tempted to offer advice, as discussed previously, the investigator consciously maintained the role of passive participant, to limit the possibility of affecting the situation. Passive participation also allowed the investigator to be present in a party setting with the Sport Club, without having to take part. In the first case, the role helped the researcher avoid "contaminating" the research, whereas in the second case, the role allowed the researcher to adapt personally to the research.

In contact with the Service Organization, the model for participant observation allowed the investigator to be aware of shifts in roles as the situation changed. On several occasions the investigator achieved complete participation, as if the research project were not being conducted. Only after the event did the investigator make notes and review the experience from a researcher's perspective. On other occasions, the investigator had a choice about being a passive, moderate, or active participant, and the model aided the investigator in making an informed choice about which role would be best for the situation.

When such choices are made, some of the implications are known in advance. For instance, one who remains a passive participant throughout
a research project will not be able to achieve a full participant's understanding of the situation. Conversely, one who is a full participant cannot achieve an outsider's detachment which allows for comparisons and evaluations. The choices that are made about which role to take should coincide with the purposes of the research.

On the positive side of the effects of the researcher's personality, some situations were made easier. The researcher established rapport easily with almost all the participants with whom there was contact during the research. Particularly during interviews, the researcher was able to put nervous students at ease.

In addition, the researcher's personality allowed for easy transitions from one role of participant observation to another. A sense of perspective which allowed the researcher to understand when more or less participation was appropriate and would be comfortable for the participants enabled the investigator to shift roles easily as situations and activities required.

**Summary of the Methodology**

The ethnographic methods used for this research proved to be very productive in revealing the culture within the four student organizations which were studied. The methods allowed the researcher flexibility in responding to particular situations presented in each organization. Patterns of culture became apparent and the researcher was able to gather important information and gain insight into each organization.
The results of the study, reported in the following chapter, indicate that the methods were useful for both discovery of patterns and exploration of ideas which arose early in the research.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS IN THE STUDY

This study was prompted by the assumption that the concept of organizational culture would be useful in understanding college student organizations, and that research methods from cultural anthropology—participant observation and ethnographic interviewing—would allow the researcher to discern the culture within an organization, the elements of that culture, and how organizational culture develops in student organizations.

Organizations have a structure and a history within which members carry out the activities of the organization. Current activities and behavior are shaped in some ways by what members know of what has been done previously in the organization. They may know fully and follow closely the precedents of the organization, or they may know only dimly and set a new course. Actions are based on the knowledge participants have and the interpretations they make as they perpetuate the organization. The perspective or frame of reference within which they learn and enact the organization is the organizational culture.

This study provides evidence of the organizational culture within four college student organizations. Each of the organizations faces many common situations and shares features, by virtue of being on the same campus and operating under similar external conditions. However,
the responses of each organization to each situation are developed within different organizational cultures and, thus, are different in ways that can be explained when the organizational culture is understood.

This discussion will identify topics relevant to organizational culture that were discovered in the research, will present evidence from each organization regarding that topic, and will explore the implications of the topic for the organization, including what problems or positive outcomes appear to result from the organizational response to each. Materials collected during the research consist of observations of organizational meetings and activities, and of interviews with organizational members and advisors. As discussed in the methodology chapter, observations and interviews were basically unstructured. In a few instances, an interviewee was selected to discuss a particular topic, but all interviewees also discussed the organization in general.

The selected research methods were used to observe each organization in its natural context and to have members discuss their experiences within the organization in an open-ended, unstructured format. Topics which arose during an interview or during observation of the organization provided the bases for questions.

From the observations of organizational meetings and the interviews, many examples of organizational behavior and organizational culture were noted. From the perspective of the participants, each piece of information may seem idiosyncratic and unrelated to other events. However, when all the information is considered in context, patterns and relationships can be identified.
The major finding of this study is that organizational culture depends on and evolves from the knowledge and beliefs members have about the organization and the ways they acquire and act on their knowledge and beliefs within established organizational patterns. These patterns, which, the evidence shows, members begin learning even before they enter the organization, constitute the organizational culture. Organizations with very similar formal structures may be enacted in vastly different ways, depending on the patterns which contribute to members' attitudes and expectations and into which those attitudes and expectations are channeled.

These patterns contain but are more inclusive than the formal structures of the organization. It must be stated that one cannot overlook the presence of formal organizational structures in any study of organizations. By definition, an organization is a set of formal patterns and relationships. In order to understand how an organization operates, one must attend to the structure. For instance, to identify accurately who participates in given activities of the organization, one must know the formal positions of those being observed. Thus, it is important to know if certain participants are officers who have prescribed means of participating in certain situations or if they are members at large acting without such guidelines.

What is shown in the evidence from this study, however, is that members interpret the formal structures just as they do other facets of organizational life. Members' knowledge of and beliefs about
organizational structure are just one aspect of their knowledge and beliefs about the organization in general.

**Organizational Knowledge and Beliefs Defined**

The label, *organizational knowledge and beliefs*, as it is used in this discussion, is intended to include the broad body of facts, thoughts, and assumptions which individual members apply to an organization, as well as the information and opinions shared by participants which affect the collective life of the organization.

Important issues which relate to organizational knowledge and beliefs are what the knowledge and beliefs are, who has them, the sources from which they come, the accuracy of an individual's knowledge in relation to other members, the extent of common or shared knowledge or beliefs within the organization, and the effect of knowledge or beliefs on individuals and on the organization. Organizational knowledge and beliefs affect who the participants are, what their attitudes toward the organization are, and what they will do as members of the organization, as well as what the organization as a whole will set as its agenda.

Members' organizational knowledge and beliefs are important to the organization because organizational actions and formal structures must be perceived, interpreted, and enacted by members. This discussion will describe how that happens.

Much of what individuals "know" is composed of what they take for granted and assume to be true. These unexamined assumptions are acted upon as if they were true, and, in a cyclical process, they become real for both the individual and the organization. Members may explicitly
learn or be taught organizational knowledge and beliefs through an orientation period established by the organization, or the learning may take place informally and without any mechanism established within the organization. They may recognize the learning process as it takes place or be unaware of it. An observer may be able to identify both the explicit and the tacit processes by which members "learn the organization" and how that learning affects behavior within the organization.

Framework for Organizational Knowledge and Beliefs

As the material from this study was analyzed, a framework for organizational knowledge and beliefs came into focus. The framework contains three categories: the stages in which members experience the organization, the perspectives from which the organization can be viewed, and the bases of the knowledge and beliefs about the organization. The framework is shown in Table 6.

This framework allows the observer to organize observations on knowledge and beliefs in organizations, identify how knowledge and beliefs develop, and describe the effects they have on individuals and on the organizations.

Stages of Membership

The three stages of membership pertinent to this study are Pre-Membership, New Membership, and Established Membership. The length and characteristics of each stage will vary among organizations, depending on when a student becomes eligible for membership, how membership is achieved, and the expected length of membership. The stages of
Table 6

FRAMEWORK OF ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE OF MEMBERSHIP</th>
<th>PERSPECTIVE ON ORGANIZATION</th>
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<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fact</td>
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<td>Pre-Membership</td>
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<td>Established Membership</td>
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membership are important in understanding who has information about the organization and when that information is useful.

**Pre-Membership** is any time before an individual has made a commitment to join or has been accepted for membership by the organization. In some organizations, a formal application by an individual and a formal vote by the membership is required before the individual will be admitted to the organization. Membership criteria for these organizations must be met by the individual.

In other organizations, an individual may become a member merely by attending a meeting and, usually, paying membership fees.

**New Membership** is the period, after entry into the organization, during which a new member may be expected to be learning about the organization and is not expected to take any active role in running the organization. This period may extend to a year if the organization relies on long-term members for its leadership.

An organization which accepts members from all academic classes is likely to rely on upperclass students for leadership, whereas freshmen and sophomores may be considered "new" members several months after they join the organization. On the other hand, an organization which limits membership to one year has a very short time during which an individual who has recently entered the organization is considered "new." Members of those organizations are expected to act as established members almost from the moment of entry.

**Established Membership** begins as soon as the individual is no longer considered "new," a period which varies in proportion to the total length of membership time available to an individual. One who
enters a one-year organization is no longer new when the previous year's group has turned over responsibility of the organization to the incoming members, at least not insofar as the responsibility for running the organization is concerned. In another organization, it might be necessary to be a new member for a year or more before other members view the individual as an established member.

**Perspectives on the Organization**

Three perspectives are also pertinent to the understanding of organizational knowledge and beliefs. These are the individual, the organizational or collective, and the systemic perspectives. In understanding how organizational knowledge and beliefs are used in an organization, the perspective serves two functions. First, it illuminates the sources of influence on behavior within the organization, especially by identifying who initiates organizational activities. Thus, for example, one examining the organization from the individual perspective would examine whether individuals provide the impetus for activity or wait for someone to direct them. Second, by examining knowledge and beliefs from different perspectives, one is able to determine the extent of consensus within and about the organization, by examining whether individual perspectives are congruent with organizational and systemic perspectives.

The *individual perspective* is that from which the participants' perspective is sought or understood. One can determine what an individual must do to find information about the organization, what an
individual's reactions are to the organization, and what the individual's role is within the organization.

The organizational or collective perspective is the perspective from which shared knowledge and beliefs may be discovered, as well as the perspective from which the influence of formal structures within the organization may be best understood. When "the organization" is said to do something or operate in some way, it should be understood that individuals—established members, to use the terminology of this framework—within the organization, acting in concert with each other or within established organizational patterns which they have learned, are acting as they believe is appropriate within the organization.

The system within which the organization operates is defined as any element of the external environment which in some ways affects the organization. Portions of the environment are in some direct way in contact with student organizations and may either support or constrain the organization. Within the framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs, the system should be seen as anything which is not specifically an individual participant or an organizational feature which affects knowledge or attitudes about the organization.

Bases of Organizational Knowledge and Beliefs

The third category of the framework is the basis of knowledge and beliefs. Three bases were found in the organizations studied, ranging from strictly factual to very interpretive or speculative. The three bases are facts, opinions, and assumptions.
Facts are verifiable from sources outside the person or organization. Most facts affecting student organizations are subject to some interpretation, as they are in any situation. How an organization uses available facts and the facts which members consider pertinent to the organization are determined in large part by the organizational culture.

Opinions, which are based on the interpretation of available information (facts), are the basis for much organizational and individual behavior. Different opinions may arise from the same information, but the basic information on which opinions are based is readily verifiable.

Assumptions, which are apparently unexamined and untested, are formed without direct consideration of available information. An individual or organization holding a belief based on an assumption is likely to cite a verifiable fact as the basis of that assumption, but the assumption is generally one or two interpretation processes away from the fact.

An example from the research illustrates the manner in which the three bases of knowledge and beliefs operate within organizations. The Sport Club sponsors regular social activities, both at bars in the campus area and on trips the club takes. The fact behind the decision to sponsor parties is that many college students go to bars and parties for their social activities. The opinion of those who decide the Sport Club will sponsor parties is that students will enjoy the parties the club sponsors and, so, will become and remain members of the Sport Club to attend the parties. The assumption, as one officer reported, is that if the Sport Club did not sponsor the parties, "no one would join" the
club. Although the club has sponsored other activities, such as intramural sports teams, the dominant assumption is that parties are the key to success and that without the parties, the club would lose most of its members. That assumption has not been tested, and will not be so long as the current officers are using the same rationale for decisions, but it guides the decisions those officers make.

In the context of this study, recognizing the bases of organizational knowledge and beliefs is critical to recognizing organizational culture. The culture influences the interpretation of facts, and also influences which facts the organization and its members consider pertinent to their activities and interests. It is a matter of interpretation to identify a particular belief as either opinion or assumption, since different interpretations of the facts in a situation can lead to different conclusions. Rather than attempt to distinguish among the bases of knowledge and beliefs during the presentation of each stage of membership, the researcher will summarize them briefly during the discussion and explore them at greater depth during a discussion of each organizational culture.

**Presentation of the Findings**

Within the framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs, different issues are highlighted when elements from the categories are juxtaposed. This discussion will use the framework as an outline, beginning with the Pre-Membership stage and examining the organizations from each perspective—individual, organizational, and systemic—and in light of the knowledge and beliefs that are apparent during each stage.
For each stage, issues which arise for the organization and for individuals within it will be presented, after which the common issues and the differences among organizations in the stage will be discussed.

Following discussion of all organizations in the Pre-Membership stage, the same format will be used for the New Membership and Established Membership stages.

**Issues during Pre-Membership**

The evidence shows that the knowledge and beliefs which prospective members have about the organization are important in affecting who enters the organization and what the attitudes and expectations of members will be regarding the organization.

For the organizations in this study, the amount and accuracy of the information available to prospective members varies widely. In turn, the information available was found to affect the opinions and expectations of individuals as they entered the organizations, creating conditions which then affect the organization in attracting members, in incorporating new members into the organization, and in deciding on and carrying out the purpose of the organization.

In the Pre-Membership stage, the two most important issues for individuals are awareness of the organization and opinion about the nature of membership. These two issues were found to vary widely among the four organizations studied.

**Pre-Membership in the Class Honoraries**

The class honoraries are comprised of underclass students who are selected for membership in the spring of one year and are active members
during the following academic year. Prospective members must be nomi-
nated, with self-nominations accepted. Applications are sent to those
ominated, with a standard application form used for all sophomore and
junior honoraries. New members are selected by the current members on
the basis of their grades and activities.

The issues facing the two class honoraries in this study are so
similar that the two organizations will be discussed together.

Individual perspective. Knowledge about the organization from the
individual perspective prior to membership in the class honoraries was
found to be very limited among the members interviewed. They were asked
to tell how they found out about the organization, what they knew about
it, and why they applied for membership.

Most of the members reported that they had been told by someone
else that they "should" apply, that it would be a good organization in
which to become involved. According to the members, some of the people
who had told them about the organization were friends from the residence
halls, Greek organizations, or classes, and instructors in honors cours-
es in the general enrollment college for underclass students. Some
members saw signs posted on campus and were prompted to apply. Although
there were advertisements of the application procedures in the student
newspaper, none of the members mentioned them as a source of informa-
tion.

The members who applied because someone else advised them to were
usually told little about the organization's activities and purposes,
and they reported doing little to seek information. Their knowledge
about the organization was very limited, but they believed the advice
that it would be "good" for them to apply and acted on that advice without seeking or receiving much additional information.

One member reported that a friend who encouraged her to apply "never really defined what it did. . . . She just said it would be a good organization for me to get involved in."

Another member was asked how much information about the organization was known at the time of the application and replied:

Not too much, actually. I'd just, I think I had seen signs. My roommate is in it, too, so we applied together. . . . We both had seen signs and I had heard of them, you know. They have different names, they have different class honoraries, you know, and stuff. . . . I had heard the names, you know, and I had heard of them and stuff, but I really wasn't, I didn't really know that much about it other than that. . . . I went over and got an application and filled it out and turned it in, you know, and everything, but I didn't know, like, you know, other than the fact that it was like recognition. Besides that I didn't really know that much about it.

The same member later said the organization seemed to compare to National Honor Society from high school, in which "we didn't really do anything," and expected the same thing in the college honorary. Others also reported making the comparison to National Honor Society, and the information provided by the organization did nothing to give prospective members any other idea about what either of the class honoraries would be like.

Organizational perspective. From the organizational perspective, the issues to be considered are what the organization does to identify qualified students to nominate, what it does to make itself known so that students will self-nominate, and what kind of information is made available to prospective members.
The paradox in the class honoraries is that, although members in both organizations report that one of the main purposes of their organization is to select new members, neither organization takes an active role in attracting and informing prospective members about the organization. There is a membership selection officer in each organization, but that person does not begin to work on the selection process until after applications have been turned in by prospective members. In one of the two honoraries, at the last meeting before all applications were due the individual responsible for membership selection procedures had not been formally appointed, and there was uncertainty among the members present at that meeting over who had indicated interest in the position at an earlier meeting.

As it was outlined by several members and discussed in organizational meetings, the selection process in both organizations should proceed along the following lines. First, the coordinating body for class honoraries, which is composed of representatives of seven university-wide class honoraries, sets the nomination period. Students who meet the grade point requirements must be nominated in order to receive an application, although they may self-nominate. The coordinating body is responsible for advertising the nomination period and procedures, which is done primarily through the student newspaper. That group also receives the nominations and mails out application forms to nominees.

The prospective members in each class at this university, from freshmen to juniors, have two organizations between which to choose, and a student may apply to only one of the two. Because both organizations in this study have the same membership requirements, the student must
make the choice on the basis of whatever information or advice is available. The organizations receive completed applications through the coordinating body and then begin their review and selection processes.

Under the process as outlined, the individual organization has virtually no opportunity to provide prospective members information about itself. Two means of reaching prospects were mentioned during the nomination period, but no formal organizational actions were taken to implement the ideas.

The first idea mentioned was for members to nominate anyone they thought would be eligible and to encourage those nominated to complete the application and return it. This word-of-mouth system had been the major source of information when the members who were interviewed were in the Pre-Membership stage. It limits the organization to contacting only those students who are known well enough by members that the members will think to talk about the process and the organization. It also means that the organization must rely on its members to act on behalf of the organization.

The second idea discussed in interviews and during observations was for members to make signs to put up in the residence halls, Greek houses, and around campus to encourage students to apply. The members who were interviewed after the application period ended and who discussed the idea in the interview reported that they had seen no indication that any signs of that type had ever been prepared and distributed. For reasons that will be discussed in the Established Membership stage, no one took any specific action or individual responsibility to implement the idea.
All indications are that neither organization has any type of coordinated information-giving process to help prospective members learn about the organization, nor do the major activities of the organization receive the type of publicity which would inform prospects of the nature of the organization. In the discussions which took place regarding publicity about the application process, the implicit purpose of the ideas discussed was to make students aware of the organization, hoping that would attract their interests and lead them to apply.

**Systemic perspective.** The system affects the class honoraries through its general acceptance and encouragement of the organizations. This is indicated in members' being told by a variety of people on the campus that becoming a member of an honorary would be a good way to get involved in campus activities and to meet people. That attitude represents the belief that students benefit from involvement and that class honoraries are among the organizations which provide an opportunity for that involvement. That belief as it is passed along to the prospective members influences their attitude toward membership in the organization.

The system also affects the class honoraries through the coordinating body. Originally designed to assist the various class honoraries in sponsoring joint projects and in removing duplication of efforts, the coordinating body has taken on much of the responsibility for the membership selection process. In some ways this supports the individual organizations, by assuring that the work is done whether organizational members perform it or not. But in other ways, this denies the organization control over its own future, by taking away the opportunity and incentive for the organization to define itself to prospective members.
and shape their initial view of the organization. Members reported having no clear idea at the time of applying for membership what, if any, the differences were between the two class honoraries studied. Although the major difference between the current organizations is the historical one of each organization formerly being single-sex honoraries, it is possible that other differences would evolve if the organizations were responsible for all phases of the Pre-Membership stage.

Basis of knowledge and beliefs during Pre-Membership in the class honoraries. The distinguishing characteristic of the Pre-Membership stage in the class honoraries is the lack of accurate information, either conveyed by the organization or received by prospective members. The organization offers little information to prospective members about what the organization has done previously or about what members are expected to do, and the prospective members, in turn, seek little information. Each person's decision to apply for membership is based primarily on the advice of others, who give little information about what membership will be like. Applicants usually know neither the criteria for selection nor the requirements of membership.

In addition to the prospective members' knowing little about the organization, the organization knows little about who receives information about the application process, who responds to it, or what the applicants expect to give to or receive from the organization. There is no provision for the organization to verify the information applicants provide and no means to determine what applicants expect to do as members of the organization.
As further evidence will show, the lack of clarity about the organization when new members enter has consequences for the organization throughout the year.

**Pre-Membership in the Sport Club**

Pre-Membership in the Sport Club is very different from that in the class honoraries. The only requirements of membership are paying annual dues of $12 and signing a form which releases the organization from liability if the member is injured during an activity sponsored by the organization. Membership is open to all students, from freshmen to graduate and professional students. Non-students, including faculty and staff may also join, although none were represented among the members interviewed or observed.

**Individual perspective.** Students who join the Sport Club are usually attracted to it by friends who are members or by advertising in the student newspaper. Prospective members, according to the members who were interviewed, know that the two primary purposes of the organization are to provide an outlet for members to enjoy the sport and to party.

The students interviewed identified three main reasons that students join the organization. First, many of the members had been members of a high school club for the sport, and even before beginning college, anticipated joining the college group to pursue the sport. Once on campus, they began to look for information about the club and joined as freshmen, expecting to continue membership all through college.
Other students saw advertising for trips sponsored by the Sport Club and joined in order to attend at the special rates the club offered. Trips are scheduled for the December and March breaks in the academic calendar and each weekend while the sport is in season in the local area. According to the officers who keep a count of members, many members join just for the trips between academic terms. The officers reported that the quality of their trips, which they measure by the amount and type of club-sponsored activities and parties during the trips, is widely known and attracts people to their trips instead of to trips sponsored by other organizations, even if the other trip is somewhat less expensive.

A third reason to join is to be able to attend parties with the club. The $12 annual dues entitle members to attend weekly parties after each business meeting. These parties are held at local bars adjacent to the campus and free beer is served. Only members are admitted. The officers reported that some people join solely for the parties and seldom take part in other organizational activities. None of the students interviewed joined only for the parties, but they knew people who did.

The members who were interviewed also reported that they joined "to get involved in something on campus," as one put it. They saw it as a way to get to know other people on a large campus at which it can be difficult to make friends. For some, it serves as the major social outlet, much as a Greek organization does for other students.

It was not clear whether the view of the organization as a social outlet developed before or after members joined, but one member, when
asked to explain the social aspects of the organization as a prospective member would hear it, said:

    We just throw the parties to make it more—open to more people as opposed to joining a fraternity or sorority. You can meet more people here, even if you're not a [participant in the sport]. For $12 a year you get to go to more parties.

Another reported that "we don't advertise as an alternative [to Greek organizations], but we do advertise as a social, [sport] organization."

Although members reported that they joined so they could meet people, most of them initially attended meetings and parties with other students they already knew. One member reported that a group of friends joined at the same time, without knowing anyone who was already in the club. Others who were interviewed had one or more friends who were already members, through whom they learned of the club and decided to join. No one who was interviewed reported knowing more than a small number of members at the time of joining.

Organizational perspective. From an organizational perspective, attracting new members is one of the most important functions in the Sport Club. Because membership fees are based on the academic year, the club starts each year, on paper at least, with no members. This means that the officers feel the full responsibility for advertising the club at the beginning of the autumn term and trying to attract as many members as possible early in the academic year. As one officer described it, "Membership each year starts at zero. And each year could be your losing year. Every year you've got to hit with a barrage."

As part of the advertising effort, officers and other volunteers help place the posters around campus and pass out handbills from a
central campus location. They also offer the attraction of free beer for everyone at the first two parties of the year, whereas later in the year the parties are limited to members only.

The members who were interviewed also reported the primary organizational strategy for recruiting members and keeping members interested: parties. The rationale for the parties, as an organizational strategy for attracting members, is that "if you just [offered times for the sport] and had no other aspects, then no one would join your club." Using this reasoning, the club has intentionally built the image of being an organization which offers members a chance to attend parties. Officers attribute much of the success of the club to its reputation for providing many parties at low cost.

The success of the club, as measured in membership numbers, is apparent in the fact that over 1,000 students join each year, making it the largest student organization on the campus.

Systemic perspective. Two ideas within the system at large affect the Sport Club. The first is the belief, both about and within groups of college students, that students want to attend parties. One member of the Sport Club estimated that 80% of college students like to party, "so the Sport Club is no different from the majority." This perception is used to support the rationale the club officers use for sponsoring parties.

The other outside influence is the existence of a "culture" among the people who regularly participate in the sport. Much of what this college-based club does is no different from what general participants in the sport do. The kind of outings the club plans and the kind of
parties the club sponsors on those outings are directly related to what others do who are active in the sport.

Within the narrower sphere of the college campus, there is relatively little influence on the Sport Club at any stage of membership. Unlike the class honoraries or the Service Organization, the Sport Club had no members among the students who were interviewed who reported that someone within the university but not already a member of the club recommended that the student join the club. The club operates more autonomously and must rely more on its own initiative to sustain itself than any of the other organizations studied.

**Bases of knowledge and beliefs during Pre-Membership in the Sport Club.** From the individual's perspective, finding out about the Sport Club is relatively easy. Posters and newspaper advertisements give information about meetings, parties, and trips which the club sponsors. Students may also get information in the club office, located in the student center. Officers keep posted office hours and give out information or take reservations for trips. Anyone who wants to find out more about the organization is able to do so from an officer relatively easily.

From an organizational perspective, providing information to members is considered one of the most important jobs the officers have. They publicize all club events and maintain office hours so that members will have easy access to the information they need.

No member who was interviewed reported any discrepancy between expectations prior to joining the organization and actual experiences as a member.
Pre-Membership in the Service Organization

The Service Organization is open to a maximum of 36 students and 14 faculty members. Students are eligible for membership after completing two quarters at the main campus of the university and compiling at least a 2.4 grade point average, on a 4.0 scale. Students may enter at any point in the academic calendar or in their own academic career. The vast majority of students enter during either the sophomore or junior year.

Pre-Membership in the Service Organization is not easily divided according to the perspectives used in this discussion, because the requirements for individuals and the efforts made by the organization are so closely intertwined. For discussion purposes, distinctions will be made, but the distinguishing feature of the organization which must be recognized at this stage is the high degree of exchange and contact between members and prospective members.

To be considered for membership, an individual must develop ideas for projects the organization might implement. One project idea must be fully prepared, with all information on how to implement the project except for actual financing procedures. The other ideas must be prepared to the extent that the prospective member can present them during the membership interview and discuss them with the Credentials Committee, the membership review panel. Upon recommendation from the Credentials Committee, the body of the organization votes on new members.

Individual perspective. Contact between the Service Organization and prospective members usually begins when a member of the Service Organization invites the prospect to the weekly luncheon at which the
Service Organization has its business meetings. There were also instances observed in which a small group of people, such as members of the Freshman Senate, were invited, as guests of the organization rather than of an individual member.

The individuals who are invited to luncheon vary in the extent of their familiarity with the Service Organization. The luncheon may be the first formal contact the student has had with the organization, or it may be a chance for the student to see the business meeting aspect after already participating in some function sponsored by the organization. Whichever is the case, members of the organization take time before, during, and after luncheon to explain what the organization is like and what it does.

After the initial contact, the Service Organization member who invited the individual to luncheon should call to find out if the individual is interested in membership. After that follow-up call, much of the responsibility for seeking and attaining membership rests with the individual.

Students who are attracted to the organization and decide to seek membership are both challenged and supported by the organization's members. They must make the decision in light of the widespread perception that it is "tough to get in the organization," an opinion voiced by the first student who was interviewed and echoed by most of the others. One member said that membership isn't for everybody. You can bring [prospective members] to lunch and they get all starry-eyed and think that this is a neat thing. But they have to put a lot of effort into wanting to be in that group. So, it's not as easy as just saying "I want to be in [other organizations]." It's not like that. It's a working kind of group.
Once the prospective member has made the decision to seek membership, there are several related activities necessary to becoming a member. First, the prospective member must develop three project ideas to present to the Credentials Committee. In the course of developing these ideas, the prospect is expected to learn about the organization, especially in the following ways which were identified by one of the members and observed as prospects went through the process:

Prospects come into contact with organizational members and become personally acquainted with them while researching ideas.

Prospects learn the basics of planning major projects.

Prospects learn how to generate new ideas.

Prospects develop a commitment to the "kind of approach" used within the organization.

A second requirement is that prospects learn the history of the organization. One member regards learning the history not so much a requirement the organization imposes as it is an interest to the prospective member:

Any group that you want to join, you want to know where they've been, what they've done, and where they're going. If you're interested in the group, you'll want to know those kinds of things.

The Service Organization has built into its membership process the expectation that students will want to know the history of the organization, whether the prospects realize they want to know the history before they begin the process or not.

In addition to developing the project ideas, becoming acquainted with members, and learning the history of the organization, prospective members must be able to present their ideas to the Credentials Committee and respond to questions effectively. Presentational skills are
important to the organization, and the Credentials process is used as a means of measuring those skills.

**Organizational perspective.** As was previously noted, it is difficult to distinguish between the individual and the organizational perspectives in the Pre-Membership stage of the Service Organization. The individual must meet numerous expectations that the organization sets for new members, but the organization, through its current members, assumes much of the responsibility for making those expectations and the ways to meet them clear.

The initial involvement of organizational members in the Pre-Membership stage is the invitation to an individual to attend luncheon. In the course of observations, virtually every member invited at least one guest to luncheon who might have been a prospective member. Although there was discussion observed among the members that follow-up on luncheon guests was not always adequate to determine the individual's interest in membership, all members did participate in the effort to some degree.

Once an individual has indicated interest in membership, primary responsibility in the membership process is shared by the individual and the Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee is charged with supervising the prospect's efforts and making organizational expectations clear, while providing adequate information and guidance to the prospect during the project research process.

The Pre-Membership stage presents two particular problems for the organization. The first, mentioned also as part of the individual perspective, is the perception of the organization as being "elite."
Members use the word reluctantly, but recognize that it is appropriate for the image people have of the Service Organization. Members attempt to overcome this perception by inviting a variety of students to lunch-eon and offering support for anyone who expresses interest in membership.

The other problem that Pre-Membership presents to the organization is that there are so many other activities going on within the organization that it is difficult for the organization as a whole to focus on membership. Unlike the other three organizations in this study, which have either a definite time at which members enter, as in the class honoraries, or a particular period when membership is emphasized, as in the Sport Club, the Service Organization does not have a specified time in which seeking new members is a major activity. One member summarized the situation by saying that the problem is one of the organization's not having a time when it can focus on membership, because there is always another project or other outside distractions to take attention away from the need to bring new people into the organization.

The result for the organization is that there are never 36 student members in the organization. They continue to try to carry out the efforts of the organization as if there were a full roster, but they actually operate with fewer members than the group is designed to contain.

Because of a particularly low number of student members during the course of observations and interviews, membership was a frequent topic of attention within the organization. Anticipating the graduation of nearly half of the student membership within two quarters, the
Credentials Committee chair brought the membership issue to the attention of the body, with the result that membership grew rapidly during the period of the study and immediately after the study ended. Several members reported that such a cycle takes place each time membership numbers decline.

In the emphasis on membership, one particular point was raised regarding the organization's role in supporting prospective members during the research process for projects. Much of the emphasis was placed on attracting younger students, those at the end of the freshman year or the beginning of the sophomore year, to the organization. Because of their inexperience relative to other prospective members the organization has admitted in recent years, the current members of the organization recognized the need to provide more structure and guidance in the project research process.

**Systemic perspective.** To a much greater degree than is true of the other organizations in this study, the Service Organization is an active part of the university system, receiving support but also returning energy and assistance to the university through service projects. The result is that people throughout the system, from the university president to an entering freshman, are likely to be aware of the organization.

It is within the system that the image of the Service Organization as an elitist group is sustained, because there are people who might have aspired to membership but were unable to devote the time to developing and researching project ideas. Some of the members interviewed reported that qualified people who already had significant commitments
in other organizations have been discouraged from seeking membership by the extensive requirements. The members report that a certain amount of jealousy results, since membership is seen as prestigious. The members feel an obligation to maintain the requirements but to give all the support that a prospective member needs to meet those requirements.

Even though the elitist image is present within the system, the organization benefits from its reputation of being a group in which students learn how to get things done on campus and develop individual leadership skills. Members of other organizations in this study aspire to membership in the Service Organization.

**Bases of knowledge and beliefs during Pre-Membership in the Service Organization.** The distinguishing characteristic of Pre-Membership in the Service Organization is the amount of information about the organization which is available to prospective members and which they, in turn, are expected to know about the organization. Each of the other three organizations in the study seeks members without any particular regard for how much information the prospective member has about the organization or for how accurate the information is. The Service Organization not only provides accurate information about itself, but also expects new members to know the information.

The information made available to prospective members of the Service Organization is so intertwined with the organizational image and the attitudes of members of the organization that it is virtually impossible to distinguish the two. Prospects learn not only what the organization has done in the past, but also how things have been done and why.
Summary and Comparison of Issues in the Pre-Membership Stage

The image that students form of an organization during the Pre-Membership stage will affect their expectations and participation during membership. These images are related to the development and sustaining of organizational culture. Because shared patterns of meaning are part of an organizational culture, prospective members who have similar knowledge of and beliefs about an organization will enter the organization with a clear idea of what membership means and what the organizational culture is like. Conversely, organizations in which members enter with few or conflicting ideas about the organization may experience difficulty in developing shared patterns of behavior and members' identity with the organization.

Among the four organizations in this study, two provide virtually no information from which prospective members may form an image of the organization, while the other two provide very clear and accurate information. The two class honoraries induct new members without those new members having a clear idea of the purposes, history, goals, or expectations which participation in the organization entails.

The Sport Club and the Service Organization, on the other hand, provide ready information about their organization. The information is both brought to the attention of prospective members and available for those prospects who wish to pursue further investigation. Although the purposes of the two organizations are different, information about both is available to anyone interested in membership.

Evidence from the organizations indicates that the initial information available to prospective members and the image which that
information forms affects members throughout their membership and, in turn, affects the development and perpetuation of the organizational culture within the four organizations studied.

**Issues during New Membership**

The first stage upon entry to an organization is New Membership. This stage will vary widely among student organizations, and the organizations studied are examples of three different types of new membership stages.

In this study, New Membership is defined as the period, after entry into the organization, during which a new member is expected to learn about the organization, without taking an active leadership role. There may be formal mechanisms through which new members are taught about the organization, such as pledge classes in Greek organizations, or new members may just quietly participate and observe as the established members run the organization.

In this study, the class honoraries are examples of organizations which have neither formal mechanisms for new members, nor an adjustment period. Almost immediately upon entry into the organization, members are expected to assume responsibility for running it. They are told what the officers' duties are in one orientation-type meeting and elect officers at the same meeting. Members reported feeling as though they never got enough information to know what they should be doing or how to do it, but they were expected to take responsibility for the organization immediately.
In the Sport Club, new members most often simply attend meetings and learn about the organization. In fact, with more than 1000 members and a limited number of positions of responsibility, the Sport Club members who do not make a special effort to become involved or who do not become acquainted with the leaders of the organization may never become any more involved in the organization than they are as new members.

The Service Organization has two mechanisms through which new members adjust to the organization and become active members. Both are formal mechanisms which will be discussed as the evidence from the study is presented.

The central issues in the New Membership stage are how new members are assimilated into the organization, how or whether they take responsibility within the organization, and what information is available to help them become more familiar with the organization.

**New Membership in the Class Honoraries**

New Membership in the class honoraries begins for all members at the same time in the spring of each year. It starts with a tapping ceremony and ends approximately three weeks later with the election of officers from among the new members. For purposes of discussion, there will be no formal delineation between the individual and the organizational perspectives for this stage in the class honoraries, because new members are the only members, the previous class having moved on from the organization. In the absence of established members during a new member's orientation to the organization, the actions of new members become the actions of the organization. There is evidence that similar
patterns occur each year, within each set of new members, but they are not intentionally the same, as they would be if established members conducted orientation sessions each year.

In each of the class honoraries, there was a tapping ceremony for which outgoing members of the organization took the newly-selected members to a spot on campus that is traditionally associated with each organization. A short ceremony is conducted at that time, followed by a formal initiation ceremony two or three weeks later. According to reports from members of both organizations, these are the only formal ceremonies the organizations observe during the year.

At the time of tapping, few members of either organization knew others among the new members. Those who were acquainted with other new members usually knew only faces and first names, unless the acquaintances were from the same Greek house or residence hall. Several members reported knowing no one else within the group at the time of tapping.

Even though members do not know each other, officer elections are held in both organizations at the first meeting after initiation. The officers from the previous year explain each office, nominations are opened, candidates give speeches, and elections are held, all at the same meeting. In one of the organizations, the election for president was conducted first and the newly-elected president conducted the remainder of the elections. The old officers leave after elections, and the "new members" are officially considered established members from the standpoint of being responsible for the organization.

The speed with which everything was done and the lack of opportunity to become acquainted with other members disturbed some members.
One reported:

We first started electing officers. I got the impression right away that the club was very cliquish. When people ran we had little speeches that we gave when we ran for office. And it didn't really seem like anybody was listening, but they just voted for their friends, from their sororities and such. And the people who weren't involved in the sororities didn't have many friends, didn't have a chance to become an officer.

Several people commented that they would have liked for the group to become better acquainted before elections were held, but the schedule would not allow time for that. Because tapping and initiation do not take place until near the end of the academic year, there is little time for more than one meeting, meaning that the group has to elect officers before anything else is done.

Although the outgoing officers explain each office before the elections take place, the new members reported knowing little about what was expected of them. They made such comments as, "I was shocked the first time we had a meeting that we walk in and we run it right away and they're gone. There's nobody there but us." Another concurred, saying, "You walk in and you're supposed to do something and you have no idea, really, what you're supposed to do."

The uncertainty over what they can or should do within the class honoraries leaves new members with certain distinct impressions: "The implication from the very beginning was that other organizations take precedence."

The two primary effects of these initial impressions are that the organizations never really recover and accomplish anything to satisfy the members who thought the organization would be beneficial to them, and many members do not continue to attend meetings. Members of both
organizations reported a noticeable drop in enthusiasm and attendance between the beginning of the membership year and the period of this study, toward the end of the membership year. One member tried to explain it:

Maybe they just found out it wasn't what they expected it to be. Sometimes it's not very well publicized and people aren't really sure. They think, "Honorary. Wow! That'd sound really good on a job application, but I'm not really sure what they do."

Such comments indicate there is a relationship between adequate and accurate information prior to a member's entry into an organization and the level of participation and satisfaction during membership.

**Systemic perspective.** There is little influence on new members from the systemic level. The primary indication new members have that anyone outside the organization is aware of what is going on is that new members are recognized, along with members of other organizations and individuals who receive awards, at a campus-wide Undergraduate Leadership Award banquet, held almost immediately after new members are tapped. The message members receive is that membership in the organization is important and noteworthy, but that apparently confuses them all the more as they attempt to discover some direction for themselves and the organization, since they do not immediately see what they can or will do within the organization, or why what they do is considered important.

**Basis of knowledge and beliefs during New Membership in the class honoraries.** According to the comments and responses given by members who were interviewed, new members in the class honoraries must operate within an informational void. They reported having nothing to guide them as they began the membership year except very brief remarks from
the outgoing officers, who left almost immediately after making the remarks. No documents or guidelines are available for how to begin the year. Even the advisors, who might fill the void, do very little to help the group get started. Members said the advisors told them it was "their organization" and that the members could do whatever they wanted, but without more direction than they ever got, the members felt that they never really did anything.

**New Membership in the Sport Club**

New Membership in the Sport Club begins when an individual pays membership fees and participates in some activity of the organization. That may take place at any time during the academic year, although the majority of the members join at the beginning of the year.

Unlike new members in the class honoraries, new members in the Sport Club are not expected to take responsibility within the organization. Among the more than 1,000 members, only a few are needed to keep the organization functioning, and new members usually do not become involved in the operation of the organization.

**Individual perspective.** Those who join the Sport Club to participate in all activities of the club as a long-term member are most likely to join at the beginning of the academic year. They will attend meetings, attend parties, and go on sporting outings the organization sponsors. For them New Membership is a time to participate in events others plan, to get acquainted with other members, and to anticipate further involvement. Many of these people may start out as very quiet members, knowing few other people, but recognizing that will change:
As you go on, you meet more people that've been in the club as long as you have. I think you can tell who the older people are now. They're more outgoing about it and the new people are kind of shy . . . . You can tell some of the new people. They sit there quiet and never say anything--like me.

These people become acquainted with others who stay in the organization, by introducing themselves at parties and by attending trips together. One said that the best way to get to know long-term club members, as opposed to those who join only for one trip or only for parties, is to go on the long trips over an academic break. Members tend to go on those trips each year and also to go to the events the club sponsors in the local area.

For those who join for a single trip or for the parties the club sponsors at local bars, the nature of the membership may never change. Those who go to parties each week become acquainted with more people, but they do not become involved in other facets of the organization. Many of the ones who join for only one trip do not attend any function of the organization after the trip is completed.

Organizational perspective. From the organizational perspective, members who join for different reasons present different issues for the organization. Those who join for long-term involvement, or who could be persuaded to remain involved, are of the greatest concern to the organization. It is for those members that the organization officers have made special efforts.

From the organization officers' perspective, it is important to keep members involved all year, so that they will re-join the following year. Two primary efforts have been made to keep people interested in the organization.
The first effort was to establish two committees in which members may participate. One is the public relations committee, the other the social committee. Although neither has been functioning long, several members indicated that they were pleased to have been involved with one of them or were planning to become involved. Both committees were the idea of one of the officers, who got approval from the other officers and set them up to give members ways to work for the organization.

The other effort has been to provide a variety of activities in which members could participate, especially when the sport is not in season. During the year in which this study was conducted, the organization sponsored intramural sports teams in several sports, held parties prior to varsity football games in the fall, sponsored an ice-skating party for members and guests, and sponsored a street party in an area adjacent to campus, open to anyone who wanted to attend.

Any of these efforts could also be considered a part of Established Membership in the Sport Club, but they are described here because the officers specifically planned them as ways of keeping members involved with the organization on a regular basis. For new members coming into the organization, the attraction of regular contact with other members of the organization could mean the difference between re-joining or not the following year.

Basis of knowledge and beliefs during New Membership in the Sport Club. The organization officers, knowing that the success of the organization depends on attracting new members every year, believe that the efforts they have made to provide information and activities for new members will lead to those members coming back each year to join. For
the most part, members have not expressed a need for more information within the organization, but the officers try to remain alert to areas in which information is needed and provide it accordingly.

In explaining activities and plans to members, the officers stress the services the students receive from the organization, thus helping to build an image in the minds of the members that the organization is good for them and one with which they want to continue to be associated.

**New Membership in the Service Organization**

The Service Organization has a distinct membership classification for new members. Upon entering the organization, the student is a probationary member. According to the written guidelines, probationary membership lasts 10 to 15 weeks, but in practice the period varies widely among individuals. Some members begin to work for active membership immediately, but others must be prodded or encouraged to do so. During the probationary period, the individual is expected to learn the procedures the organization follows, to begin serving on one or more of the standing committees, and, usually, to chair a project which the organization sponsors.

At a suitable time, usually after the individual has chaired a project, a probationary review and active interview is conducted by the Credentials Committee. The Committee recommends action to the body, which votes on changing membership status to active.

Probationary members may not hold an elected office, vote on membership, or vote on constitutional or bylaw changes, but they enjoy all other privileges of membership.
Individual perspective. The New Membership, or probationary, stage in the Service Organization is different from active membership in two primary ways. First, it is specifically a learning period, during which individuals are expected to become familiar with organizational documents and procedures which were not specifically necessary during the Pre-Membership stage.

To assist the probationary members in the learning process, the organization provides a membership handbook, 23 pages of procedural information, typed and single-spaced. This also contains the constitution and bylaws of the organization.

In addition to the handbook, the organization has provided for orientation of new members through an Orientation Committee, which is comprised of a chair and all the probationary members at the time. A series of five orientation programs are given on a regular basis, each of which explains important aspects of the organization. Probationary members who have heard the programs during their probationary period do not have to attend a repeat presentation, but each probationary member is expected to hear all the programs.

From the comments which were made and observations collected, the Orientation Committee approach is curiously ineffective in meeting the purposes of the organization. There seem to be two possible explanations for its ineffectiveness.

The first problem with the approach is that it creates redundancy for the probationary members. Everything they are taught through orientation comes up in other ways during the probationary period. They do not enjoy sitting through a formal presentation of material they either
know or will be learning first-hand. Related to that is the difference among members in previous experience with organizational procedures and with the university. Those probationary members who are accustomed to having responsibility for projects within the university do not need the same kind or amount of instruction as younger or less experienced new members.

The second problem is that the formal orientation structure sets the members apart from the other members of the organization. The emphasis in this organization is on everybody working together and on learning by doing. Neither occurs in the orientation programs.

One member explained that the orientation idea began about four years earlier, when a large number of new members entered the organization at the same time. Under that rather unusual circumstance, a formal means of transmitting information to a number of people in a short time was useful, but under the more usual circumstances of a few people entering the organization fairly regularly, the formal mechanism does not serve the purpose as well.

The second difference between probationary and active membership is that probationary membership is the time when new members must prove themselves to the organization. In order to become a probationary member, each person must develop and present project ideas to the Credentials Committee. In turn, in order to become an active member, the probationary member must take responsibility for a project and chair it to its completion. Once the project is completed, the probationary member is again interviewed by the Credentials Committee and a vote is taken by the body to change the membership status to active.
One member who had just been accepted as a probationary member stated an eagerness to gain active status: "Right now it bothers me being a probationary member, because it seems like a cloud over me," not being a "full-fledged member." The attitude that probationary members are not full-fledged was not apparent among active members, but it was felt by new probationary members.

In order for the probationary members to complete the project necessary to achieve active status, on-the-job learning must take place. One member who was taking a project through each of the committees in the standard review process was asked how a new member learns to do the presentation which is the standard format for project discussion, and replied that the learning takes place by watching other people doing their projects and learning from them.

Another, a new probationary member taking a project through for the first time, said "I really didn't know how to do it. I just felt my way through and I didn't know what to do." This is language very similar to that used by a member of one of the class honoraries, but the difference in the Service Organization is that there are people within the organization, members who have been through the process, to whom one can turn to ask questions. That same member successfully guided the project to completion and became an active member the quarter after this study was conducted.

Organizational perspective. There are a number of written requirements and procedures established by the Service Organization to assist new members in becoming fully functioning and gaining active membership. As stated previously, the requirements are clearly defined
for both participation in the Orientation Committee and completion of a project during the probationary membership.

The Service Organization expects and needs all its members to contribute to the group, voicing opinions as well as participating in projects. One practice that gives a new member an immediate opportunity to speak before the group is that each new member, at the first luncheon after being admitted to membership, stands and speaks, giving name, major, hometown, and information such as other collegiate activities. It is a simple act, but one which "breaks the ice" for that member.

When new members enter the Service Organization, others who have been in the group for some time make an effort to be sensitive to the new member's experience. They recognize that a new member can be lost in what seems routine to older members. One member said, "The whole [Service Organization] thing is overwhelming for some people, just the amount of involvement, the time involved. If you haven't seen that before, you're not expecting it and it just hits you."

For some, the entry is easier than for others, so little effort needs to be made to help the new member become comfortable with the organization. Of those for whom entry is a little more difficult, one of the faculty members said:

We've invited them to this group, we've seen some potential in them, and I often call them "unpolished pearls," in that we think they're a neat person and they've got a lot of potential, but just don't drop them in the pot. You've got to help them in there, if they're just standing back.

The same faculty member said that one of the special ways the faculty members of the Service Organization can contribute to the group is by being aware of the potential of new members who are less able to
step directly into the pace of the organization, and to help those people adapt.

There are some among the student members who also recognize the situation. A common image they use is of a train barreling down a track, representing the organization in the almost relentless pace of meetings and activities it maintains. They speak of members having to jump on the train or be left behind. Particularly those students in leadership positions within the organization expressed the need for someone to make sure that no one gets "left behind." One officer reported going directly to particular new members to make sure that entry into the organization was successful for them.

Systemic perspective. The evidence does not show that there is widespread reaction within the system when new members enter the Service Organization. Members reported calling their families when they were admitted to membership, and in individual cases there were other parties who responded to the news when a student was admitted, but the reactions reported were generally mild. The significance of membership increases as a student begins to take on responsibility within the organization, creating opportunities for contact with others on campus.

Basis of knowledge and beliefs during New Membership in the Service Organization. The amount and accuracy of information available and used during the New Membership stage within the Service Organization is important both for individuals as they enter the organization and for the organization, as its established members help new members enter the group.
For individuals, New Membership is marked by an abundance of information. Not only is the factual, documented information readily available to probationary members, but rationales, procedures, and historical information is also available from other members. The new member is expected to become familiar with the organization and is given the necessary information to do so.

From the organizational perspective, because the Service Organization expects new members to be actively involved in and contribute to the organization as soon as they enter, great care is taken to assure that everyone who enters is given adequate support and encouragement. This requires communication between established members and new members, for information to be shared. The established members share their image of the meaning of membership in the organization with new members as they help the new members become a part of the organization.

With the information available to them as new members, individuals know other members, know what has been done previously within the organization, know what activities are in process, and know the reasoning behind and attitude toward activities within the organization.

Summary of Issues during New Membership

In each of the organizations, entry into the organization was similar in nature to the Pre-Membership stage. In the class honoraries, both stages are characterized by a lack of structure or accurate information. In the Sport Club, they are both matter-of-fact stages, in which the student is able to obtain as much information as needed and become as involved with the organization as desired, but the organization places few requirements on individuals. In the Service
Organization, both stages are characterized by active and frequent contact between established members and prospective or new members, with information provided by established members and learned by incoming members.

The experiences individuals have during Pre-Membership and New Membership lay the foundation for further involvement with each organization. Patterns and expectations do not appear to change substantially during Established Membership.

**Issues during Established Membership**

If all issues arising in the operation of student organizations were discussed within the framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs, the majority of them would occur during Established Membership. When "the organization" is discussed as a level of analysis in the earlier stages of membership, it is actually a composite of the established members and the patterns which those members have established within the organization.

In order to illuminate more clearly the characteristics of Established Membership as a stage in the membership experience of individuals, this discussion will be limited to those aspects of the organization which affect individual participants during their term of active membership. Other issues which arise for the organization and which are important to the idea of organizational culture, but which do not specifically affect individuals, will be discussed in a separate section.

Established Membership as a stage within the membership experience of students who enter the organization is best understood in light of
three central issues: the extent of acquaintance among members of the organization, the distinctions made between officers and members, and the nature of membership participation.

**Extent of Acquaintance.** The extent of acquaintance among members must be observed on two levels. In three of the four organizations in this study, there were significant numbers of members who did not even recognize some other members by face. The first level of acquaintance, then, is whether members are actually acquainted.

The second level would be that of the extent of the acquaintance and whether it is specific to the organization or not. The questions to consider at this level are whether members know anything about other members on a personal level and whether they ever have any contact with each other outside of official functions of the organization.

**Officer-Member Distinctions.** Each of the organizations in this study has a formal structure which sets officers apart from the general membership of the organization. The organizations vary in the extent to which the membership experience is different for officers and for members, and these differences form the basis for much of the experience individuals have within the organization.

**Membership Participation.** Membership participation is the label given to a set of issues which are central to individual participants. In a sense, all other aspects of membership are a subset of membership participation, but the key elements which have not been discussed elsewhere are considered under this label.

The issues included within membership participation are the level of individual activity—both the range and amount of activity open to
members within the organizational structure and the level of activity which most members choose—within the organization, members' role in decision-making, use of members' individual skills, and developing previously untapped potential within individual members.

Established Membership in the Class Honoraries

As in the previous stage of membership, similarities between the two class honoraries are strong in the Established Membership stage. Different patterns do emerge, however, and those differences will be highlighted when the evidence warrants.

Because issues for individuals of the organizations are so directly related, the individual and organizational perspectives will be discussed in relation to each other, rather than separately. Perhaps more so than at any other stage, the two perspectives mirror each other, making distinctions between the two an analytical device that could destroy the relationship.

Extent of acquaintance. The first major issue to be identified during Established Membership is the extent of acquaintance among members. Within both of the class honoraries, the startling discovery was that the majority of members do not know more than a small percentage of the other members. In organizations with fewer than 30 members, there were many who estimated that they knew fewer than half of the other members by face, and knew even fewer by name. Each organization is scheduled to meet every two weeks, so a member who had attended even half of the meetings would have had the opportunity to see other members at least five times by the end of the quarter of study. Since one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for joining the honoraries was to
meet other people and get involved in a campus activity, the low rate of acquaintance is surprising.

Members who knew each other at the time they both entered the organization tended to remain together during the year and not meet other people. Even those who identified the lack of acquaintance with other members as a problem reported that they had made little effort to meet others since the beginning of the membership year.

In one of the organizations, a member reported that from the time of officer elections, "cliques" had appeared and that the organization had never really worked together. Another commented on the cliques which were apparent early in the year, but thought they were less a problem later in the year than was the low priority members gave the organization in their schedules.

The lack of acquaintance among members was a problem from both an individual and an organizational perspective. For individuals, one of the expected benefits of membership was missed, that of getting to know students from other areas of campus. For the organization, projects and activities become more difficult when people do not know each other, much less feel a commitment to work together as part of the same organization.

Members of both organizations suggested during interviews that they thought it would be a good idea for the organization, either through the advisor or previous officers, to make more of an effort to have members become acquainted with each other early in the year. One member suggested an off-campus retreat early in the year of membership as a means for accomplishing that.
The difficulty in solving the problems created by lack of acquaintance will be discussed more fully as an issue of membership participation, but it rests within the members themselves. Coming into the organization at the same time for a one-year membership, they did not recognize that the responsibility for becoming acquainted rests with each member. In one of the organizations, the president made it the job of the social chair to plan an acquaintance activity for each meeting, but that plan did not begin until the middle of the year, by which time many members had decided becoming better acquainted with other members was not an interest.

That lack of interest on the part of some members created ambivalent feelings on the part of others. One said: "If they don't want to be involved, that doesn't bother me. What bothers me is that we can't do anything without them."

**Officer-member distinctions.** Clear distinctions are made between officers and members in both class honoraries. Some distinctions are made simply by virtue of the officers' having specific responsibilities for each office, but most of the distinctions grow out of the rate of participation within the organization, with officers participating at a far greater level than non-officers.

Within both class honoraries, the pattern which was observed was that only officers spoke at meetings and that all items of business were introduced by officers.

In Organization A, the pattern went even further. In that organization, attendance at meetings during the quarter of study was composed almost entirely of officers. The meetings observed during the study had
attendance ranging from 6 to 13. The five officers constituted a major portion of the attendance at each meeting. Officers were completely responsible for bringing up items of business.

One unusual situation in A was that all but one of the officers were enrolled in the same academic college, a college that encourages student involvement in campus activities. Although all the officers were not acquainted before they were elected, they developed a close-knit group. Without apparently intending to exclude other members—they did, in fact, voice frustration at not being able to get more people to attend meetings—they took responsibility for the organization and were, for the most part, unable to attract the participation of other members.

Within Organization B, the officers were also almost exclusively in charge of the organization, although steps were taken to seek membership participation in major organizational activities, particularly the selection of new members.

Organization B had a much more directive, organized president than Organization A. Where A's president would use an agenda so casually that one was hardly aware it was being used, B's president used an agenda so rigorously that any items not on the agenda at the time the meeting started were in danger of being overlooked. The purpose of the agenda, according to the president of B, was to give the members opportunities to participate in the meeting and to offer ideas and suggestions. The meetings which were observed, however, were mostly presentations by officers or discussions between two people who could have settled their business in a private meeting rather than an
organizational meeting. Members who were not previously responsible for a topic on the agenda rarely spoke in the meeting.

One relatively active member of A who was not an officer observed that:

'It's important to elect officers who will try to do an effective job and who are reliable. . . .Who you elect as officers can either make or break an organization. It doesn't seem like it should all fall on those few people who are chosen to lead when there are so many other people involved. But, actually, they have a great influence about how the outcome of the organization will be.'

That attitude was also reflected in the comment that a member of B made:

"It seems like it's just the officers that are holding the club together."

Whether the officers did not know how to get other members involved or the members did not want to be involved in these particular organizations is unclear. Some of the members commented on the fact that they had not been active members, even though they are usually very active in organizations they join. Perhaps one identified the problem:

'Everybody's used to being the leader. You know, everybody's used to taking charge. . . .Everybody's used to running the show. . . .It's hard. I sensed it was a problem . . . when we elected a president and [the president] takes over the meeting and everybody suddenly hates the president, because they're used to having that role."

The two organizations showed different patterns in attitudes toward the leadership of the organization. In A, with the officers' having developed a reasonably good working relationship, few of the members interviewed singled out the president for criticism. There were indications that the members who had criticisms to make included all the officers.
In B, on the other hand, the president was singled out, even by other officers. Although the president of B reported making efforts to lead the group effectively, while the president of A showed little effort to change procedures or approaches, the president of B was the one criticized most directly by members.

In this case, the attitude of members of Organization B probably arose as much from the personality of the president as from the conditions under which the president and the organization operate. Whatever leadership skills the president had were not well suited to the situation. However, the lack of cooperation or participation on the part of members of the organization exacerbated the situation.

If the members felt left out of the organization and blamed the officers for making them feel that way, the officers felt no less frustrated. One of the presidents said:

I've never had any contact with a president whose role it was to tell, to make the group understand its purpose, and make them feel its purpose, and make them see themselves as a group. And that's more of an active, I suppose, instead of a passive presidency. And I have read a little bit about there being specifically two separate kinds. And I realize our group has a need for the other kind. I just have never seen that and don't really know how to be it.

The president of the other organization said that, although membership in the next class honorary would be nice and an application had been submitted for it, running for office again would be out of the question, because of all the difficulties encountered in the current honorary presidency.

In both organizations, the role of the advisor was discussed by both members and officers. Neither advisor had taken an active role in assisting the officers or suggesting procedures which could have helped
the organization run more smoothly. Each advisor's rationale was that the members should be free to run the organization in their own way, but neither president felt comfortable in knowing what to do and how to run the organization.

Although both advisors made an effort to attend all meetings of the organization, actual contributions from the advisor were limited. As membership selection procedures began, both advisors shared information about the process with the president and the selection chairperson, but that was the only area in which the advisor was observed making an active contribution. That reinforced the opinion expressed by members of both organizations that the main purpose of the organization was to select new members, a message the advisors may not have intended but which they delivered very clearly, nevertheless.

Membership participation. As was mentioned previously, the issues which are considered under the label of membership participation are central to the entire membership experience within each of the organizations. All that has been said about relations among members in the previous sections could have been discussed in this section, but those topics were sufficiently clear to be discussed separately.

The effects of organizational knowledge and beliefs are seen most clearly at the individual perspective in the Established Membership stage, particularly in the category of membership participation. In both of the class honoraries, the knowledge and beliefs members have about the organization lead them to define the limitations of their abilities within the organization and live within those limitations.
The problem of membership participation began in the class honoraries, according to the members interviewed, at the first of the year, when responsibility for the organization was turned over to the new members, but no structure or guidelines for getting started were given. In both organizations, the previous officers, the advisor, or both, had told the new members that it was completely up to them to decide what to do as members of the organization. All the members had to go on was their own information about what the organization had done in the past and the image they had of an honorary and its purposes.

The lack of information and the conflicting ideas with which members entered the honoraries left the new members with little sense of direction. They saw the honorary as an ineffective organization almost from the beginning. "You can tell by the ways it's set up--I can, anyway--that it's not set up to do a lot things." That opinion was expressed by one of the more active members.

The void of information about what the organization has done in the past could be an opening for someone to step in and lead the organization. However, if the people with an interest in leadership do not give the best speeches during elections, they are not the officers. In both organizations, the officers are the only ones who have a ready-made opportunity to contribute to the group. Few other members show any real interest in actively participating in the honorary.

The central issues of membership participation are the level of activity sought by and allowed to members, the members' role in decision-making, use of individual skills, and the development of new skills among members. In all areas, the class honoraries rank low in the
opportunities they offer members and the members gave little individual effort to change the situation.

For the individuals, the expectations of membership in an honorary varied widely. Some members reported having expected the honorary to be the main activity of the year, while others were surprised that there was any expectation of service and active involvement. Virtually all of them reported that the honorary had become a low priority for most of the members, if not for each of the ones interviewed. A common comment during interviews was that the member being interviewed was aware of being dissatisfied with the organization, but had never made any real effort to change things. One said, "I can't say I lay awake at night trying to think of how I would improve [the organization]. And sometimes it takes somebody to point-blank ask you." Several others made similar comments.

Several members also reported that they got the impression that the honorary did not expect a lot from them, even though they would have given more if asked early enough. One reported expecting the organization "to help me get involved in other things. Instead of expecting me to be so involved that I don't have time for it, I think I was sort of hoping for it to be a door to open me up to be involved in other things."

From an organization standpoint, no time was set aside for new members to discuss the purposes and activities of the organization during the year. Several mentioned that none of the early meetings gave members an opportunity to set goals for the year or discuss plans. The groups each made a decision early in the year to repeat a service
project which the previous year's group had done, to tape-record books for the Office of Disability Services on campus. Most of the members thought that was a worthwhile service project for them to do, but they observed that it was something that members were to do on their own time, and that no other project had been arranged for which they could all work together.

The lack of specific goals for the organization was explained by one of the advisors:

I don't know if that's really bad, because I think that their not having set objectives allows them to be very flexible. It allows them to do service projects and do social events on the spur of the moment. I mean, they can have two weeks' notice and decide to do something. So I think it helps them be spontaneous. They can do things as they come up.

A problem with that rationale became apparent during observations. A service project which was first suggested during the fall quarter was discussed again during winter quarter, a date was set, conflicts arose for a few people, the date was postponed, and as of the end of this study, no new date had been firmly set for the spring quarter. Opportunities for flexibility and spontaneity are lost within an organization that has no sense of direction, and making a decision with two weeks' notice is difficult when the group has had little experience with making decisions about the organization.

Systemic level of analysis. If a member of one of the class honoraries were to ask someone outside the organization, from the system within which the organization operates, for assistance in setting purposes and goals, the attitude the member would be likely to encounter is that the organization is not capable of doing anything more than it is already doing. Few people other than student affairs administrators are
aware of the class honoraries, and the attitude of the people who work with other student organizations is that inherent limitations of the honoraries keep them from accomplishing any more than selecting new members and supporting a minor service project.

The advisor to the coordinating body for class honoraries was interviewed about the sophomore honoraries. In the course of the interview it became clear that the limitations the members see, especially that of the organizations being comprised of inexperienced students who are members for only one year, are shared by the advisor of the coordinating body. Rather than consider alternative means of group development and leadership training, to help those inexperienced students learn through the honorary, the people within the system who are most directly associated with the honoraries view the circumstances as unalterable. That view is shared by the students within the honoraries, so the cycle is not likely to be broken.

**Basis of knowledge and beliefs during Established Membership in the class honoraries.** As in each of the earlier stages of membership in the class honoraries, during Established Membership, members have very little information available to them. They do not know each other well, do not have information about previous organizational activities which they might use to guide their own activities, and do not receive guidelines for organizing themselves and setting goals.

In the absence of information and with no direction given by former officers or the advisors, the two organizations have accomplished less than most of the members expected according to the evaluations they gave in interviews. Many, apparently having lost interest completely,
simply stopped attending meetings. Others attend meetings but, in
interviews, expressed dissatisfaction so great that they chose not to
apply for the next year's honorary. Those who had decided to apply
almost unanimously expressed the hope that the next year would be dif­
ferent.

Established Membership in the Sport Club

Among the more than 1,000 members of the Sport Club, there are
three basic groups: officers, who control all planning and virtually
all decision-making; involved members, who participate on committees and
in some of the administrative activities of the organization; and the
remaining estimated 95% of the paid members who rather anonymously
follow the lead of the officers and the involved members.

As in the class honoraries, the central issues during the Estab­
lished Membership stage are the extent of acquaintance among members,
the distinctions made between officers and members, and the nature of
membership participation. Also as before, the individual and organiza­
tional perspectives mirror each other in a way that should not be dis­
torted by discussing them separately.

Extent of acquaintance among Sport Club members. Among the silent
95% majority of the members of the Sport Club, acquaintance with other
members appears to be very limited. Members usually arrived at meetings
in pairs or small groups, sat with the group during the meeting, and
left the meeting with the same group. At parties members have the
opportunity to meet other members, and many of them do so, according to
the members who were interviewed. However, relative to the total mem­
brership, only a small percentage of members attend each party, so it
appears unlikely that an individual member would become acquainted with a major portion of the total membership.

Among the relatively involved members, the extent of acquaintance is greater. These are the members who join one or both of the committees, participate on the intramural teams sponsored by the Sport Club, attend parties and trips frequently, and generally consider the club as one of their major activities rather than as only a social or recreational pursuit.

Each year's officers are most likely to have been relatively involved in the organization as a member, becoming acquainted with previous officers in the process.

The officers themselves are closely acquainted with each other because of the amount of work they do together. They are also reasonably well acquainted with the involved members.

From an individual perspective, the Sport Club provides an opportunity to meet as many or as few people as the individual chooses. With parties scheduled every week and trips sponsored during four months of the academic year, the members have many chances to become acquainted outside the business meetings.

From an organizational perspective, providing social opportunities for members is considered extremely important, to keep the members happy and involved with the club. Several new approaches had been implemented to achieve that purpose, including the intramural teams and more parties than in the past.

The organization does not, however, rely on having all paid members heavily involved with the operation of the club, which means that
from an organizational perspective the extent of acquaintance among club members is not an especially important issue. This factor will be discussed further as an issue of membership participation.

**Officer-member distinctions.** The officers of the Sport Club are very much set apart from the majority of the members. The officers make all the decisions for the organization, with members' opinions sought only to "fine-tune" the officers' decisions, as one of the officers phrased it. At the general meetings of the organization, officers are positioned in the front of an auditorium-style classroom, several of them behind a laboratory table which physically sets them apart from the members.

The officers regard their work within the organization as the equivalent of a part-time job, requiring between 20 and 30 hours of work each week. With so much work to be done, the officers are willing to use the help of anyone else who wants to work for the organization, but they do not devote much time to seeking membership involvement in the business operations of the organization.

The committees, which had been created less than a year before this study began, serve as a bridge between the officers and those members who are interested enough to become involved. Meetings of the committees are announced at the general meetings, so anyone who wishes to work within the organization can attend and contribute through the committees.

One member who had attended the committee meetings and had become a co-chair reported that the committee had provided an opportunity for involvement. "I had more fun. And as a result of it, I got to know
people closer and I got to see a little bit more of what happened." The involvement gave "a special pride" in the success of the organization. As a result of the involvement, that member decided to run for office for the next year, because "the higher the office, the more you know."

Another member who also ran for office was somewhat critical of the incumbent officers, saying, "they keep themselves apart" and were "arrogant." That member's goal as an officer was to emphasize opportunities for members to be involved and to make an effort to get to know as many members as possible, rather than remain aloof as the incumbent officers had done. Another candidate was elected to the office, but the member, knowing the successful candidate would be graduating before the term of office expired, intended to continue to be active and to seek appointment to the unexpired office.

The officers' perspective on officer-member relations is that the relations are good, that those who want to be active in the organization can be, and that the officers had made themselves accessible to anyone who needed information or assistance within the organization. One officer explained the position of the officers:

We have to present two images to the [Sport Club]. One, we got to be responsible enough to handle such a big group, a thousand people. And, yet, we gotta relate to the kids and what they want. When I was a member, I wanted to go out and have a good time. So now that I'm an officer I still want to go out and have a good time. I may not be able to do it with them every week . . . We have to allow and give them space, you know, for them to have a good time to stay in the club.

Within the other three organizations in this study, it is theoretically possible for all members to be acquainted with one another before officers are elected. That does not happen within the class honoraries as now established, but it could be feasible. In the Sport Club,
however, with over 1,000 members, it would be virtually impossible for them to be acquainted with each other. To overcome the problems of choosing officers from among unknown members, the officers have developed the strategy of recruiting individuals to run for office. The saying, "It's all in who you know," is very much in effect within the Sport Club.

Three of the five officers during the quarter of study had been recruited to run by previous officers. For them the length of time they had been a member prior to running for office was less important than becoming acquainted with the officers during that time. Within four months of joining the organization, one member was vice president. Another who had been invited to run for an office was not elected, but was offered the chance to interview for an office which is appointed by the elected officers and subsequently received the appointment. A third member who, at the time of joining the organization, planned eventually to run for office volunteered for work as a new member, became known to the most involved members and the officers, and was elected to office.

The pattern that is evident in the election of officers is that members will elect the "known quantity." Candidates who are selected by incumbent officers generally have the best chance of winning the elections, and incumbents who run again are virtually certain of being re-elected. Few members actually vote in elections, some even going so far as to leave after the business portion of the meeting had been completed on the night of elections and not staying to hear candidates' speeches or to vote. Approximately 40 people remained at that meeting.
Membership participation. The low participation rate in officer elections is not unusual for other administrative activities of the Sport Club. Most members join for the sport and the social activities, preferring to leave the responsibility for the organization in the hands of those who want it. One member observed that the dedication of members may be to the sport rather than to the club, saying, "I don't think [Sport Club] is a priority for most people."

The officers recognize the different levels of interests in the organization among its members. The committees were established through the initiative of one officer who believed that others wanted the chance to do more as a member than attend meetings, parties, and trips. Through the committees, those members publicize the organization, plan activities other than the weekly parties at local bars, and offer ideas for the organization.

According to the officer who initiated the committee idea, "You can get whatever out of this club you want, because whatever you put in, you can get out." The officer reported that among committee members, there are some who are rarely seen "and some who are always there and always have ideas." Among the general members, there are some "who don't want to get involved at all." They join, probably, "for the parties."

One of the members who was interviewed believed that members should be given more opportunity to be involved, especially in making decisions about sites selected for trips sponsored by the club. The student ran for office on a platform that included more involvement for members, but was defeated by the incumbent.
The low rate of participation in administrative aspects of the organization does not affect participation in the sport and social activities the club sponsors. A trip during the December break had attracted over 250 people, weekly trips during the academic term attracted another 200, and two trips in March attracted a combined total of approximately 280. One of the officers estimated that there is very little overlap in those figures, so approximately 700 different people traveled with the organization in the previous year.

Attendance figures at the weekly parties were not kept, and attendance varied widely at different times in the academic calendar. One officer estimated that there were more members who had joined for the social activities during the current year than had in previous years. The unit of measure used to gauge that was kegs of beer. The previous year, the organization provided an average of 6 kegs per party, but the parties during the current year had used at least 8 kegs and as many as 14.

The officers, while not particularly displeased with that situation, saw the need to change. "Next year what we're gonna do is try not to publicize our parties more in advance." Instead, they will publicize the meetings and announce the parties only at meetings.

Systemic perspective. Within the university setting, the Sport Club is regarded as a "party" club, with members who spend a significant amount of time drinking beer at local bars. Although that image is not complete, it is reasonably accurate. According to the members interviewed, it is uncommon for club members to become intoxicated at club
parties, but members do consume alcoholic beverages at virtually every activity of the organization.

The organization also has the reputation within the university of providing the best trip for the price of any student organization. Another organization sponsoring a trip in March similar to one of the two Sport Club trips offered the trip at a lower price than the Sport Club did but had far fewer people sign up for it. The Sport Club officers explained that the reputation the Sport Club has for offering the best deal attracts people to them even when their price is slightly higher.

**Basis of knowledge and beliefs during Established Membership in the Sport Club.** Two clear sources of information influence the members of the Sport Club. The first is the prevalent attitude toward the sport and its participants within the general community of participants, beyond the college campus. There is an identifiable "culture"—a term used among participants, not applied during this study—which mandates certain activities related to the sport. Enthusiasts for the sport are seen as partiers, outgoing, friendly, even boisterous. They have a reputation for playing hard and taking risks. "They're kind of crazy... they'll risk their life" in the sport, one member said. The image influences the activities and atmosphere of the Sport Club, fulfilling the expectations of those familiar with the wider culture of the sport and indoctrinating novices.

The second influence on the members is the performance and reputation of the leadership of the organization. There is a "we're in charge here" attitude among the officers which at once assures the members that
their interests are being considered, but may also preclude their involvement. Among the members who are not on committees or otherwise involved, there seems to be a willingness to let others take charge and make decisions.

For those who make the decisions, the culture of the sport and the history of the organization guide them. Previous activities, primarily trips sponsored by the club, are well-documented. The duties of each officer are clearly defined in writing, so that if some or all of the officers were to leave, new ones could learn the responsibilities easily from materials on file.

What is most clear in the Sport Club is that no one has to wonder what is going on. Information is readily available and the purposes of the organization are clear to members. An uninformed outsider might be surprised initially to learn what activities are considered essential within the organization, but members know clearly what they want and appear to appreciate what they get from the organization.

Established Membership in the Service Organization

Membership in the Service Organization is characterized by high levels of involvement and close working and personal relations among members.

This discussion will be limited to the nature of Established Membership for the student members of the Service Organization, although members of the faculty and administrative staff also serve as members. The effect of their membership on the students is an important consideration, one which many of the members regard as the key to the success of the organization. However, the role of faculty and administrative
members differs substantially from that of the student members. The issues of Established Membership, as it is defined and discussed here, are those pertinent to the student members. The effects of faculty and administrative members (hereafter referred to simply as faculty members) and their role within the organization will be discussed in a later section.

For the student members of the Service Organization, the central issues of Established Membership are, as in the other three organizations, the extent of acquaintance among members, distinctions between officers and members, and membership participation. An additional issue arises in the Service Organization, as well, that being the effect of length of membership on individual members and on the organization.

Extent of acquaintance. The members of the Service Organization know each other's names, hometowns, academic majors, favorite foods, career aspirations, college activities, study habits, and various other information. In short, they are as well acquainted as any group of people could be, and more than some would like when an occasional embarrassing moment is shared throughout the group.

The Service Organization stresses the importance of members' knowing each other from the time an individual enters the Pre-Membership process, and the emphasis is seldom relaxed. In the early stages of contact with the group, the individual is made to feel an obligation to meet as many members as possible and to use members as a resource in developing project ideas.

Upon entering the organization, the new member becomes a part of one of the most active organizations on the campus. As one member
pointed out, the organization has a formal meeting of at least one of its standing committees or of the body as a whole every day of the school week. Members are expected to serve on at least one of the committees and to attend the weekly luncheon meeting, so each member will have at least two formal sessions with the organization weekly. In addition, members are responsible for spending time in the organization office during weekdays; to answer the telephone and assist visitors. Members also participate in projects of the organization, which may take place any day of the week. Thus, the opportunities for contact with each other are numerous and regular.

The organization's agenda provides some time for members to share information about one another, some serious and some humorous. Under the category of "announcements" in the weekly luncheon meeting, members introduce all manner of information about other things they are doing or about other members of the organization. During the announcement period in the time this study was being done, announcements about members included such information as birthdays, admission into law school or medical school, engagements, employment, honors received through other organizations or academic units within the university, participation in theatrical performances, vacation plans, and newsworthy accomplishments.

The members also share information with the group about their other activities when they think the group will be interested or when they are soliciting support. Several individuals sought pledges for charitable activities, such as donations for swimming a certain number laps in a charity swim-a-thon. Others announced activities with which they were involved and invited members to attend.
The announcements serve purposes other than increasing members' acquaintance with each other, and the announcements were not limited to the information just described. However, they can and do serve a valuable function in keeping the members informed about one another and interested in each other as individuals.

Some of the members indicated that the demands the Service Organization makes on the time of the members need to be balanced by the enjoyment it can give. One said that the organization "for a long time, I think, has realized that student organizations don't have to be all work but there can be fun, too."

Another stated that the organization "is very much a people experience." That member explained that the members of the organization talk about doing things for the university, which benefits from virtually all of the projects, but the member said the real reason they do so much is "for [their] friends. That's why it works." Without the commitment to each other that grows out of close acquaintance and friendship, the members would be likely to devote less time and energy when the project and meeting load got heavy.

**Officer-member distinctions.** Lines between officers and non-officers blur in the Service Organization. Leadership is provided by nearly every student member at one time or another, and is never limited to the elected officers.

The Service Organization uses a project approach to implement its purpose. Any activity of the organization which requires members to spend time or the organization to spend money is undertaken as a project. Even the annual banquet at the end of the administrative year is
treated as a project, reviewed and planned just as if it had never taken place before.

Each project has a project chair, an individual who is responsible for developing the idea, presenting it to the various committees for review, presenting it to the body for a vote, and implementing it. There are traditional projects which the organization sponsors every year and there are new projects that members develop from inception to completion.

The project process provides opportunities for several members other than elected officers to have positions of responsibility. Each of the review committees, which review the central purpose of the project, the means for implementing it, the plans for publicizing it, and the plans for financing it, has a chair and standing members. Those people are assigned the review responsibility and appear to take the process seriously.

The most directly responsible person is the project chair. That person essentially becomes the president of an organization whose purpose is to carry out that project. Other members of the Service Organization, including the elected officers, may take direction from the chair. Decisions of the chair are subject to review by the standing committees, but within the parameters of what the organization as a whole thinks is reasonable and within the "scope" of the organization, the project chair has wide authority.

In addition to having primary responsibility for a project, the chair of each project which has been approved by the body of the organization is expected to attend all meetings of the Steering Committee of
the organization until the project is complete. This committee is composed of the elected officers, the chairs of the standing committees, and project chairs. It meets weekly and coordinates the activities of the organization.

By having project chairs serve on the Steering Committee, the organization develops a flexible attitude toward the leadership of the group. Members work together in changing capacities, one leading one project and another leading another project. As members discussed their experiences within the organization, they never made marked distinctions between officers and members, in contrast to the other three organizations.

The situations which officers face are different from those for officers in the other three organizations, as well. Although the officers have the formal responsibility of representing and leading the organization, they have neither the complete control of the officers in the Sport Club nor the burden of sole responsibility felt by officers in the honoraries.

One officer stated the opinion that the organization would control itself if the officers, particularly the president, were not functioning. While several acknowledged that the president sets the tone which the organization adopts, they also believed that the organization as a whole retains a character apart from the president.

One particularly interesting development presented itself to the organization during the period of this study. Officer elections were to take place and the organization found itself with only four eligible members for its three elected positions. Since only active members, as
opposed to probationary members in the organization's definition of membership categories, are allowed to hold office, and since graduation was expected to remove a number of the active members, there were only four eligible candidates. Thus, the election was less a decision about who would lead the group than it was a decision about which person would hold which office.

Organization members appeared not to be disturbed by the limited options. As it turned out, only one of the offices was contested, the other two being filled by acclamation when the candidates decided which of the offices they preferred.

The low number of eligible candidates apparently is not unusual for the organization, according to the discussions which took place in the election process. It did serve to emphasize the membership situation, which the organization had begun to act on by actively seeking persons interested in becoming members.

Membership participation. The nature of membership participation has been discussed as relations between officers and members were explained. Members view the Service Organization as their own. They do not regard the officers as the ones to decide what the organization will be or do, but see it as a joint venture among all members to direct and sustain the organization.

As in almost every organization, there are different personalities within the Service Organization, resulting in different kinds of participation. One member who is prone to being caught in embarrassing situations and being teased about it within the group takes it all with humor, saying, "I have no secrets! My life is an open book!" There are
others who could almost be overlooked in the hectic pace of organizational projects, but who contribute steadily and importantly to the behind-the-scenes work which makes the successes appear to come easily to the organization.

Perhaps the key to the working relations, and thus to the success, of the Service Organization, although it was not identified by the members who were asked about the success of the group, is that everyone who enters the organization is able to contribute individual skills and pursue individual interests within the supportive environment the organization provides. Members have to learn a lot about "the way things are done," but they have the chance to make their own unique contributions in the process.

The key to success which most members would identify is the participation, perspective, and contribution of faculty members. Certainly that is vital to the way the organization gets things done. Faculty serve as sounding boards, historians, and steadying influences. The students were unanimous in their praise for the faculty members and in attributing the success of the organization to the faculty presence. However, the faculty members rarely take an active role in implementing the projects. An occasional project will attract considerable faculty participation, and certain faculty will participate in most of the projects alongside the students. On the whole, though, the faculty serve in an advisory capacity, while the students do much of the actual work. In that circumstance and with a membership that is limited in numbers, the ability of the organization to use the best talents of its members is crucial to its success.
Even within successful organizations there are areas which could be improved, and the Service Organization is no exception. Some of the members believe the organization may be making too many demands on its members in a time when most of the members have a part-time job and also wish to remain involved in other student activities. As this study ended, such concerns were coming to light and being discussed.

Effects of length of membership. Within the Service Organization, members may enter the organization at any time in their academic career from the end of the freshman year to the middle of the senior year. Most enter during the sophomore or junior year and remain active until graduation. A few, however, enter during the freshman year or remain active after undergraduate graduation, as graduate students.

These varying lengths of membership create a situation which is not present within the other three organizations in this study. Both the organization and the individuals who are members longer than the average length of time have problems of "out-growing" each other. From observations and interviews with members in all phases of membership, it seems that they are aware of problems, but they do not seem to have identified the source. One member said, "I prayed for graduation," for two members who had graduated in the recent past. They were both members whom everyone liked, but their effectiveness as members had diminished and they reportedly caused problems within the organization by having been around "too long."

Within the organization at the time of this study were three members who seemed to have been around "too long," one while starting graduate school and the other two as undergraduates. They shared a
certain amount of disaffection from the organization, although all had been loyal members and retained a high regard for the organization. From the standpoint of these individuals, membership in the organization had changed in character as they had remained active and saw all the friends with whom they had entered graduate and leave.

The problem seems to stem from the closeness which is developed among members, the rich relationships on which the organization relies when members are asked to do so much work with the organization. One of these members said:

When you get in, you build a really close bond with that group of friends, and you don't want to replace them because they're special to you and you can't replace them. So if you're a young kid and you get to be good friends with some juniors and seniors, when they graduate, you just don't have the heart or the motivation left to make that new group of [members] your special group of friends.

The members who have been in the group for so long that their best friends have graduated do not have the same commitment to the present group. They have gone through "withdrawal," but they are unable to withdraw completely.

From the standpoint of the organization, the presence of these withdrawn members can become a morale problem. In a group which thrives on enthusiasm and commitment to new projects, having members around who are not enthusiastic and committed is a problem. The other members seemed to have found no better solution than to wait for graduation.

A related situation which can arise occurs when elections are held and former officers who have been accustomed to leading the organization find themselves in the role of participant and follower. In the transition which occurred during this study, no problems appeared to develop.
The previous and newly-elected president conferred, but the new president appeared to assume the office with relative ease, and the former president chaired a project to remain occupied.

**Systemic perspective.** The Service Organization appears to be one of the most highly regarded and well known student organizations on the university campus. During the study, the organization was approached by organizations both on and off campus and asked to take responsibility for projects. At the annual banquet, members of the central administration and the Board of Trustees of the university were present. Shortly after the banquet, one of the projects sponsored by the Service Organization was presented to the Board of Trustees for its approval, because of the nature of the project. At least one Trustee wrote to congratulate the organization on its efforts and to make a financial contribution to another project.

**Basis of knowledge and beliefs during Established Membership in the Service Organization.** The members of the Service Organization develop a rapport unlike that of any of the other organizations studied. It is similar to the working relationships enjoyed by the officers of the Sport Club, but extends throughout the membership of the Service Organization. Within that rapport lies a key to the manner in which the organization functions. Members have a clear understanding of the purpose of the organization and high expectations of and for each other.

Information about what the organization is doing is clearly available at all times. Communication occurs almost constantly, in both informal contacts and formal meetings. Members were observed sharing information with each other in a variety of settings, particularly
before meetings began. By obtaining information in advance, they were able to move more quickly through more business in formal meetings.

Many of the decisions within the Service Organization are made through discussion and consensus rather than through formal voting. For the most part, formal votes are used for official approval of projects, election of officers, and financial allocations. For other items, if a hand count is even used, it comes after discussion clearly reveals the consensus of the body, and the vote merely ratifies that consensus.

Under such circumstances, a shared body of information and beliefs develops. Members do not have to wonder if they are alone in their opinions, nor do they proceed with little direction through projects and activities. When lack of information becomes a problem, they confer with each other or with other resource persons on campus.

Summary of Issues during Established Membership

There is little difference, within any of the organizations, between the nature of Established Membership and earlier stages of membership. Within the organizations which provide adequate information and clear expectations to prospective members, the same thing happens during New Membership and Established Membership. The reverse is true in the other organizations.

During Established Membership, individuals learn and perpetuate the patterns that have evolved within their organizations. Thus it happens that even those members of the class honoraries who are most disappointed with their experience do little or nothing to change the patterns and assure that succeeding members are better informed. And a member of the Sport Club who appears quiet and who reports being shy and
reserved anticipates attending trips and being one of the partying older members someday. A member of the Service Organization who has already enjoyed success as a student leader in other activities expects to refine leadership skills and develop new ones through participating in the processes of the Service Organization.

The evidence shows that conditions which exist within the organizations before an individual enters will have a major impact on the participation of that individual. Persons with different interests, backgrounds, and personalities participate in each of the organizations, but the patterns of participation within any one of the organizations are remarkably similar among its members. Where membership involvement is common, virtually all members contribute; where it is uncommon, virtually none do. Where satisfaction with the organization is high, participation is, too. Where satisfaction is low, so is participation.

The conditions within the organizations do not determine behavior in a mechanistic, unalterable way. Individuals can, and sometimes do, break out of previous patterns. The president of one of the class honoraries reported starting the year with the attitude that no efforts needed to be made to get members acquainted, thinking that would happen in time. That attitude changed as time passed and members remained unacquainted. An officer was designated to plan activities which would introduce members to each other. The president and the designated officer had broken a pattern. To their dismay, however, the members did not respond with the desired enthusiasm and did not break the pattern. The two officers considered their attempt a failure.
When attempts are made to change organizational patterns, they seem to be most successful when a group consensus develops about the need for change and the type of change needed. Within the Sport Club, the officers decide together how they want to change things. In the case of setting up committees in which members could participate, one officer developed the idea, but it was presented to all the officers and approved by them before it was implemented. Similarly, when the Service Organization decided to drop a traditional project, the idea came from one member, but the entire organization discussed it, weighed the merits of the project and the implications of dropping it, and decided to drop it. Even those who had initially favored continuing it appeared satisfied that the interests of the organization were met in the consideration and accepted the decision.

Established Membership is the stage in which the patterns and cycles are perpetuated. Changing an organization or understanding why and how patterns develop requires understanding the nature of Established Membership.

**Summary of the Framework for Organizational Knowledge and Beliefs**

The framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs emerged as the membership patterns of each organization in the study were observed and analyzed. Of special interest were the manner in which individuals received information about the organization, incorporated the information into their personal view toward the organization, and became
assimilated into the established patterns in which members of the organization operated.

The evidence shows that the patterns within each organization are consistent for individuals at each stage of membership: prior to entering, immediately upon entry, and during established membership. These patterns are developed from what individuals are able to find out about the organization, what opinions they form, and what actions they take as members of the organization, based on the information and opinions they hold.

Organizational Culture and the Framework of Organizational Knowledge and Beliefs

The framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs provides insight into the processes within each organization. One who is interested in organizational culture must develop an understanding of such processes. Behavior which characterizes and reveals organizational culture does not occur in isolation, but within the context of patterns and processes which members of the organization learn and follow.

In the remaining sections of the discussion, the organizational culture of each of the organizations in this study will be described. Certain issues and topics which are related to the organizational culture of the organizations in the study will be identified and will form the basis of the discussion of each organization.
Organizational Culture within College Student Organizations

Individuals who enter college student organizations, as well as any other organization, learn the patterns of behavior and belief which characterize the organization. The manner in which each of the organizations in this study incorporates new members into the organization has been discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. It has been shown that each organization has a different pattern of incorporating new members and, subsequently, different patterns of behavior and belief.

In addition to developing patterns for incorporating new members, the organizations in this study showed patterns in four other areas which are related to organizational culture. These four organizational topics, which were identified as the material from the study was analyzed, are organizational self-image, documentation and evaluation, the role of social activities, and the use of organizational insignia. They are at least somewhat related to the topics in the framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs, and the evidence used to describe the framework is also appropriate for describing these topics. However, these topics cross the categories of the framework, so that, for example, organizational self-image influences members in each stage of membership. Viewed within an organizational context, they help illuminate and illustrate the organizational culture within each organization.

Each topic is explained below, followed by a description of the organizational culture of the four organizations in the study. The four organizational topics and the issues which have been identified during the discussion of the framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs
occur in patterns within each organization. These patterns, along with the images and symbols used by members, constitute the organizational culture. It is difficult to identify cause-and-effect relationships or to say that culture either causes or is caused by certain behaviors. It is possible, however, to identify the ways in which those behaviors are consistent with each other within the cultural context.

Organizational Self-Image

The first topic is the development and effect on members and activities of organizational self-image. Organizational self-image is the attitude members of the organization develop in regard to what they expect to be able to do and what they think members of the organization should do to fulfill the purpose of the organization. The self-image is developed from an awareness among members of what the organization's purposes are and how those purposes have been implemented by previous members.

When the image of the organization is clear and shared by most members, decisions about what the organization should do are relatively easy to make. When the image is unclear or not shared among the members, decisions are difficult and may be disputed or not supported.

The central questions regarding this topic are what members think the purposes of the organization are, how purposes direct members in planning activities, how traditions affect the decisions members make, and what verbal or mental images or symbols members develop to describe or evaluate the organization. Members appear to develop an image of the organization early in their contact with the group, and that image influences subsequent participation.
Documentation and Evaluation

An issue closely related to organizational self-image is the extent of documentation and evaluation. In some ways, this may be the single most important factor separating the organizations in this study, because those which use documentation to sustain patterns within the organization offer more guidelines to new members than do the organizations which leave little record of the activities they have completed. When new members enter a student organization, they look for some form of information about what previous members have done within the organization and about what is expected of members. Before deciding what they themselves will do, they often want to know what has been done before. In each of the organizations in this study someone within the organization asked about "how they did it last year," when one or more projects was mentioned. They rely on written information when it is available, as it may be in constitutions which specify the purposes of the organization, minutes or reports which give a record of organizational activities, or membership handbooks which explain general procedures for members to follow. Lacking such information, new or inexperienced members reported having difficulty deciding what and how to carry out the purposes of the organization.

When students have materials available about previous organizational activities, they may choose to follow the previous agenda very carefully, or that agenda may serve merely to give the students ideas about developing their own plans. One could argue that responsible college students should be able to make their own plans and decisions, but members of the organizations in this study which did not maintain
records about previous organizational activities made few attempts to do so.

A companion activity to documentation is evaluation. Another word for what sometimes happens within these four organizations is "reflection." During evaluation or reflection, a student or a group within the organization might ask, "What are we doing or what have we done as an organization? What should we be doing?" When the organization has actually done something, evaluation is appropriate. To start out the year or to change course in the middle of the year, reflection is appropriate, giving the members either the challenge or the opportunity to decide what to do.

**Role of Social Activities**

During discussion of members' acquaintance in an earlier section, social activities were mentioned. They warrant attention again because of the differences which are apparent among the four organizations. Each organization planned social activities, but with varying degrees of success and for different purposes. The purposes and impact of social activities for the members appear to be directly related to the organizational culture and the members' sense of identity with the organization. During the description of the culture of each organization, the attitude toward and support of social activities will be discussed.

**Use of Organizational Insignia**

The fourth issue is the use of organizational insignia, which can be jewelry, uniforms, or other type clothing. This issue is less a factor within the organizations in this study than it might be within organizations such as Greeks, but the variations in use of insignia
parallel other variations among the organizations studied, in ways that
will be described as the cultures are described.

Organizational Culture of Class Honorary A

Organization A can be understood best through images which indicate lack of direction, futility of effort, and inability to set and achieve goals. The images which most clearly describe A are those of a ship without a rudder or a runner stumbling in darkness. In both images, the basic problem is that movement is hindered and following a path is difficult. Similarly, the purposes and goals that members of A express are very poorly met, if at all, and very little is done in A, especially compared to what some members thought they would do when they became members.

Two examples illustrate situations in which a course was apparently decided upon but never followed. The first involves a service project which the researcher was told about in one of the earliest contacts with the organization. The advisor of another honorary had approached Honorary A about participating in a joint project, seeking pledges for a bowl-a-thon to support a health-related charity. The members of A had agreed to participate, expecting that to be a major service project during winter quarter. As the quarter progressed, they heard nothing more about the project. Someone asked about it at each meeting, but the discussion was basically the same each time: "[Advisor of other honorary] was supposed to get back with us on that." At no time during the discussion was anyone designated to contact the advisor or a member of the other honorary to inquire about the project. The time for the project passed without A doing anything about it, and no other project
was developed. Several members expressed dissatisfaction that the quarter had passed without any major service project being sponsored. At least partial blame can be placed on the advisor of the other honorary, for introducing an idea and not following through, but the officers and members of A allowed the time to pass without taking action to get information and take part in the project.

Another example of a general lack of direction occurred during discussion of new member selections. At a meeting early in the quarter, a volunteer was sought to chair the selection committee. One member volunteered, but at a later meeting, discussion arose as to who the chair was to be. The volunteer was not at the later meeting, and none of those present could remember who had indicated an interest in the position, nor were there minutes of the earlier meeting to give them the information. Those present decided they thought it was one person, when in fact it was another. The research ended before the situation was resolved, but the investigator could foresee a problem, since the president planned to contact the person who was thought to have volunteered and made no plans to contact the person who had actually volunteered. This occurred as the quarter was ending and applications for membership were due, so the organization was going to have little time available to correct the mistake, or the person who was contacted would have little time to prepare for the selection process.

These two examples illustrate the difficulties members of A have in accomplishing their objectives. The service project was never undertaken, and the membership selection volunteer was apparently going to be replaced. The pattern is that members of A frequently do not wind up
where they think they are going, and they often think they have gone nowhere at all. The pattern of too little information and too little decisiveness is characteristic of each aspect of the organization, as the discussion to follow will show.

Organizational self-image in class honorary A. Class honorary A experiences some difficulties caused by the lack of a well-defined self-image. Members enter the organization either with no clear idea about the purposes and activities of the organization or with conflicting ideas. All agree that the term, "honorary," implies a recognition function, so that students' achievements are the basis of membership selection. Some believe that recognition is the only viable function of the organization and that membership is a reward for efforts in other organizations and activities. Others believe that, although membership is a reward, it also carries obligations of service. Few of them have a clear idea of what constitutes "service" for a college honorary, but they think the organization should do some sort of service project.

Either opinion—that membership is strictly for recognition or that it entails service responsibilities—is based on the information which members received about the organization prior to membership. A problem arises when members with different opinions about what the organization should do begin to work together.

The definition and self-image of the class honoraries is influenced—and possibly confused—by the presence of the coordinating body for class honoraries. The upperclass honoraries which are members of that body have somewhat more clearly defined purposes which include service projects, according to the members of the honoraries in the
study. Whereas members of both A and B might develop internal consensus that their organizations would be recognition societies without a service component, the coordinating body influences A and B to plan service activities. The influence is not accompanied by guidance, however, so A and B remain uncertain about what to do for service activities.

The organizational self-image is also influenced by the image members have of themselves. As underclass students, they view themselves as being too young and too inexperienced to sponsor a major activity. One member reported that some people seem to feel "intimidated, like they don't have anything to contribute." With such a self-image, which members reported they developed or saw in others early in the membership year, the organization seldom attempts to do anything other than hold meetings, and those meetings are poorly attended. The service project which the organization adopted was one which the previous year's group had done, tape-recording material for Disability Services. Members saw that as a worthwhile project, but said it did nothing to bring the organization together because it was an individualized project.

Documentation and evaluation in honorary A. Honorary A showed the least use of written records of any of the organizations in this study. No reports, minutes, or constitution were evident in this study. A list of members and telephone numbers was available, which contained information on about two-thirds of the original members.

The absence of documentation about previous year's activities added to the difficulty the organization had in deciding on projects and activities. Members had little information about or experience in
planning projects. That may explain why they participated in the two projects they reported during the study: reading for Disability Services, and making and carrying a sign for the university's Homecoming parade. In both instances, someone else provided the details about what to do. The Office of Disability Services has standard procedures for volunteers, and the Homecoming Committee Parade Chair provided instructions on how to register for and march in the parade. Although not all the members participated in either activity, the ones who did reported that they had enjoyed them.

Without documentation about previous activities, Honorary A's members had little to evaluate. They also spent little time reflecting upon possible activities. Several members reported during their interviews that they had thought about projects or procedures which could change the way the organization was functioning and make it "better," but they either had never mentioned their ideas in a meeting or, if they had, the idea had never been acted on by the organization. One example of an idea that was not accepted was given by a member who was dissatisfied with the meeting schedule. That member reported that A did not adopt a standard meeting time. At one time or another, a meeting was held each night of the school week, at times set by the officers, who notified the other members. The rationale was to avoid conflicts which would prevent a member from attending meetings because of a standing commitment to a class or another organization. The result, however, was that by the time the members were notified of the next meeting, many of them had conflicts which could have been avoided had they had earlier notice of A's meeting. The member had suggested that a regular schedule
of meetings be established, to prevent such conflicts and allow members to plan around A's meetings. That suggestion was considered, but was not acted upon. The member was frustrated that one apparent solution to an organizational problem was so easily dismissed.

Role of social activities in honorary A. Few of the members of A know each other on a personal basis, and the organization does not regularly sponsor social activities as a means of increasing acquaintance among the members. Immediately following their entry into the organization, the new members were invited to a submarine sandwich party in the student union, which had been planned by the previous officers and was attended by many of the new members. The next social event was a party sponsored by honorary B during fall quarter. Few members of A attended and only the Social Chair from B did, so most people judged that to be a failure. No other social activities or acquaintance exercises during meetings were attempted.

Use of organizational insignia in honorary A. Members of A do not have any insignia available to signify membership in A. The advisor reported that a design for a pin had been used in the past, but that no one ordered a pin anymore because of the expense. The members discussed designing a T-shirt for members to order, but that had not been done as of the end of the last full quarter of membership. The one identifying design that was seen was a drawing of the symbol of the organization—a fixture on campus at which the tapping ceremony is conducted each year—which was on the cover of the initiation ceremony program from the previous spring.
Summary of the Organizational Culture of Honorary A

Students entered class honorary A with widely diverse ideas about what kind of organization it would be and what participation in it would entail. No single activity at the beginning of the year was designed to develop consensus about the purposes. Members who were interviewed reported expectations ranging from A's being the most engrossing and important organization for that student during the year of membership, to its being a nice recognition to include on future applications but not an organization that warranted members' time. The result is an organization which decides on very little, because interests and opinions are so diverse, and which accomplishes only a portion of what is decided, because the level of participation is so low.

Organization A is limited in shared understandings and patterns of meaning that indicate organizational culture. The implication of organizational culture is that it serves as an interpretive framework within which members view and respond to various issues and concerns which they encounter through the organization. The only consistent response among members of A is not to respond. Ideas may be suggested, but are seldom implemented. Meetings are scheduled, but few members attend. In the interviews, members identified problems they saw within the organization, such as lack of purpose and lack of membership involvement, but they said they made little effort to seek solutions to those problems. Most of them said they were "just waiting to get out" of the organization.

As members enter A they learn or otherwise come to believe that they will not be able to do much because they are too young, or too
inexperienced, or because membership will not last long enough. They act in the belief that they can do little, which means they seldom act at all.

**Organizational Culture of Class Honorary B**

Many of the patterns which develop in organization B are similar to those seen in organization A. Members seldom take initiative on behalf of the organization, often do not follow through on ideas that are suggested, and, in many cases, indicate a lack of interest by staying away from organization meetings.

An image of a ship is appropriate for B as well as for A, but in the case of B, the ship is one which is attempting to function with a skeleton crew, and some of the crew are threatening mutiny. The "skeleton crew" is composed of the members who attend meetings, which is approximately half of the original members. They are enough to keep the organization going, but do not think they are enough to plan and implement projects for the organization. The "mutiny" is the process of members' blaming the president for the organization's problems and for members' lack of involvement within the organization. The president of the organization, like the captain of such a ship, faces an impossible task if such crew as there is fails to cooperate in directing the ship.

As in class honorary A, implementing projects is difficult for class honorary B. Ideas presented to the members may win agreement in principle, but often are not implemented. For example, one service project, to visit a retirement home, was approved, but the date was delayed so many times that the project had not been completed more than a full quarter after the idea had been accepted.
Organizational self-image in class honorary B. What was said of honorary A applies equally to B: Members enter with different ideas about whether recognition alone is the purpose of the organization, or whether service is an obligation which is required in return for the reward of recognition. As in A, no discussion specifically intended to clarify the purposes was ever held.

An added hindrance to the development of shared understandings about the organization is that the members of B developed a strong sense of "we" and "they," distinguishing between themselves and the officers, most especially the president. The president was blamed for a variety of ills within the organization, especially for forcing decisions which some members thought do not reflect the interests and wishes of the members. For example, one member reported making a suggestion about a service project. The suggested change would have made the member feel much more comfortable about the service the organization had chosen to perform, but the president rejected the idea. According to the member reporting the exchange, "it was supposed to appear like a group decision, but . . . [the president] was sort of influencing them toward it."

Documentation and evaluation in honorary B. About midway through one of the meetings of honorary B, the president leaned over and said to the vice president, "Nobody's taking minutes for this meeting, are they?" The secretary was absent and no one had been designated to take minutes. That was indicative of the documentation within honorary B: Members had an idea of what is documented within many organizations, but they had not mastered the procedures for using documentation as a useful organizational practice. The president was mindful enough of minutes to
think about them, but not so mindful as to call for the reading of previous minutes at the beginning of the meeting and realize that no one was there to take minutes of the current meeting.

The basic documents which were evident within honorary B were a constitution, which some but not all members had; a membership roster with information for all members, which was distributed at the beginning of winter quarter, almost half-way into the membership year; informal minutes, in the form of notes the secretary took at the meetings and from which the secretary read directly, without preparing them in permanent form, at the next meeting; and a compilation of instructions for the membership selection process. There was no evidence of written reports other than those for selection.

The officers and advisor used the constitution as the rationale for decisions about projects, often using an interpretation which others saw as narrow: "The officers don't seem to want to do anything that's not written into the constitution." Several members reported that they felt they had little influence in the decisions about what constituted acceptable projects, since either the president or the advisor would cite the constitution as limiting the range of suitable projects.

The projects which were accomplished were seldom evaluated, either in advance for the members to judge whether they seemed appropriate given the purposes of the organization as the students saw those purposes, or after completion to judge whether they had been worthwhile and should be recommended to the next year's group. The project of reading for Disability Services was done because, "Throughout the years, [honorary B] has been active with the Disability Services," not because
previous members had evaluated the project and recommended that succeeding members continue it. Similarly, the procedures for selecting new members remained essentially the same each year, despite current members' reports that the process was not well-publicized and their discussions about changing the process. Without a formal or official evaluation, the process was not going to change.

**Role of social activities in honorary B.** As in honorary A, members in B are not well-acquainted. Honorary B had a social chair, who attempted to increase social contacts among B's members and between A and B. As mentioned previously, B sponsored a Christmas party with A, at which the social chair was the only member from B present. The social chair also attempted to coordinate acquaintance exercises at meetings so that members of B could become acquainted. One which the investigator observed occurred before a meeting and everyone in attendance participated. Another was conducted at the end of a meeting, but about half the people in attendance left, rather than stay for the acquaintance activity.

Both the president and social chair expressed disappointment at the lack of interest among members, but one member said directly, "It's not like a close-knit group, which I don't really think I want it to be."

**Use of organizational insignia in honorary B.** Members of honorary B discussed ordering T-shirts with the organization's design on them and pins which were available to them, but neither item had been ordered and received as of the end of the last full quarter of membership. The T-shirts had been designed, but not ordered. The pins had been ordered
by approximately 10 members, but delays in shipping them meant that those who ordered them would not receive them until after they had completed the year of active membership.

In the discussion about T-shirts, it was said that the T-shirt would give the organization "visibility," especially among the students who would be eligible to apply for membership. The thinking was that if the organization were more visible, then more students would apply for membership for the following year. Unfortunately, given the rationale, the purpose of the T-shirt was negated when the deadline for membership applications passed and the shirts still had not been ordered.

Summary of organizational culture in honorary B

Honorary B showed the pattern of getting half-way involved but seldom achieving full participation: About half the members attended meetings; about half of them contributed hours of service to the service project with Disability Services; the T-shirts were designed but not printed before the membership year ended; and a service project to visit a retirement home was planned but never implemented.

The lack of follow-through may be a result of the distance between officers and members. The members reported feeling as though the officers, particularly the president, sometimes made decisions without heeding members' opinions, so the members felt under no obligation to support ideas that officers developed and presented.

In such a climate, members did not take personal responsibility for or indicate a sense of identity with the organization. One member called the members "apathetic." The prevailing attitude is that they are there merely to bide their time until they can leave the
organization. One said, "I think most people just sort of want to get their requirements and then get out. Some wait to get into the next year's honorary and some leave the system of class honoraries entirely.

Organizational Culture of the Sport Club

The prevailing idea within the Sport Club was that the club provides an opportunity to have a good time, to meet people, and to drink a lot of free beer. The cultural pattern is to "package" every event as the best way to spend the members' time and money. The club officers are responsible for creating the conditions under which that becomes possible, and most of the time, for most of the members, the Sport Club is synonymous with fun and partying.

Organizational self-image in the Sport Club. The members who were interviewed reported that they joined the Sport Club for two reasons: to enjoy the sport and to enjoy inexpensive parties. They, unlike members of the class honoraries, reported no confusion about the purposes or appropriate activities of the organization. As long as the conditions were right for the sport when they went on trips and as long as there was plenty of beer for all, the members felt good about the organization.

The image within the Sport Club is maintained, if not actually created, by the few people who speak before the group. Those are primarily the officers, who are in the position to say both what the group will do and why. They tell the members that the trips and other events planned for the club will be fun and will be well worth the money they cost. (One officer calculated that the dues, divided by the number of parties offered, entitled members to attend parties that cost 21.8¢
each.) Thus, they create an image of both fun and value, which the members seem to understand and support.

A few members who were interested in the administrative activities of the club would have liked more opportunities for general members, rather than only officers, to contribute to running the organization and making decisions. Their concern, however, was not so much to see changes in the actual activities as to see changes in the way activities were decided on. One member, who ran unsuccessfully for office, reported in an interview that people in the club who had enjoyed the sport at a number of different locations were seldom or never consulted about good locations for trips. The member would have tried to change that and draw on the experience of more members in making trip decisions.

Both that member and all the other members interviewed indicated that they enjoyed and benefited from membership in the club and would continue to be active because they "really like it."

The image that the Sport Club is something to enjoy does not prevent the officers from devoting a great deal of time and effort to make the club operate smoothly. Even they seem to want to emphasize the fun side rather than the work, however. They work in an office equipped with a stereo radio, which is almost always playing when they are in the office. They respond efficiently and readily when work is required, but an unspoken code seems to make them want to make everything they do appear easy and fun.

**Documentation and evaluation in the Sport Club.** There are two forms of documentation within the Sport Club: written and pictorial. The written documents are a constitution which gives general guidelines
for how the organization will be organized and operated, and extensive reports which give detailed information on each trip or activity the club has sponsored during its 11-year existence on the campus. The officers follow the guidelines of the constitution and use the reports frequently, but other members know very little about either. When officers plan new projects or trips, they have full knowledge of what was done on previous similar activities. One officer said that if all the officers left the club at the same time, new officers could step in and learn exactly what needed to be done in every major area of club activity simply by reading the reports.

The other form of documentation was slide shows which either previewed or followed major trips of the organization. Individuals took pictures during club trips and a volunteer assembled them in a slide show, set to music and offered with informal commentary by others who had been present on the trip. The slides were approximately equally divided between scenes of members enjoying the sport and scenes of parties.

Evaluation of club activities also took two forms. The most frequent indicator of success used by officers was attendance at club functions. During this study the officers were very pleased with all the numbers they monitored: participation was at capacity on the major trips they offered; at capacity on the weekly trips; up from the previous year at the weekly parties following business meetings, as measured by the number of kegs of beer consumed, up from an average of six per party the previous year to an average of eight per party during this
study; and up at business meetings, although only a small percentage of members attended business meetings.

All the officers interviewed judged the success of activities on the basis of response from members. The officers reasoned that the members would attend if the club offered attractive activities, and that if members attended, the activities must be attractive. Under the circumstances, the officers supported the idea of "more of the same."

The second measure of success was financial. Each trip was designed to make a small profit, so that proceeds from trips could support other activities and supplement the membership dues. As the study concluded, the officers were discussing how to sponsor trips the following year without working through a travel agent, thus saving a few dollars on every trip. The numbers were being studied carefully, and indications were that the officers would decide to try arranging the trips themselves. The written reports were referred to frequently during negotiations with representatives of various sites for trips.

Role of social activities in the Sport Club. Social activities are considered to be one of the two main purposes of the Sport Club, along with activities associated with the sport. Every member who was interviewed reported that the parties and social events attract many, if not most, of the people who join the club. The officers believed that "no one would join" if the club did not sponsor social events to keep people involved with the club.

The weekly parties following business meetings provide members a routine event to attend. The club arranges with the bars at which parties are held—a different bar each week—to restrict entry to club
members, so that either a separate room or the entire bar is reserved for members. Members were observed arriving in pairs or small groups, and then joining with other clusters of people. The members who were interviewed reported that most members go to parties with friends they already know, and then become acquainted with other people their friends know. Several members described the people who attend the parties as "real friendly," and said that many members introduce themselves to others.

Parties are also important on the trips the club sponsors. One officer said that the club has a reputation for offering the best value on trips, because the package price always includes parties and other activities, including some meals, whereas other student groups' trip packages usually do not include parties. When the Sport Club negotiates trips, arrangements for parties are included in the negotiations.

The parties offer a setting in which members can become acquainted. With over 1000 members, the club never attempts to sponsor an activity which all members attend. However, the members get acquainted at parties and then attend other events together, such as intramural games and trips.

Use of organizational insignia in the Sport Club. Very few Sport Club members used insignia to identify them with the club, but items of clothing were available, and some members bought and wore them.

At the first meeting of the quarter when this study was conducted, an idea for a T-shirt was presented by an officer, for review by members. A design had been developed for a figure and lettering to be printed on the shirt, and members were asked to indicate what style of
shirt they would prefer or whether they would purchase one. Only a few dozen members indicated they would buy one, but the officers thought the level of interest was high enough to warrant an order. The order was placed and the shirts were available within a month for those who chose to buy them. The process was a contrast to that in both class honoraries, in which no action was taken to order T-shirts because decisions were delayed until members could agree on an idea.

The T-shirts were available to anyone who wanted to buy one, but another item of clothing appeared to have been designed by the officers for themselves, a winter jacket with the name of the school and the club sewn on the back. The jacket and letters were in the school colors. Several, but not all, of the officers wore the jackets to a meeting at the end of the quarter. No non-officers were seen wearing the jackets, so it appeared that a few of the officers had designed and purchased the jackets as individuals.

The Sport Club displayed identification with the university when the spring break trip was being planned. One of the instructions was for everyone making the trip to wear and carry items with the school name and colors prominently displayed. The trip was to coincide with the trips of students from many other universities, so the university identity was emphasized more than the club identity.

**Summary of Organizational Culture in the Sport Club**

The Sport Club is a pleasure culture. The main purposes are enjoyment, of the sport and of parties. Whenever a member was asked about the benefits of membership, the response related to having fun at a reasonable price. The club provides both regular parties and special
trips at low cost. The officers and a core of members do the work so
the general membership can enjoy what the club offers.

The emphasis on parties, fun, and value affects the way the offi-
cers do their jobs, because they look for ways to portray activities as
being fun and being a good value. If an activity is not connected in
some way to promoting low-cost fun, the Sport Club is not likely to
sponsor it.

Organizational Culture of the Service Organization

The Service Organization is characterized by a "can do" spirit,
one in which it seems the members ask how they will do something, rather
than whether they will be able to do it.

Within the culture of the Service Organization, everyone has a
contribution to make and makes it willingly. Although there are dis-
agreements and differences of opinion, no one in the Service Organiza-
tion was ever heard to complain about being excluded from decision-mak-
ing or having their ideas dismissed without consideration, as happened
in each of the other organizations.

Organizational self-image in the Service Organization. The image
used most frequently by members of the Service Organization is that of a
train moving rapidly--barreling, they would say--down the tracks. The
image was used in several contexts, but arose most often when new mem-
bership was discussed. During an overnight "bull session" soon after
new officers were elected, the members discussed how new members could
be incorporated into the organization more quickly and smoothly, without
stopping all other activities to give them time to get acclimated. The
image of the train barreling ahead was accompanied by the image of
individual members' standing on the side of the tracks, hesitating to get on board. One member said that the new members had to learn how to "grab hold and get on board." In an organization which admits members individually, rather than in large groups, it is not feasible to suspend other activities while new members learn all they need to know.

The image of a train on a track is not entirely appropriate, because it connotes one track and one direction. The Service Organization conducts many simultaneous activities, all somewhat coordinated but also somewhat autonomous. A more apt image might be a multi-lane freeway, with cloverleaf interchanges and occasional rest areas. Each member travels in a lane which is coordinated with other members, so that simultaneous and fast-paced activities can occur with a minimum of collisions or bottlenecks. At certain points, as projects are completed, individuals may stop at a rest area or change directions at an interchange. Unlike the image of the train, the freeway image allows one to account for different paces, different routes, and different destinations, but it still connotes fast-paced movement which can have undesired consequences for members who stand still while the organization keeps moving.

Self-image is also important to the way individuals view their participation and contribution to the organization. Whereas members of the class honoraries reported feeling "intimidated" and "apathetic," members of the Service Organization reported being energized and challenged by the Service Organization. The system of requiring each probationary member to chair a project also included the implicit reassurance that, "We accept you as a member because we know you can do what we
require of you. And we'll help you do it." New members had some doubts about their abilities, but they were encouraged to test them within the Service Organization, and most of them reported that they exceeded their own expectations about what they would be able to accomplish.

Documentation and evaluation in the Service Organization. The Service Organization is on a par with the Sport Club in its use of documentation, and it does more evaluation than any of the other organizations in this study.

The documents the Service Organization uses are a constitution; minutes of each meeting, which are distributed to members at the next meeting and are available to those who miss a meeting; an information booklet which is available to prospective members; a membership handbook which is given to each new member; and extensive reports which detail the projects sponsored by the organization.

The written information is used extensively by members at all stages of membership. Prior to entering the organization, the prospective members can review the purposes, history, and structure of the organization by reading the information book. They are required to know the information for membership interviews.

Upon entering, the new members receive a complete membership handbook. The purpose of the handbook is explained on the first page:

[The Service Organization] is a very complex organization with a constantly changing membership and an elaborate internal structure. This document of the practices, procedures, and traditions of the organization was developed for your use to provide easy access to important information.

The handbook explains everything from the formal structure of the organization, to the proper attire for the luncheon business meetings,
to the procedures for presenting project ideas for consideration. During the study it was not apparent whether members used the handbook or relied on other members to explain procedures to them, but the handbook was given to all new members at the first or second meeting after they were admitted to the organization, so the information was available to them.

The other form of documentation which members used extensively was a reporting system for each project which was conducted. An officer was responsible for collecting reports from all projects, and that officer made announcements several times to remind members to turn in project reports. Since the projects were more varied than the Sport Club's trips, the manner in which the reports are used within the two organizations varies, but the general use is the same in both organizations: The reports aid succeeding year's members in conducting projects which have been done before and in avoiding mistakes and problems which hindered previous efforts.

The Service Organization used the most extensive evaluation system of any of the organizations in this study. The organization operates on a project-based agenda, and each project must be justified before it is accepted. Even activities which take place every year, such as a banquet at the end of the term of office, must go through a committee review process in which all of the committees question the project chair on the procedures, costs, and content of the project. This "zero-base" approach requires that the use of the organization's time and money be justified before commitments are made, even to traditional projects. In the course of the study, the investigator observed the process of review
in which one traditional project was not renewed, and members told the investigator that another traditional project had been turned down the previous year. In both cases, the members thought that other organizations could better sponsor the project and that other projects the Service Organization could do would better serve the organization and the university. Steps were taken to assure that other groups which normally relied on the Service Organization knew about the decision in time to adjust to it, and the Service Organization replaced the traditional project with something new.

**Role of social activities in the Service Organization.** The role of social activities moves along a pendulum, according to members who have been in the Service Organization long enough to see cycles recur. The members of the group work closely together and become good friends, so they often socialize with each other. At times, however, according to some of the members, the social activities can begin to overshadow the stated purposes of the organization, so that activities begin to be centered around parties, or members become so involved with other members that they neglect recruiting new members.

The members who discussed this said that a balance is needed. One member noted that the requirements of the organization can be so demanding, that if there is not a strong bond of friendship among the members, the commitment to the organization will not be strong enough to assure that work will be done. On the other hand, as other members noted, if the group becomes too close, it appears to be too "cliquish" or "elitist," and other students will not be attracted to the group. Therefore, they said, the organization's members must try to develop friendships
and allegiances, but also be careful to avoid developing a social atmosphere which excludes other people.

Aside from developing personal friendships within the organization, members of the Service Organization benefit from social activities in other ways. A number of activities of the organization place members in situations in which they work with university administrators and other professionals. This contact puts students in a variety of social settings, ranging from formal banquet to ice cream parties. They learn social expectations for different situations and learn how to conduct themselves in settings similar to those they may find when they enter employment. This is a learning experience which the organization provides and which several of the members interviewed appreciated.

**Use of organizational insignia in the Service Organization.** The Service Organization has several forms of clothing and insignia which identify members. All the members wear clothing with the organization's logo on it during certain projects which make members very visible. That promotes the organization's name at the same time the members are conducting the project.

All the members also receive nametags that they are supposed to wear at luncheon meetings. Most of them wear the nametags most of the time, although there is never a meeting at which every member wears one. When they wear the tags at the luncheon meetings, guests are better able to identify members, and new members become acquainted more easily because of the nametags.

Other insignia are available, including a lapel pin which many, but not all, of the members purchase.
Summary of the Organizational Culture of the Service Organization

The Service Organization is different from each of the other organizations in this study in the degree to which it involves all its members in the development and maintenance of organizational goals, purposes, and activities. The coherence of the members of the Service Organization and their level of involvement with the organization is attributable to the ways in which the organization uses each of the topics related to organizational culture. The development of self-image, use of documentation and evaluation, role of social activities, and use of insignia is not left to the officers, as it is in the other three organizations, but involves all the members of the Service Organization.

Each of these organizations has an organizational culture, defined as learned patterns of behavior and shared understandings. The difference for the class honoraries is that members have learned, within the cultural context, to think that they cannot do many things that they expected to do when they entered the organization. In the Sport Club and the Service Organization, the cultural contexts do not teach members what they cannot do, but rather teach members what to do and how to do it within the patterns of the organization.

Summary of Organizational Issues Related to Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is either based on or determines the extent of the development of the four organizational issues: organizational self-image, use of documentation and evaluation, role of social activities, and use of organizational insignia. Throughout the study, similarities were seen between the Sport Club and the Service Organization
on the one hand, and between the two class honoraries on the other. That alignment is clear when these four issues are considered.

Even given that the nature of the four organizations is different, the evidence indicates that organizations which accomplish the purposes its members would like to see are those which show evidence of having a clear organizational self-image, maintaining records of its activities and examining those activities, bringing members into contact with each other for social activities, and members' having a sense of identity with the organization, often shown through clothing or jewelry which identify them with the group.

None of the above evidence is shown within the class honoraries, two organizations whose members generally give low evaluations of the effectiveness and usefulness of the organization.

Each of these organizations has an organizational culture, defined as learned patterns of behavior and shared understandings. The difference for the class honoraries is that members have learned, within the cultural context, to think that they cannot do many things that they expected to do when they entered the organization. In the Sport Club and the Service Organization, the cultural contexts do not teach members what they cannot do, but rather teach members what to do and how to do it within the patterns of the organization.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study of college student organizations grew from the investigator's interest in the conditions which affect participants and participation in college activities. One who is familiar with college student organizations is likely to have seen organizations go through cycles of success and discouragement, accompanied by either commitment or apathy among members. Some organizations seem to avoid the lowest extremes of the cycle and continue to thrive, even while very similar organizations struggle to maintain membership and activity levels.

The study was designed to discern and investigate the dynamic processes of student organizations and to explore the patterns and cycles within selected organizations. In this chapter the author will discuss how organizational culture develops and contributes to or determines organizational responses to common situations.

The findings of this study will be presented as propositions regarding the nature and consequences of organizational culture. The propositions integrate ideas from the organizational literature and the findings from the study, which may be transferable to organizations in other settings. The propositions are intended to sensitize students of organizations to action patterns which contribute to and result from organizational culture.
Bases of Organizational Culture

The evidence from this study shows that organizational culture within the organizations studied is based on the knowledge and beliefs members have about the organization. That is, what people think about the organization determines their actions as organizational members. In a cycle which repeats itself when new members enter the organization, what previous members have said and done determines what new members think about the organization. The organizational culture, then, is the pattern of thoughts and behaviors which members learn as they enter and perpetuate as they participate in the organization.

The evidence given in Chapter IV describes the framework of organizational knowledge and belief which emerged as the patterns discovered within each organization were compared. The following discussion will relate the evidence of organizational culture in the student organizations to broader ideas about organizational culture and to pertinent ideas and models from the literature which add to an understanding of student organizations as formal organizations.

Categorizing Cultures

Deal and Kennedy (1982) have evaluated cultures within selected successful companies and labeled them "strong culture companies" (p. 7). They have stated,

Every business—in fact, every organization—has a culture. Sometimes it is fragmented and difficult to read from the outside.... On the other hand, sometimes the culture of an organization is very strong and cohesive; everyone knows the goals of the corporation, and they are working for them. Whether weak or strong, culture has a powerful influence throughout an organization. (p. 4)
The authors have implied here and in other places as well that "strong" culture is cohesive, successful, and good for the company. Conversely, "weak" culture is fragmented, unsuccessful and bad for the company.

The evidence from this study refutes the dichotomy of strong-weak organizational cultures. There are strong and weak organizations, as measured by the organization's ability to achieve stated purposes, but the cultures associated with them are not necessarily also strong and weak. In fact, a weak organization may be one in which strong cultural patterns perpetuate the weaknesses of the organization. With that in mind, another dichotomy presents itself.

The cultures of the four organizations in this study can be divided between those which fulfilled the participants' purposes and those which did not, between those whose patterns allowed participants to experience success and those whose patterns almost inevitably led to participants' disappointment. All of the cultures are "strong" in the sense that each one affects all participants, directs organizational activities, and is consistent and coherent. (A "weak" culture would be one in which everything occurred randomly.) However, these "strong" cultures are not all associated with successful or strong organizations.

The dichotomy evident in this study was one between self-fulfilling cultures and self-impeding cultures. That is, from the perspectives of participants, two organizations in this study fulfilled their purposes and allowed participants to experience successes and meet goals. The other two organizations, from their participants' perspectives, failed
to develop purposes and frustrated the attempts of participants to coordinate activities.

The terms are not used in a pejorative sense, but describe the cultural patterns for meeting the goals or purposes which participants identify for each organization. The members of each organization could identify, with varying degrees of clarity and consensus, purposes which they associated with the organization at the time they entered it. Their evaluations about the extent to which the purposes they understood for the organization were met is the basis for labeling each culture either self-fulfilling or self-impeding.

Based on the reports of the members of each organization, the Sport Club and the Service Organization have self-fulfilling cultures, and the class honoraries have self-impeding cultures. Neither category completely describes the organizations, since some stated purposes are less well met than others in the Sport Club and Service Organization and some stated purposes of the class honoraries are met to the satisfaction of members. The label is used to indicate the general pattern of the culture as described by the members during the investigation.

Both self-fulfilling and self-impeding structures can be "strong" cultures, to the extent that the culture determines the conditions under which participants operate and the images of the organization which participants share.

**Self-Fulfilling Cultures**

The cultures of the Sport Club and the Service Organization are self-fulfilling. Members who entered either organization developed a sense that they could, in conjunction with other members, plan and
implement activities to fulfill the purposes of the organization. In addition, the members reported that there was congruence between the activities and purposes they anticipated before entering the organization and those they experienced as members.

In the Sport Club, the purposes were to sponsor sporting activities and parties. Each member interviewed knew those purposes upon joining the organization and reported that the activities supported the purposes. The officers developed other activities with the added purpose of keeping members involved in the organization, such as committee work and intramural sports, but such activities were verbally related to one of the two main purposes.

The culture of the Sport Club was found to be self-fulfilling in that its patterns and images supported its activities and purposes. Officers maintained office hours so that members could call or stop by for information about parties or trips. Officers kept detailed records of each activity so that subsequent activities would have a base of information from which to begin planning. All activities were discussed in terms of partying and fun times.

When dissatisfaction was reported by members of the Sport Club, it was based on the lack of opportunity for members' involvement in decision-making and leadership within the organization, rather than on lack of direction within the organization or lack of congruence between purposes and activities.

The purpose of the Service Organization is to sponsor projects to benefit the university. The focus of the purpose is easily contrasted to one of the purposes of the class honoraries, which is also "service."
As will be explained when those organizations are discussed, the class honoraries lacked a focus or definition for their use of the term "service," which led to difficulty when decisions about activities had to be made.

Although the Service Organization was structured into committees, the activities of the organization were based on projects which individuals designed and directed. The committee system and procedures within the organization supported the project approach, through review processes and suggestions for project chairs.

Within the overall purpose of sponsoring projects to benefit the university, each project was based on its own purposes and obligations. During this study, projects ranged from sponsoring a leadership training workshop for freshman students, to providing coffee and donuts to commuting students, to arranging a 10-kilometer race. The chair for each project presented the idea as one which would serve the university, in keeping with the organization's purpose.

The culture of the Service Organization was found to be self-fulfilling in that the purposes of the organization guided the development of project ideas, and the patterns and images within the organization supported the purpose of service to the university. As in the Sport Club, members reported congruence between the purposes and activities they expected within the organization before entering it and the purposes and activities which were adopted and implemented.

**Proposition 1: Self-Fulfilling Cultures**

Organizations will develop self-fulfilling cultures to the extent that they seek and achieve consensus on purposes, that
they relate activities to purposes, and that they develop images of the organization congruent with and supportive of the purposes.

**Self-Impeding Cultures**

A self-impeding culture is one in which the cultural patterns inhibit members from agreeing on and accomplishing purposes. In such cultures, a pattern develops which consistently prevents consensus. A self-impeding culture is not to be confused with a weak culture, which is one with no discernable patterns and random or inconsistent responses to organizational issues. The patterns are distinct and responses consistent in self-impeding cultures, but they inhibit organizational action.

The class honoraries were found to be self-impeding cultures. A variety of topics arose during observations and interviews which elicited consistent responses from members of the organizations, responses which inevitably limited either members' images of what the organization should and could do or members' commitment to implement decisions.

In many cases, the limitations on the organization took the form of assumptions the members made about themselves or the organization. Two examples illustrate this point.

The first example is the assumption among members that they could not accomplish any major projects. As several members reported in interviews, the reasoning was that, because they are all underclass students, they have no experience in planning or implementing projects within the university. Further, since they have no experience, they cannot attempt a project, because they are underclass students and do
not know enough. The circular reasoning prevented them from examining any of the basic assumptions, such as whether they did, collectively, have experience with university procedures that would have enabled them to undertake a project, or whether some projects were within their scope even without prior experience. Implicit in the discussion of members in interviews was that when they became upperclass students, they would have enough experience to plan and implement projects. No one ever said from where the experience would come.

An ironic note to the reasoning behind students' not planning projects was the unexamined assumption of one of the advisors. The advisor said in an interview that the members did not need much guidance in how to get things done, because they were all selected on the basis of their previous involvement in activities, so they would know how to do things without the advisor's help. The contradiction between what the members reported and what the advisor reported illustrates how assumptions which are part of the cultural pattern of the organization impede the activities of the organization.

A second example of self-impeding cultural patterns is the lack of clarity of purposes within the class honoraries. As the discussion in Chapter IV reported, there were two major purposes which members reported: recognition and service. The members reported that there had been no discussion among new members about which purpose, if either, was most important, or about how the purposes could best be served through organizational activities.

The members could be divided into three primary groups: (a) those who expected membership to provide recognition for previous
achievements, with no requirement for service; (b) those who thought service was the main purpose and that recognition was a coincidental benefit; and (c) those who reported that they did not know which purpose should be most important. Each group provided evidence that little discussion or reasoning had occurred to develop consensus on the purpose or purposes of the class honoraries.

When members discussed recognition, for instance, they did not and could not discuss precisely on what the recognition was based or why membership in the honorary should qualify as recognition. They reported that membership gave them no visible status within the university community, and that they thought it probably would not make much, if any, difference in their selection into the next year's honorary. The investigator found evidence of recognition of members, which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, but the members themselves were not aware of the forms of recognition which membership afforded them.

Members could also offer no clear explanation of the connection between membership in the honorary and service. The types of service performed or considered by the organization had little connection to the university at large or to an organization based in part on academic achievement.

The cultural pattern impeded the fulfillment of organizational purposes because the culture allowed the assumptions made by members to continue to go unexamined. If a member thought that recognition was the main purpose of the organization, no one challenged that member to think about what justified or constituted recognition. Similarly, if a member
thought service was the main purpose, no one challenged the assumption that anything remotely altruistic, whether related in any way to an honorary society or not, was a justifiable service project.

Proposition 2: Self-Impeding Cultures

Organizations will develop self-impeding cultures to the extent that they fail to develop consensus on purposes, that they fail to relate activities to purposes, and that they fail to question organizational assumptions which have inhibited the development of consensus and have perpetuated self-impeding patterns.

Cultural Patterns and Organizational Membership

Two ideas regarding organizational or group membership shed light on the cultural influence on membership patterns within student organizations. The first is Turner's (1961) idea of social ascent through sponsored or contested mobility, which is applicable to each of the organizations in this study. The second is Etzioni's (1980) idea of compliance structures, based on kinds of involvement and kinds of power within organizations.

Modes of Membership Selection

Sponsored mobility is the means by which one is given status within the "elite" class of a social system, "on the basis of some criterion of supposed merit [which] cannot be taken by any amount of effort or strategy" (Turner, 1961, p. 122).

Contest mobility, on the other hand, is the means by which one attains "elite status [as] the prize in an open contest [which] is taken by the aspirants' own efforts" (p. 122).
The democratic ideal is contest mobility, by which every person has an equal chance to seek elite status. The belief reported by members of each of the organizations in this study was that their organizations were run democratically and that the benefits of the organization were available to anyone who competed for them. Only occasionally did a member recognize that the cultural pattern for each of the organizations was to support sponsored mobility, even while espousing contest mobility.

The organization in which members most easily recognized and discussed the processes which constitute sponsored mobility (the actual terms were not used in any of the organizations) was the Sport Club. The officers of the Sport Club constitute the "elite" of that social system. Each of the officers reported that it was almost a necessity to be asked to run for an office if a person were to have any chance to be elected. One officer who intended to run for office from the time of first joining the organization reported making an effort to become acquainted with the officers and seeking their nomination to run. Another member who ran unsuccessfully for office reported that members get to be officers if they have "connections" with incumbent officers.

In the other three organizations, members would protest if told that the organizations practice sponsored mobility, but the cultural patterns are strong in that direction. Not only is entry to membership subject to sponsored mobility, but the benefits of membership evolve from the university's reliance on the organizations to select the "elite" who are to be recognized by the university.
Membership in the class honoraries serves as one point of entry into the university's elite status for students. As mentioned in Chapter IV, there is a prevalent attitude within the system—that is, the university community—that membership in the class honoraries is a good way to become involved on campus. Members are invited to a President's Undergraduate Leadership Awards banquet in the spring, both the year they are selected and the year they leave the organization. The mere fact of selection to the organization, regardless of the validity of the selection process or of one's contributions to or participation in the organization, qualifies members to be considered "leaders" on the campus.

Since membership in the class honoraries constitutes sponsorship into the university's elite status for students, the selection process is of particular interest. That process appears to be the key to many of the conditions which members reported to be problems for the organization, including lack of consensus on purpose and lack of participation.

To the extent that members identify and nominate students for membership the following year, sponsored mobility occurs. Only students who are made aware of the organizations know to apply. However, there are many who apply who do not have a clear idea about what the class honoraries do or what membership requires, so such sponsored mobility does not serve the organization by controlling for interest and commitment to the organization.

After students apply, membership is based on democratic voting procedures, in which the voting members do not know the names of the
people who apply. Members vote on the basis of a written application only, with no information on the personality or other qualifications of applicants.

The democratic procedures used in the class honoraries, in which everyone who supplies similar written information has an equal chance of being selected for membership, without needing "connections" among voting members, also assure that the voting members do not know what applicants know about the organization, what they would be willing to do as a member, or how they would work with other members. Further, no verification process is used to check the written application or to determine an applicant's record as a member of previous organizations.

The cultural pattern in the class honoraries is to perpetuate the selection procedures, even though members reported that the procedures did not receive adequate publicity to attract qualified applicants and that the procedures had resulted in the selection of members who were not committed to the organization.

The framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs can be used for explaining how the cultural patterns of the membership selection process work against the organization. In the Pre-Membership stage, the knowledge individuals have about the organization is limited because the organization provides very little information. For the organization, knowledge about prospective members is limited to what individuals say they have done, and commitment to or understanding of the organization cannot be verified.

The Service Organization is an opposite case. As in the class honoraries, the democratic ideal of contest mobility is supported, but
the practices used in membership selection are based on sponsored mobility. The culture of the Service Organization requires a high degree of commitment from members, so the chief membership qualification is evidence of commitment. Members evaluate prospective members' knowledge of and commitment to the organization.

The membership selection process places a premium on supporting the efforts of prospective members, which is in keeping with contest mobility and democratic ideals. However, one member reported in an interview that there are subtle methods of keeping prospective members out. Considerations for membership are officially based on "objective" criteria, such as knowledge of the organization's history and purposes or preparation of ideas for proposed projects. The member said that objective data are used so that members will not "have to face the fact that other stuff is influencing their decision more than they care to admit."

There is some tension within the cultural patterns of the Service Organization between contest and sponsored mobility. The democratic ideal of contest mobility receives public support from members, but the organization relies on sponsored mobility to assure a shared commitment to the organization. Members reported being uncomfortable being seen as an "elite" organization, but the demands of the Service Organization set the organization apart from most other student organizations. The members do not have to be any "better" than other students, but they do have to commit themselves to more involvement with the Service Organization than students do for other organizations.
Summary and Proposition 3: Organizational Membership Selection

Student organizations differ in the degree to which sponsorship is necessary for an individual to gain access to the organization or to move to elite status within the organization. Very few organizations recognize that sponsored entry occurs, and the membership procedures of most student organizations are established according to democratic principles which favor contest mobility. However, truly democratic selection processes require a degree of knowledge at both the individual and organizational levels which student organizations seldom achieve:

1. Individuals need to know about the organization, its purposes, and its activities, before they can make an informed choice about joining.

2. The organization must assure that all or most qualified candidates for membership have adequate knowledge about the organization to decide whether to join.

3. The organization needs to know the full qualifications of potential members in order to select the most qualified candidates for membership.

Unless both the individual potential members and the organization have accurate knowledge of organizational expectations and requirements, contest mobility based on democratic procedures is not possible. Under such conditions, sponsored mobility develops, and certain individuals are singled out for membership because of their acquaintance with or relation to organizational members.
(Sponsored mobility is not limited to those situations in which knowledge is lacking, but it is used when knowledge is lacking, whether it is recognized by participants or not.)

If an organization assumes that it is operating with contest mobility and that membership is equally available to any qualified candidate, but if membership practices favor sponsored mobility, incongruity exists between the assumptions and practices for admitting new members.

Proposition 3:
To the extent that congruity exists between the organization's assumptions about and practices for admitting members, the organization will be self-fulfilling. To the extent that incongruity exists between the assumptions and practices, the organization will be self-impeding.

Proposition 3.1:
To the extent that the organization operates on accurate and complete information about its own membership requirements and its candidates' qualifications for membership, congruity is possible between its assumptions about and practices for admitting members. To the extent the organization lacks understanding of or information about its membership practices or candidates' qualifications, incongruity between assumptions and practices will develop.
Forms of Membership Involvement and Organizational Power

The second idea from the literature is Etzioni's (1980) discussion of compliance structures, based on kinds of involvement and kinds of power within organizations.

Etzioni has identified three kinds of involvement in organizations:

1. Alienative involvement, characterized by negative orientation between the members and the organization or among members (p. 90).
2. Calculative involvement, based on the expectation of receiving material benefits for involvement (p. 91).
3. Moral involvement, based on the individual's seeking approval by others and accepting group norms and values (p. 91).

These forms of involvement can be crossed with three kinds of power used within organizations:

1. Coercive power - the application or threat of physical sanctions or the control of physical needs (p. 88).
2. Remunerative power - control of material resources (p. 88).
3. Normative power - control of symbolic rewards and prestige or acceptance (p. 88).

Table 7 illustrates how the types can be crossed, to produce types of organizations. Organizations which match a kind of involvement with the most closely related kind of power are called congruent types (p. 92). The congruent types are listed in Table 7. Etzioni has stated that congruent types are both more frequent and more effective than noncongruent types.
The organizations in this study can be compared to Etzioni's congruent types, and problems reported by members can be related to incongruence between membership involvement and the organization's use of power.

The Sport Club provides an example of utilitarian compliance, based on the stated purpose of offering members parties and trips at reasonable prices. Members join for the material benefit of reasonable prices for social and recreational activities. The organization offers reasonable prices as a means of attracting and keeping members. So long as members accept the Sport Club's activities and prices, congruence exists. Neither the members nor the organization makes additional demands on the other.

For the members who reported some dissatisfaction with the Sport Club, the problem rests in the kind of involvement those students sought. Rather than accept the material benefit of low prices for

Table 7

Typology of Compliance Relations

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activities, those members sought additional benefits of membership, such as the prestige of being involved in the decision processes of the organization and the status of "insider" in the authority structure of the organization. Since the Sport Club was not designed to accommodate high levels of membership participation in the administration of the organization, the purposes of those members were at odds with the officers' purposes of providing the most activities at the most reasonable cost. The organization could more easily tolerate dissatisfaction from members who wanted to be more involved than from people who thought they could get greater material benefits elsewhere.

The other three organizations must rely on normative compliance and seek moral involvement of members, because the primary source of power available to them is normative power. Unlike the Sport Club, which can offer value for its members' dollars, the other organizations can offer symbolic rewards, but can control few material rewards. To the extent that members accept and value the symbolic rewards available from the organization, congruence exists, but to the extent that members seek other rewards, incongruence exists.

The Service Organization has developed a strong identity with the organization among its members, which serves as a symbolic reward for new members to seek. Members develop a commitment to involvement so that they can feel a sense of belonging to the group and receive the group's rewards. Members, especially officers, frequently praised other members for a project completed or some other goal achieved. Occasionally some "prize" accompanied the praise, such as a cookie or similar treat, but the real reward was the praise.
The Service Organization was sensitive to the possibility that individuals might seek membership as a means to an end other than service to the university. One member reported that members "could tell" when an individual wanted to be a member of the Service Organization because membership could be a factor in the individual's favor when applying to law or medical school. Members consciously resisted such calculative involvement.

The class honoraries have not clarified the rewards they offer, and the lack of clarity is a cause for some of the problems members reported. According to members, there are some individuals who are selected for membership who believe that selection itself is the greatest reward the class honoraries can offer. They see membership as a material benefit, because they can report membership in an honorary on future applications for other organizations. When that is the case, the class honorary is unlikely to be able to persuade the individual to participate in its activities, since there would be "nothing in it" for the member. The problem for the organization, then, is to identify rewards which are congruent with moral involvement.

No such rewards were offered at the time of this study. The organizational response to lack of participation was to attempt to withhold such material benefits as it could. In one of the honoraries, the advisor and officers had announced early in the year that the honorary would not give a recommendation, in support of an application to the next year's honorary, to any member who was not active in the organization. The advisor and officers told the members that selection into the next year's honorary would depend heavily on the recommendation they
gave. Thus, withholding a recommendation could prevent an individual from being selected to the next group.

Such remunerative sanctions did not affect those members who had decided not to apply to the next year's honorary. The practice was also resented by some of those who did intend to apply, but who did not appreciate the threat that officers could affect the application process in that manner. In addition, the members who did participate because of the threat of a non-recommendation reported that they did so only enough to be counted, not out of any real commitment to the organization.

What the class honoraries did not do was attempt to develop a normative reward system which would engender commitment to the organization on moral, rather than calculative, terms.

Proposition 4: Congruence of Reward Systems and Membership Involvement

To the extent that the organization establishes a reward system congruent with its ability to offer rewards and with the kind of involvement members seek, the organization will develop a self-fulfilling culture. To the extent that the rewards offered are incongruent with the kind of involvement members seek, the organization will develop a self-impeding culture.

Orientation of Organizational Culture Toward Action-Taking

The organizations in this study presented two orientations toward action-taking. The tendency to support and promote action-taking was seen in the two organizations with self-fulfilling cultures, the Sport Club and the Service Organization. The two class honoraries, with self-impeding cultures, were found to be oriented toward non-action.
As each organization discussed possible organizational actions, its tendency toward action or non-action emerged:

In class honorary A, an idea for a service project, presented by the advisor of another honorary, was accepted by A's members, and was expected to be the major service project of the quarter. When the other group's advisor did not provide additional information, no member of A suggested either seeking more information on the project or adopting another project. Result: No project was attempted during the quarter, and the year was completed without the group's sponsoring any service projects in which members worked together on behalf of the honorary.

In class honorary B, a project was suggested and approved to have the group visit a retirement community and escort residents to a church service. Because of conflicts in schedules, the project was postponed several times. At the last postponement during this study, no new target date was set for the activity. Result: No service project was attempted during the quarter of this study and the year apparently was going to be completed without the group's sponsoring any service projects in which members worked together on behalf of the organization.

(As reported in Chapter IV, each of these organizations adopted the project of making audiotapes of testbooks for Disability Services at the university. Several members reported dissatisfaction with that
arrangement because few members participated and the project did not give members an opportunity to work together.)

In the Sport Club, one officer developed the idea of a committee system to support the officer's efforts. Other officers accepted the idea, on condition that the officer suggesting it do the work to establish and coordinate the committees. Result: Two committees were established, which provided nearly 100 volunteers for the organization during membership and publicity drives to do the work previously done by seven officers.

In the Service Organization, new projects were accepted at the rate of nearly one per week; projects ranged from those requiring approximately 20 member-hours to implement to those requiring more than 100 member-hours. Result: The members are continually involved in developing, reviewing, implementing, and evaluating projects.

Proposition 5: Action versus Non-Action Orientation of Organizational Culture

To the extent an organization is oriented toward action-taking, it will adapt actions and purposes to each other and will develop a self-fulfilling culture. To the extent an organization is oriented toward non-action, it will resist developing actions to fulfill its purposes and will develop an self-impeding culture.

Factors in Developing Action versus Non-Action Orientation

As the tendency toward action or non-action was analyzed, three particularly relevant ideas from organizational literature were applied:
"the liability of newness" (Stinchcombe, 1965); (b) "believing is seeing" (Schroeder, Nicholls, & Kuh, 1983); and (c) "camping on seesaws" (Hedberg, Nystrom, & Starbuck, 1976).

The liability of newness. Stinchcombe (1965) identified four conditions which can be liabilities for new organizations. Although student organizations are not "new" each year, the changes which many student organizations undergo make them susceptible to the conditions Stinchcombe identified.

1. New roles must be invented and learned and working relationships developed (p. 148).
2. Inventing new roles and developing relationships exact high costs in "time, worry, conflict, and temporary inefficiency" (p. 148).
3. Trust in social relations is more precarious in new than in old organizations (p. 149).
4. A new organization lacks stable ties to those who use organizational services (p. 149).

Student organizations experience changes among officers and a high turnover of members each year, so much so that the organizations are subject to some of the same liabilities as new organizations. When students assume new offices, the role for each office is not new, but the students entering the roles must learn the duties and working relationships required of the officers. While the new officers learn their roles, everyone else in the organization must also learn new relationships. If the organization allots time to develop relationships at the beginning of a new membership year or new terms of office, the
liabilities of changes can be controlled. If not, the organization may operate the entire year without overcoming the liabilities.

In an effort to avoid the liabilities of newness, the Service Organization scheduled an overnight, off-campus "bull session" within three weeks after officer elections to discuss plans and procedures for the new officers' terms of office. All members were included, and the majority of the student members attended.

In the Sport Club, officers reported that after they had been elected, they devoted nearly two quarters to learning their own jobs and establishing working relationships. (One officer had been removed from office for not following the agreed-upon procedures.) No members were included in the process. Since five of the seven officers were re-elected, four to the same office and one to a new office, during the quarter this study was conducted, the officers did not repeat the learning process, so the investigator did not observe it.

The class honoraries, which experienced the most "newness" because all members entered and left the organization at the same time, had not designated any time at the beginning of the membership year to become acquainted and establish working relationships. Members of the organizations reported that they never fully understood what would happen during their year of membership.

**Summary and Proposition.** When an organization experiences substantial change, with new members entering the organization and members entering new roles, the organization is subject to liabilities of newness. Time invested in establishing procedures and working relationships can prevent or minimize such liabilities. Failure to invest time
in such a manner can impede the organization's efforts throughout the year.

Proposition 5.1

An organization which does not overcome the "liabilities of newness" will be prone to non-action, whereas an organization which does take steps to overcome liabilities is better able to take action.

"Believing is seeing". Schroeder, Nicholls, and Kuh (1983) have discussed the process by which one's beliefs can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Phenomenological absolutism, or "believing that the world is as we see it" (p. 51), leads people to assume that their perceptions and assumptions about the world are complete and accurate. They "often selectively screen out information inconsistent with their assumptions," (p. 53) so that the assumptions will not be challenged.

When an organization develops a cultural pattern for viewing the world, that culture serves as a selective screen to determine what information will be admitted into the organization and what will be excluded. The screen can make information processing easier for the organization, by excluding information that is irrelevant to the organization, or it can hamper the organization, by distorting information which the organization needs to function properly. The information which is admitted is matched to the image members' have of the organization and serves as a basis for decision-making and action-taking.

Organizations which are action-oriented seek information on which to base actions. The Sport Club and Service Organization established information-gathering procedures which supported the projects they
planned. Those two organizations identified types of information which were necessary before an action would be taken and followed established procedures to collect the information.

In keeping with the believing-is-seeing principle, once the Sport Club and Service Organization collected the information they sought, they implemented their plans for action. They assumed that the information available to them was accurate and sufficient to allow them to complete their plans. Even if additional information was needed as the plans were implemented, the organizations continued acting and collecting the additional information at the same time.

The class honoraries, on the other hand, were frozen into non-action because of their belief in their inability to accomplish objectives. They did not have knowledge of a history of successful projects to give them confidence in their ability, so they were uncertain of exactly what information they would need to implement a successful project. They adopted the belief that they could do little because of their inexperience, so they attempted little.

**Proposition 5.2**

An organization with a clear idea of the information and abilities needed to implement activities will believe itself to be capable of implementing the activities and will be action-oriented. An organization with no clear idea of the information and abilities needed will believe itself incapable of implementing activities and will be non-action oriented.

"Camping on Seesaws". Hedberg, Nyston, and Starbuck (1976) have identified six fulcra of organizational processes, "the media by which
an organization creates future acts" (p. 41). The image of the fulcrum is used to emphasize that organizations "ought to seek minimal amounts of desirable characteristics" (p. 56). Too much of each characteristic creates inertia which the organization cannot overcome; too little creates an over-reaction within the organization. The six fulcra are:

1. minimal consensus.
2. minimal contentment.
3. minimal affluence.
4. minimal faith in goals.
5. minimal consistency in processes.
6. minimal rationality. (pp. 56-62)

For an organization to be able to take action, it must achieve these minimal characteristics, but it must not become so intent on achieving them that action is delayed. The organizations in this study provide examples of how minimal reliance on the characteristics is necessary and of how over-reliance impedes organizations.

The action-oriented organizations, the Sport Club and Service Organization, operated with minimal reliance on the characteristics. That is, before actions were taken, the organizations had attended to the six fulcra, but the organizations were willing to proceed without the complete development of all characteristics. For example, the Service Organization used consensus to arrive at many decisions, but a decision binding on and ultimately accepted by all members could be made by a majority vote. Similarly, the Sport Club sought to make money on its trips, but it did not delay decisions about trips until it was sure
of covering its costs. An unprofitable trip could be supplemented by other trips.

The non-action-oriented organizations, the class honoraries, on the other hand, sought maximum levels on all characteristics. Without assurance of maximum levels, the organizations were unwilling to act. For example, honorary B had discussed the service project of visiting a retirement community, but was unable to set a time when "all" members could attend. Rather than accept the fact that no date would ever accommodate all members, the members repeatedly postponed the activity until consensus could be reached on a date. The result, as reported previously, was that no action was taken.

In honorary A, an example was reported to the investigator in which affluence was a stumbling block for members. The organization had reached the milestone of its fiftieth year as an organization, and members had discussed an activity or project to commemorate the occasion. Ultimately, however, nothing was done because the organization "couldn't afford it." The advisor, in reporting the circumstances, appeared to have accepted the twin notions that anything the organization might have done would have cost more money than the organization could collect and that the members could not have collected money for any project. From the report, it appeared that the organization was committed to achieving full affluence before it would be willing to attempt any project.
Proposition 5.3

An organization which develops minimal demands for consensus, contentment, affluence, faith in goals, consistency, and rationality will be willing to take action when those minimal levels are achieved. An organization which relies on maximum levels of the characteristics will postpone action unless or until desired levels are achieved. The likelihood of achieving the desired levels will diminish as actions are postponed.

Summary of Orientation toward Action-Taking

Organizations which are accustomed to taking action will find it easier to take action even under conditions of uncertainty. Some degree of success will begin a process in which "success breeds success." Organizations which have no history of success on which to build find it difficult to take any action, therefore inertia prevents them from doing so.

Implications of the Research

In Chapter I there were three primary reasons identified for this research:

1. To explore and describe practical ways of understanding student organizations.

2. To contribute to the developing theory of organizational culture.

3. To contribute to the literature reporting the application of anthropological methods to the study of college student organizations.
This report of the research fulfills each of the purposes, although the report is not specifically segmented to focus on each purpose individually. Practical insight into student organizations is given in the review of the literature and in the report of the findings. Contributions to theory of organizational culture are made in the report of the findings and in the series of propositions regarding organizational culture in this chapter. Finally, the report of the application of anthropological methods given in Chapter III and the outcome of the use of those methods given in Chapter IV extends previous research and provides a model for future research.

Of particular importance is the development of the framework of organizational knowledge and beliefs. It identifies distinct areas in which organizational culture is developed and perpetuated. Organizational culture does not develop in isolation from the system of which the organization is a part, nor do individuals perpetuate culture without also affecting the culture. The development and impact of organizational culture is explored in the discussion of the findings.

Recommendations for Enhancing Organizational Culture

From the material gathered in this study, the investigator has developed a series of recommendations for enhancing organizational culture, particularly so that an organization will develop a self-fulfilling culture and an action-taking orientation.

1. A focal group, which could include the officers, advisor, interested alumni, newly selected members, or a combination, should determine what the purposes of the organization will be. The purposes might or might not relate to previously recognized purposes of the
organization, but they should be clearly understood by all members. Although subsequent members may wish to modify the purposes, the focal group should be less concerned with possible future modifications than with developing acceptable and widely-understood purposes for the current group.

The organization should allocate time for discussing purposes immediately after new members enter the organization, before the new members elect officers or otherwise structure themselves. During the discussion of purposes, new members should ask, "What is meant by this purpose? What activities are necessary or desirable for achieving each purpose? What kind of leadership and participation is necessary to enable the organization to achieve its purposes?"

2. The members--as many or as few as wish to participate--should develop a timetable for organizational activities. Whether the level of commitment allows for one project per year or one per month, the schedule for projects should be developed. If changes are necessary, they should be accommodated, but activities should not be postponed indefinitely.

If lack of participation is a problem, the members who are willing and ready to participate should not have to wait until other members choose to participate. Activities can be altered to accommodate as many members as are interested. Rather than lose the interest of everyone, the organization should adapt to the level of interest shown.

3. The organization should become what Mead has called a "teaching culture," one in which it is regarded as "imperative that those who know inform and direct those who do not know" (Wolcott, 1983, p. 84).
When prospective members and new members seek information about the organization, the information should be readily available, accurate, and complete. Members can teach by instruction or by example, and the information they provide can be either written or verbal. Members should decide what is most beneficial to the organization, not just what is easiest to provide.

4. The organization should be aware that the high turnover rate within student organizations creates two conditions: (a) anything that has been done two consecutive years "has always been done," in the opinion of the current students, and (b) if something is changed or not done one year, for whatever reason, it is likely to be permanently changed or stopped.

5. The organization should adopt ideas from other organizations with recognition of the differences among student organizations and the awareness that what works for one organization does not always work for another. Caution should be used in accepting ideas without adapting them to the particular circumstances of the organization.

6. Students and their advisors should recognize that one of the valuable purposes of a student organization is to provide a means for students to learn social and organizational skills. The task orientation of a rational-model organization is not conducive to developing social relations or broad-based experiences with organizations and should be balanced with concern for the individual development of members.
Directions for Future Research

There are many areas which remain to be explored to develop a full understanding of organizational culture in college student organizations. The most obvious direction for future research would be a replication of this study with different organizations, to determine whether similar material would be found. Other studies could answer new questions. The three objectives for this study provide the basis for identifying areas for future research.

Understanding student organizations. Studies which explore the following questions are needed to add to a practical understanding of student organizations for student affairs practitioners:

1. What effects do national organizations have on local chapters? Many national organizations provide clearly stated purposes and suggest or require certain activities. Given the importance of image formation in the development of organizational culture, how and in what ways do national organizations affect organizational images chapter members have?

2. What effect does age and/or previous experience in organizations have on the ability of students to adopt an action-taking orientation? How can or in what ways can an organization affect an individual's willingness to take action as a member of a student organization?

3. What effect can or does an advisor have on the organizational culture of a student organization? Does the effect change in different kinds of organizations?

4. How does affiliation with academic departments affect student organizations?
5. What are the effects of each element of the framework for student organizations?

**Extending organizational culture theory.** Student organizations provide an opportunity to observe systems operate through complete cycles of membership selection, entry, socialization, leadership succession, and departure. Most ongoing systems do not provide such an opportunity in a time frame which is feasible for most studies. Therefore, studies which explore the development, manifestations, and maintenance of organizational culture can be conducted with student organizations and the findings can inform studies of corporate organizational culture.

Specific questions regarding student organizational culture which are yet to be answered are:

1. What kinds of information are necessary and sufficient to sustain organizational culture? In what ways must the knowledge be transmitted to new members to sustain the culture?

2. How can a self-impeding organizational culture be changed to become self-fulfilling?

3. How does the administration of the university affect the culture of student organizations on the campus?

**Applying anthropological methods.** The use of anthropological methods in this study revealed two directions for future research, one pertinent to the methods in any application and one pertinent to the use of the methods on university campuses.

The use of participant observation techniques revealed the need to discern and explore the differences for each form of participant observation. Junker (1960) and Spradley (1980) have provided outlines for
different forms, but they have not described the gradations of behavior for the investigator or the means by which the investigator can select the most appropriate role from which to observe or participate in research settings. The discussion in Chapter III of this study amplifies the discussion from Junker and Spradley, but more work remains to be done.

The use of anthropological methods on the campus offers exciting prospects for understanding student behavior, in both formally organized student groups and in classrooms or informal groups. The need to understand group behavior, as opposed to the individual behavior on which psychological paradigms focus, encourages the further use of anthropological methods in a variety of studies.

In each of the three areas listed above there are many potential topics of investigation. This study is an initial effort to extend a developing perspective in organizational literature to student organizations. Much research remains to be done.
APPENDIX A

Framework for College Student Organization

This framework was developed by the investigator prior to the research project. It is based primarily on the investigator's experience with a wide range of student organizations and, secondarily, on characteristics suggested by the literature on student organizations but not organized into a comprehensive framework.

The purpose of the framework is to identify points of comparison between college student organizations and models of organizations which are presented in organizational literature. Although many important dimensions are comparable between student organizations and other formal organizations, there are also many differences. Some of the general organizational literature is applicable to student organizations, but a clear understanding of the salient features of student organizations is needed before concepts developed for other forms of organizations are applied to them.

A framework for student organizations also has practical application. Student personnel professionals and other university officials must assist, accommodate, contend with, or otherwise acknowledge the existence of untold numbers of student organizations. To do the job well, they need information about important features, issues, and concerns of student organizations. It is not practical to treat all organizations alike, as has already been recognized in many ways. Differential treatment is given to organizations which present special
circumstances, such as Greek organizations which own property, but the key circumstances of many student organizations have not been recognized. Tasks and relevant issues differ among organizations. A framework within which to place student organizations will enable those who work with them to recognize differences and tailor responses or contacts to match the situation of each organization.

Membership Characteristics

After the definition of student organization which is to be used is specified, it is possible to identify which elements of the organizations will be incorporated into the framework.

Under the definition used for student organizations, the organizations can be distinguished along two broad sets of characteristics or features, membership characteristics and governance characteristics. This study will attempt to determine which of the characteristics appear to contribute to or hinder the development of an organizational culture, a topic that has received attention in recent organizational literature. By studying organizations which share certain characteristics but differ along others, it may be possible to show how different cultural patterns are created.

The first set of characteristics to outline are membership characteristics. These include the ways members enter and participate in organizations. Each characteristic can be viewed as a continuum, along which an organization can be plotted. Key organizational issues stem from each characteristic.
Membership Pool

The membership pool for a student organization is the portion of the student body from which members are drawn. A college population may be divided by academic majors, by classification as freshmen through seniors or graduate students, by residence status, by race and gender, or by a number of other means.

Although the complexion of the college student population in the United States is changing, the student body will probably always be more homogeneous in many ways than the general population. Undergraduate students comprise the membership of most student organizations. Many of them are and will continue to be full-time students, meaning that the college atmosphere is a major factor in their lives. Most of the undergraduate, full-time students will continue to fall in the age range from 18 to 23. Individual campuses will vary in the average age of students, the proportion of full-time students, and the residential status of students, but basically all organizations on a campus will draw members from a common pool. This factor alone might lead an observer to see more similarities than differences among student organizations.

Differences become apparent when organizations are placed on a continuum of the membership pool, some of them taking members from a limited portion of the pool and some from the full range, even extending to non-students. Those organizations which draw from non-students for any participants other than advisors must be examined to see if they function as student organizations or as some other type of association, such as an administrative tool of the university. If students are
integ rall y involved in sustaining the organization and in providing leadership, the organization is a student organization.

Membership Longevity

An important difference among organizations would appear to be the length of time an individual member is involved in a particular organization. From the member's perspective, this factor is best labeled "membership longevity," while from the organization's perspective it can be considered as "membership turnover." The term "longevity" will be used because it does not carry with it the connotation that the organization loses members through some fault within itself.

On the traditional academic calendar, undergraduate students attend the university for four years. Even those who are enrolled longer than that are prone to change affiliations over the years as their interests change, so a complete change in the membership of most organizations is likely to occur at intervals no longer than three years, even in organizations which hold their members longest.

The significance of this feature rests in what the organizational structure or tradition allows, rather than in the actual experience of individual members. An organization may be constitutionally limited to membership terms of one year or it may have the built-in expectation that members will join as freshmen and remain active until graduation. Class honor societies are examples of the first group. Sororities and fraternities, which emphasize long-term commitments, represent the second type.

Within each type, there is the possibility that individuals will not conform with organizational expectations and will leave the
organization as interests and other commitments change. That sort of
departure becomes an organizational issue only when it occurs more
frequently than the organization is prepared to accept. The prevailing
organizational structure and expectations will continue even when indi-
viduals occasionally deviate from the norm.

Within an organization, membership may last a specified short
term, as in class honor societies which limit membership to one year, or
may be for an unspecified term which may last until the member's gradua-
tion. In many of the short-term membership systems, an entire group
enters membership at the same time and leaves the group together, where-
as under long-term membership, members who enter together may remain
active for differing lengths of time. In still other organizations
individuals enter at different times, rather than as a group. Each
manner of entry and departure presents different issues for the organi-
zation.

Access to Membership

Some organizations are open to anyone who seeks membership and
meets minimal criteria such as paying dues and attending meetings. Oth-
ers establish more stringent criteria, but all candidates are judged
objectively against these criteria and are not voted upon subjectively
by incumbent members to gain membership. Most often these organiza-
tions do not limit the number of members they will accept. Professional
associations—those affiliated with academic disciplines—are often of
this type. One criterion they use might be exceptional academic
achievement, as in academic honor societies. Others may require only a
major in the field and average grades.
Still other organizations establish minimum criteria, which a relatively large pool of students may meet, and select a limited number of students from that pool, with selection often dependent on the subjective evaluation of incumbent members. Leadership societies typically fall into this category, as do social fraternities and sororities, although the latter must also consider the candidate's decision as well as the incumbents' decision.

Attracting or Recruiting Members

Some organizations seek members and admit only those members they invite to membership, whereas others accept students who seek membership. For the organizations which recruit members, many issues will be different from those in which students seek out the organization. For a competitive organization such as a leadership society, the student might devote considerable effort to build up the credentials which are necessary to qualify for membership. In professional organizations, on the other hand, incumbent members may actively seek to attract students majoring in the discipline. The degree of personal commitment accruing to the organization may vary according to this factor.

This factor, perhaps more than any other, may vary over time. As the interests of the students change and the purposes served by particular organizations are judged to be more or less important to potential members, the burden of attracting members may shift. The reputation of organizations can also change, so that the job of attracting members becomes more or less difficult.
Intensity of Membership Involvement

A key feature of membership is the degree of intensity of membership involvement. Personal characteristics affect this feature in important ways, so one must consider the range of expected or accepted behavior in describing the intensity of involvement in particular organizations.

Some organizations provide students the chance to be totally immersed in the organization. This seems to be particularly true for organizations which have a set location for organizational activities. In Greek organizations members may live, eat, socialize and attend class together. It is possible, in extreme cases, for a member to be involved in nothing except the Greek organization and classes but still be busy all the time.

Other organizations provide much less intense involvement. They may meet regularly, but members may see each other only at meetings and rarely for other purposes. There may not be a meeting place that the organization can call its own, so there is no place for members to gather with each other. Loyalty to the group may be strong, but the group makes relatively few demands on the members.

One element in intensity of involvement may be a place that belongs to the group, but there are other ways group identity can be shared.

The time commitment to the group is one indicator of involvement. The organization may have many or few activities and may or may not have attendance requirements. If a member's attendance is expected and absences are punishable by dismissal, those who are less committed may
leave rather than commit their time. Each group sets its own schedule of activities and requirements for participation. Some may prefer to retain members who do not attend all meetings, whereas others may opt for having fewer members but expect greater loyalty and participation.

Financial requirements may also indicate the intensity of involvement, although the means a student has to meet the requirements must be considered. The student who must work to pay tuition may be intensely loyal to a group but unable to give much time to it because of job commitments. Another may have a generous allowance and spend a great deal to be a part of the organization but feel no particularly strong affiliation.

Finally, the presence and use of distinctive symbols may indicate the intensity of a member's involvement. Some groups actually have a uniform, but many more have insignia, clothing, or distinctive jewelry which identify group members.

Groups will vary greatly on both the types of involvement they require and the intensity. The range of accepted behavior is important as well. An honor society member who wears the key to formal society functions may fit right in, but another who wears it to class everyday may violate the norm. Within each group there are implicit understandings which are likely to develop about how much use of symbols is too much or, conversely, how much is required as a minimum for a member to acknowledge affiliation with the group.

Alumni Membership

A feature which is closely related to both membership longevity and the intensity of membership involvement is the opportunity for
alumni membership. Student organizations are divided among those which offer no opportunity for and carry no expectation for alumni membership, those which offer limited opportunity, and those which carry a definite expectation for such involvement. This aspect of membership is both an organizational factor and an individual factor. In a study of organizational culture, it may be considered to be an indication of the organizational culture: Those organizations which successfully inculcate members with organizational values and identity as undergraduates may attract continued alumni involvement or may lead members to create their own such opportunities through alumni groups of the organization.

**Summary of Membership Characteristics**

To summarize, the membership characteristics present conditions which vary among student organizations:

- **Membership pool** - whether the organization draws members from a wide or narrow range of students.

- **Membership longevity** - how long a student may be involved as an active member.

- **Access to membership** - whether membership is open to any interested student or is based on competitive selection.

- **Attracting or recruiting members** - whether the student takes the initiative in seeking membership or the organization takes the initiative in seeking members.

- **Intensity of membership involvement** - the degree of commitment or loyalty to the organization which is expected of members.

- **Alumni membership** - whether contact with the organization continues beyond active membership.
The particular combination of these features which is present in any organization will determine in large part what issues the organization will face in the process of receiving new members, acquainting them with the organization, involving them in organizational activities and engendering feelings of loyalty toward the organization.

**Governance Characteristics**

Although much of the agenda for student organization activities is set by the students who are active in the local chapter, there are many sources of influence that come from outside the student group. These can be grouped into three broad categories: national affiliations, alumni involvement, and institutional involvement.

**National Affiliations**

A local chapter of a student organization may be affiliated with a national organization but still be little affected by the national tie. On the other hand, the national headquarters or national officers may have an impact on even routine daily activities and may have a significant voice in what the local organization does for special activities. The extent of the involvement will markedly affect the experience of student members of the organization.

The most important factor to consider is whether there is any sort of national affiliation. If there is, the type and degree of impact of the affiliation is important. If there is not, the organization will be free to make more decisions for itself.

One must also consider who is affected by the national office. Some national officers work through chapter advisors, seldom having contact with student officers. Others may have direct contact with a number of students in a variety of positions within the chapter.
Alumni Involvement

Those organizations which have national affiliations may have direct contact with national through local alumni. Alumni might also be involved with strictly local organizations. In those organizations which have any degree of alumni involvement, the type and degree will again be important, as it is with national affiliations.

Institutional Involvement

A universal feature for student organizations is the presence of an affiliated college or university. The student organization exists because the university exists. There are doubtless many groups which would have a reason for being without the presence of the university, but it is the university which gives the group a focal point and an identification that others will recognize.

As with national affiliations, the type and degree of university impact on individual organizations can vary greatly. There are organizations on every campus which seemingly drift along on the fringe of the campus, virtually unaffected by the university or its rules. Others depend on the university for office space, administrative support, and other forms of assistance without which the organization would not continue to exist.

The university has often asserted its right to influence some kinds of organizations by setting up separate administrative offices, such as a Greek Affairs office to oversee social fraternities and sororities. For other organizations, the university may supply support personnel, but it is up to the organization to seek assistance when it thinks necessary.
The university may set up or allow autonomous structures to work with categories of student organizations, or it may attempt to centralize operations. Some separate structures would be those set up to advise and coordinate Greek programs or to deal with academically based organizations through academic units of the university. The university could set clear lines of authority, so that certain issues would be handled by the autonomous structures while others would be handled by a central office. If a student organization is responsible to more than one university office, the ways in which the responsibilities are divided and how the students learn of them is important to consider in understanding how the organization goes about its business.

Summary of Governance Characteristics

In summary, there are three ways in which persons or organizations outside the student organization may affect the way in which the organization conducts itself. National affiliations provide the structure within which a local chapter operates. Alumni members may serve in advisory capacities to the student chapter. Institutional offices or personnel may oversee the conduct of the organization on the college campus.

Summary of the Framework

The characteristics which comprise the framework for student organizations are common to virtually all formal student organizations. They provide a basis for describing differences among organizations and comparing similarities. They also provide a basis for understanding how particular characteristics within one organization affect other
characteristics in the same organization. The cumulative effect of all characteristics produces an organizational culture.

Understanding the framework is useful because such understanding aids description of organizational features. The insight can also be useful to student personnel professionals and organizational advisors, because it can reveal areas which might be targeted for change and can aid in understanding how change in one area—recruiting practices, for instance—might affect the entire organization.

The framework is intended to identify the major features which comprise the organization and the context within which it operates.
APPENDIX B

Forms Used in the Study
INFORMATION FOR INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Project: Discovering the Elements of Culture within College Student Organizations

Interviewer: Charlotte Davis, Ph.D. Candidate
College Student Personnel Work

This interview is being conducted as part of a study of selected student organizations. You will be asked to discuss various aspects of your experiences with one of these organizations.

The purpose of this study is to determine what features of this organization are similar to other organizations and which ones are distinctive. Your perceptions of the organization and its members in general, as well as particular individual experiences you have had, are important for research purposes.

Any information you give in this interview will be used with respect for your privacy and that of other members and will not be identified with you personally.

Your voluntary participation will be appreciated, but if you do not think you are able to participate willingly, you are under no obligation to do so. If you do participate but do not wish to answer certain questions, you may decline to do so without consequences to you. If you wish to end the interview session at any point, you may do so.

Thank you for your time and assistance.
I consent to participating in (or my child's participation in) research entitled:

Discovering the Elements of Culture within College Student Organizations

Charlotte Davis ___________________ or his/her authorized representative has
(Principal Investigator)
explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my (my child's) participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am (my child is) free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me (my child). The information obtained from me (my child) will remain confidential unless I specifically agree otherwise by placing my initials here ____________.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _________________________ Signed: _________________________
(Participant)

Signed: _________________________ Signed: _________________________
(Principal Investigator or his/her Authorized Representative) (Person Authorized to Consent for Participant - If Required)

Witness: ____________________________

HS-027 (Rev. 12-81) -- To be used only in connection with social and behavioral research.
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APPENDIX C

Personal and Professional Notes

Any research activity should include an evaluation of the instrument used. In qualitative research, the investigator is the instrument, so it is appropriate to consider what effect the investigated and the investigator had on each other over time.

Reactions to the Investigation

As the research instrument during the investigation, I encountered both stiff challenges and exciting opportunities for growth. The two were intertwined, so that the challenges invariably prompted growth, and growth always presented challenges.

The discovery process of ethnographic research was the single greatest challenge. There were no pre-determined categories for investigation and no neat and precise questions to ask during the study. The challenge was to discover patterns and to derive coherent descriptions and explanations from the amorphous material collected. One of my primary goals during the doctoral program had been to develop the ability to analyze and synthesize events and experiences, so the opportunities the investigation presented to do that were welcomed. The investigation was a validating experience for me.

At the same time, the experience was frustrating because the role of investigator influenced or determined my responses to situations the participants presented. As a participant in similar situations, my
responses would have been different from the responses the investigator's role allowed.

For instance, on one occasion, four members of one of the class honoraries participated in a group interview. They spoke of becoming "apathetic" as members of the organization, yet I saw in them a high potential for energy, enthusiasm, participation, and dedication to the organization. Inwardly, I was torn between wanting to give them advice about how to channel the interest they expressed for the organization and needing to back away from influencing their responses. I shared their anger and disappointment over the way the organization was run. If I had been in a position to do so, I would have replaced the advisor and impeached the president, but I could not express that to the members in the interview.

I realized during the investigation how strongly I believe in creating situations in which individuals can test ideas, are allowed to take some well-considered risks, and are given a chance to be successful when they try to do something new. I also recognized my personal and professional aversion to—even contempt for, although I still hesitate to use such a strong term—"nay-sayers" and those too cautious or timid to make decisions and commitments to new ideas. I was attracted to the Service Organization because of its institutionalized openness to new ideas, and I was irritated by the class honoraries because of their indecisiveness and reluctance to attempt anything that had not been done before. I had to be very conscious of my personal reactions to the organizations so that I could avoid influencing the information I collected from them.
As a student personnel professional, I believe that advisors and administrators can create the conditions under which students can take responsibility and can be successful in initiating, planning, and implementing programs and activities. Student organizations can have a profound effect on members. Depending on the organization a student joins, the student can become energized, enthusiastic, and positive about the organizational experience, or can become apathetic, lackadaisical, and negative. I believe student personnel professionals can influence, although not determine, which experiences students will have.

The investigator's role also required me to enter or remain in situations I would not have chosen otherwise and in which I was uncomfortable. The Sport Club's emphasis on drinking and partying was uncomfortable for me, not because I placed a value judgment on members' behavior so much as because I was personally uncomfortable in the setting. Conducting the investigation made it necessary for me to remain even when I was uncomfortable, but the degree of my discomfort limited my observations in those settings.

As a student personnel professional, I encounter similar situations. Whether I agree with or am comfortable with the purposes and interests of individual student organizations, I am in a position that requires me to give advice and support to them.

If I Were Starting Over

I entered the study with a number of ideas about student organizations, ideas developed while I was a member in several organizations and while I worked as a student personnel administrator and an advisor to student organizations. I incorporated many of my ideas about student
organizations into the framework which guided the development of this study. I identified elements of organizations which I think make a difference in the way organizations function and the issues they face.

Generally, I am satisfied that this study validates the framework. There are differences, evident from the study, between organizations which admit members in different ways and which retain members for different lengths of membership. The elements or characteristics comprising the framework identify ways in which organizations differ and provide a means for explaining the differences and the effects they can have. If I were starting over or were to do another study, I could use the same framework and could frame many different questions about similarities and differences among student organizations.

On the other hand, if I were starting over, I would be a different research instrument because of the experiences I have had. I entered the study with certain ideas about students and student organizations which have been challenged. I expected student organizations to be open to the most qualified and most interested students, and I expected those students to take the opportunity to influence and direct the activities of the organization. I was surprised on both counts, particularly regarding entry to student organizations.

I found that membership procedures which were supposed to be "democratic" and "objective" were either unsuccessful in selecting members who would contribute to the organization or were much more influenced by the members than any member would like to admit. Furthermore, I now recognize that "subjectivity" in selecting members can be an advantage for student organizations: If organizational success depends
on members' commitment to the organization, then a "blind" review of candidates for membership is unlikely to produce the kind of member the organization needs to contribute to its success. In such circumstances, I now believe that selection procedures should require candidates to demonstrate their qualifications and interest or should allow some other means for members to determine what a candidate's likely contribution to the organization would be.

Before this study, I would not have believed such procedures to be necessary for student organizations. Mine was a very egalitarian attitude, based on the belief that any student could make a contribution to student organizations. What I saw in the students in this study was that individuals are much influenced by circumstances. When expectations are clear and structured, as in the Service Organization, students will respond. But the students in the class honoraries surprised me in the extent to which they were willing to let circumstances determine their participation in and contribution to their chosen organizations. Although I shared the frustration of those who complained about the organizational circumstances which inhibited action, I also recognized, with surprise, that the students were all too willing to succumb to the circumstances. If I were to begin the study again, I would be more skeptical of what students said was done to them and would give direct attention to the amount of effort and creative thinking or dedicated working students did on behalf of the organization. If I were to conduct a second study similar to this, I would make three changes.

First, I would want to conduct a preliminary investigation of the characteristics of potential target organizations. In this study, there
were surprises among the organizations, such as the discovery that the Sport Club was as much or more a social organization as a sport organization and the discovery that the class honoraries were much more talk than action. The surprises did not hinder the study, but if another study were designed to compare organizations, more should be known about the organizations before the study were begun.

Second, I would want to study each organization before new members entered. This would allow the investigator to observe how an organization prepares for, admits, and socializes new members. In this study, I received members' reports of the process, but was able to observe it directly only in the Service Organization. Ideally, one would want to interview candidates prior to membership selection, but if that were not possible, interviewing new members is the next best alternative.

Third, I would want the opportunity for a full range of participant observation. There were few opportunities for either complete observation or complete participation. A longer period of research would probably provide more varied opportunities. Also, organizations which schedule a variety of activities would provide more opportunities for varying the research strategy.

**Recommendation for Future Investigators**

A final note is a recommendation that future investigators solicit the assistance of a colleague who will observe the investigator and serve as a "sounding board" during the investigation. One who becomes immersed in a study such as this faces the twin dangers of sensory overload and "going native." Having a colleague available, someone trained in or familiar with the methods used, would give the
investigator an opportunity to discuss the research experience and its effects and would also supplement the written analysis of the research project.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


